

The Legacy Lives On



Congratulations to the World War II veterans of the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service on this historic occasion!

On July 15, 1946, President Truman greeted the 442nd on the White House lawn and said, “You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice and you have won”. Sixty five years later, Congress bestowed its highest civilian honor on the Nisei soldiers of World War II. The Congressional Gold Medal recognizes the accomplishments of these great men and their embodiment of American ideals, not only on the battlefields, but also at home. America is not only a free nation, but a better and stronger nation because of their service and sacrifices. At the medal presentation in Washington last month, U.S. House Speaker John Boehner, said it best when he proclaimed the Nisei “a great American story.”

Indeed, it is a great American story. It’s a story that deserves to endure. Sixty five years from now, when we no longer are here, will America remember? Will America remember the internment camps? Will America remember the sacrifices made by all Americans of Japanese ancestry? A nation is only as great as its ability to learn from its past. We need to ensure those lessons, earned with the blood and toil of so many Nisei, is preserved.

A group of sons, daughters and supporters has begun work on a Nisei Legacy Center to perpetuate the history and lessons of the World War II veterans of the 100th, 442nd, MIS and 1399th Engineer Construction Battalion. The group is committed to the preservation, study and exhibition of the role and contribution of the Nisei. Each of the veteran organizations has a growing collection of documents, artifacts, audio-visual material and wartime memorabilia. These priceless collections need to be shared with not only today’s generation, but with future generations as well.

The Nisei Legacy Center Committee’s effort is being undertaken with the support of the three veterans clubs (100th, 442nd and MIS) as well as the 100th Infantry Battalion Legacy Organization and the 442nd RCT Foundation. All agree on the need to create a single facility in Hawaii that will combine the Nisei soldiers’ archives in a unified collection to perpetuate their legacy. The committee is exploring several possibilities, including constructing a stand-alone facility in partnership with an educational institution. No specific site or configuration has been selected. The Nisei Legacy Center is envisioned as a physical location to house artifacts and records and make them accessible for research and education and secondarily as a gathering place for the veterans and the public.

We invite the family members and supporters of the veterans who are here today to join us in the creation of a Nisei Legacy Center. If you find yourself asking, “Where do we go from here?” the time has come for everyone to come together. It doesn’t matter whether your ties are with the 100th, 442, MIS or 1399th. The time has come for a legacy center to honor of our veterans.

For more information, please contact us via email at: sons-daughters@442sd.org

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