

EAST COAST JAPANESE AMERICANS FOR REDRESS

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For immediate release

Former Nisei servicemen of World War II will be the guests of honor at a reception here on Veterans Day, Nov. 11th. Hosted by the East Coast Japanese Americans for Redress, it will be held at the home of Natsu Ikeda Ifill, 47 West 94th Street, beginning at 2 p.m.

The event will honor the achievements of the Japanese American 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team that fought in Europe, as well as the accomplishments of the men who served in the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) on the Pacific front. Their unmatched exploits helped to win public recognition in the United States for Americans of Japanese ancestry and their alien parents at a time when wartime feelings were running strong against them.

Special guests will be Governor and Mrs. George Ariyoshi, Senator Spark Matsunaga of Hawaii, and the Hawaii Pa'u Riders and representatives who will participate in the 11 O'clock Veterans Day Ceremonies at the site of the Eternal Light at 23rd Street and Fifth Avenue. An invitation was also extended to Secretary of State Basil Patterson who will represent the All-Black 369th Regiment. The 369th, like the 442, was a segregated unit.

The reception will not only honor Nisei servicemen, but will focus on the wartime experience of West Coast Japanese Americans as a prelude to the hearing to be held here on November 23rd by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. The host group is a coalition of Japanese American community organizations and individuals in New York City who are working in concert with the Commission.

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(Additional information on Nisei Servicemen attached).



NISEI SERVICEMEN, WORLD WAR II

The all-Nisei 100th Infantry Battalion preceded the 442nd Regimental Combat Team into action. Dubbed the "Purple Heart Battalion," the 100th participated in the bloody Italian battles of Salerno, Volturno River, Cassino, Rapido River, and Anzio. After the Anzio beachhead was secured, the 100th Infantry Battalion was incorporated into the larger 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Together they went through five major campaigns in Italy and France, earning more decorations than any other unit of its size--18,143 decorations for valor, including one Congressional Medal of Honor, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses, 560 Silver Stars, some 4,000 Bronze Stars, and seven Presidential Distinguished Unit Citations. In addition, the "Go for Broke" unit suffered 308 percent casualties--which translates into 9,500 Purple Hearts. Two U.S. senators from Hawaii are veterans of this unique outfit: Daniel K. Inouye, who lost his right arm in combat and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross; and Spark M. Matsunaga, who won 1the Silver Star.

That is only half the story of Nisei in uniform. Much less known to the general public were the heroic exploits of approximately 6,000 Japanese Americans assigned to the Military Intelligence Service (MIS). Unlike the 100th Infantry Battalion and 442nd RCT, these men served individually or in small groups throughout the Pacific Theatre of Operation. They engaged in intelligence gathering, translated captured Japanese documents, interpreted enemy communications, interrogated prisoners of war, deciphered codes, and flushed out caves and dugouts filled with frightened civilians and soldiers. Attached to every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, many of the MIS-men were loaned to Allied units--the British, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, and the Chinese. Nisei served with the Merrill Marauders in the China-Burma-

India theatre and participated in every major invasion, including going in with the first wave of assault troops at such places as: Guadalcanal, New Guinea, Leyte, Solomon Islands, Saipan, Iwo Jima, New Caledonia, Bougainville, the Phillipines, Okinawa, etc. MIS-ers were killed and wounded in action and the decorations won was far out of proportion to their number. Later, hundreds more served in the occupation of Japan. High military sources claim that the work of Nisei helped to shorten the war against Japan by at least two years--thereby saving over an estimated one million lives, both American and Japanese.

Altogether--about 33,000 Japanese Americans served in the U.S. military during World War II, including women in the WAC's and Army Nurse Corps.