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442nd Regimental Combat Team musters for review by Gen. John E. Dahlquist after suffering over 800 casualties while successfully rescuing 211 men of the 141st Infantry Regiment in eastern France. One of eight soldiers in the first group of I Company, 3rd Battalion, to reach the Lost Battalion was Valley Nisei, Pfc. Junji "Jay" Shiroyama of Laton, who was awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. Japanese American National Museum



Maj. Gen. Frank D. Merrill is shown with MIS soldiers T. Sgts. Herbert Miyazaki and Akiji Yoshimura, of the famed "Merrill's Marauders" in the China-Burma-India Theater. Gen. Merrill said, "As for the value of the Nisei group, I couldn't have gotten along without them." Japanese American National Museum



The 442nd Regimental Combat Team received the seventh Presidential Unit Citation from President Harry S. Truman for breaching the Gothic Line. The Citation was presented on the White House lawn - July 15, 1946. National Park Service, Abbie Row. Courtesy of Harry S. Truman Library

JAPANESE AMERICAN SOLDIERS SERVING IN WORLD WAR II

100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team



Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the War Department reclassified Japanese American men of draft age 4-C, "enemy aliens" ineligible for military service. The War Department later reversed its position and created the 100th Battalion employing volunteers from Hawaii and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team ("RCT") made up of volunteers from the War Relocation Centers. These two units were eventually merged. Japanese Americans fought in World War II because of their sense of duty and patriotism and their desire to show their loyalty as Americans.

The 442nd Regimental Combat Team adopted the motto "Go for Broke," a Hawaiian gambling expression meaning "All or Nothing." As segregated units, the 100th and 442nd fought in eight campaigns in some of the bloodiest battles in Europe. The 442nd RCT started with approximately 3,500 men in France and suffered more than 2,200 casualties including 160 killed in action in less than a month of fighting to liberate Bruyeres and Biffontaine in eastern France and to rescue 211 men of the 1st Battalion/141st Infantry Regiment/36th Division (Texas Division). In all, 650 Japanese Americans were killed in action in the Mediterranean and European Theaters.

The 100th Battalion and 442nd RCT were awarded seven Presidential Unit Citations. Twenty-one Medals of Honor were eventually awarded to Japanese Americans of those units. Ironically, elements of the 442nd RCT liberated the prisoners of the Nazi death camp at Dachau, Germany, while their own families and friends were behind barbed wire in America.



Military Intelligence Service

"When the U.S. Army needed Japanese-speaking soldiers for military intelligence and combat duty, the Nisei answered the call. They served under very difficult circumstances-not the least of which was that their own fellow soldiers were liable to mistake them for the enemy. They rendered invaluable service: interrogating prisoners, intercepting messages, translating captured documents, infiltrating enemy lines and other vital functions. They saved countless lives and shortened the war in the Pacific, perhaps by as much as two years.

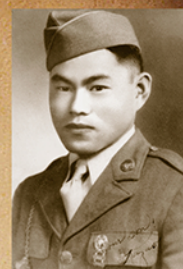
"Because of the highly classified nature of their work, their full contribution to America's victory would not be recognized until decades later. When their full story was finally told, it played a major role in securing passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which Congress enacted in an attempt to redress the injustice of the internment.

"Their service to this country is a reminder to all of us that being an American is not a matter of race or national origin, but a conviction of the heart." Secretary of State Colin Powell from MIS Research Website, National Japanese American Historical Society, Inc.

Over 33,000 Japanese Americans served in the U.S. Armed Forces during the World War II period that ended in 1946. They joined the military effort to demonstrate their loyalty and service to the United States. Because of their heroism, they made America a more tolerant country.



Private First Class Joe M. Nishimoto
Nishimoto Family Collection

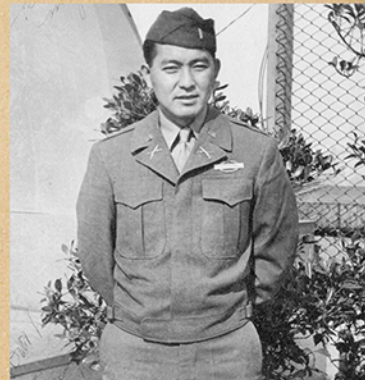


Staff Sergeant Kazuo Otani
Otani Family Collection

Two Fresno County Nisei heroes, both members of the highly-decorated 442nd Regimental Combat Team, were recipients of the Medal of Honor.

Private First Class Joe M. Nishimoto distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action on November 7, 1944, near La Houssiere, France. Nishimoto was killed in action just seven days later.

Staff Sergeant Kazuo Otani entered service while interned at the Colorado River War Relocation Center in Poston, Arizona. He distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action on July 15, 1944, near Pieve Di Santa Luce, Italy, and was killed on the battlefield while administering first aid to a fallen soldier.



First Lieutenant Kan Tagami, personal interpreter to General Douglas MacArthur, acted as liaison officer to Emperor Hirohito during the occupation of Japan after the war. Emperor Hirohito thanked Lt. Tagami and all the Nisei serving during the occupation stating, "Your Japanese ability has truly made the government work much easier. The Nisei are a bridge across our two countries. Thank you very much." Photo courtesy of John Tagami, quote from *Nisei Linguists* by James C. McNaughton

"You fought for the free nations of the world. You fought not only the enemy, you fought prejudice - and you won. Keep up that fight. Continue to win. Make this great Republic stand for what the Constitution says it stands for, The welfare of all of the people all the time." President Harry S. Truman upon presentation of the 7th Presidential Unit Citation to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team on July 15, 1946

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