



JAPANESE AMERICAN  
VETERANS ASSOCIATION

Post Office Box 391  
VIENNA, VIRGINIA  
22183-0391

Bert Mizusawa, President  
Akio Konoshima, Editor

# NEWSLETTER

---

**JANUARY – MARCH 2005**

**VOLUME XIII – NUMBER 1**

---

## **VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:**

For this newsletter, with JAVA president Bert Mizusawa in Afghanistan, I have the honor of providing the quarterly message to our members. As most of you know, Bert was recalled for active duty in January and, barring re-assignment to Iraq, is slated to return home sometime later this year.

Gratefully, despite the uncertainties he is facing on his current assignment, he has made a truly conscientious effort to stay abreast through electronics of JAVA activities and provide guidance. We wish for his continued safety and return home to his family, and, of course, to us.

Currently, there are two topics I would like to bring to the forefront as far as JAVA is concerned. First, we would like to hear your views, both pro and con, on actions by JAVA's executive committee, which plans and approves the directions and activities of JAVA.

This committee, as you know, is composed of Bert and I, Dave Buto, Earl Takeguchi and specialists in various areas. These specialists include Terry Shima, our executive director; Gerald Yamada, our general counsel, and Phil Ishio, Grant Ichikawa, Calvin Ninomiya and Jack Tashiro, each of whom contribute in his special field of expertise.

Topics on the EC agenda include budgeting and other fiscal issues, membership, scholarships, ceremonies, inter-action with other Japanese American organizations, maintaining political influence, and, above all, educating the American public on the contributions Japanese Americans have made in preserving our democracy.

The proceedings of these meetings are by no means secret. The minutes are posted on the JAVA website for all to review and, if they wish, to discuss with any EC member. This interaction will make us a more viable and effective organization.

Secondly, both long-time and new members may be wondering how they can become more involved with JAVA. In the past year the tempo of JAVA activities has stepped up, focusing on veterans' issues affecting Japanese Americans as well as veterans of all ethnicities such as the Veterans' Day ceremonies, the Library of Congress' oral history projects, and research at the National Archives of Nisei veterans. Other activities involve awarding scholarships and activities during Washington's annual cherry blossom festival.

Your presence and involvement in these activities is most welcome and speaks volumes. No one is pressured into doing anything, but you can see for yourself what JAVA is doing for the Japanese American community through its veterans' roots.

In the coming months, I plan to contact as many members as I can to let them know that their participation in our activities is important for maintaining the Japanese American image of courage, patriotism and honor.

I ask that all continue to show up at our meetings and programs; decide for yourselves how much you want to do for and with JAVA. If you have paid your dues, we owe you this opportunity and you owe it to yourselves to take us up on it.

**Thomas “Vic” Mukai**

####

### **JAVA PRESIDENT MIZUSAWA SENDS GREETINGS FROM AFGHANISTAN**

JAVA president Bert Mizusawa was recalled to active duty and has served in Afghanistan since February 25, 2005. At JAVA's request, Bert sent the following message:

“To JAVA members: I am still here in Kabul, Afghanistan doing my part in the Global War on Terrorism. I had a chance to visit JAVA member Major General Jason Kamiya, the new commanding general of Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF)-76, which is responsible for the fight against the Taliban and illegal militias here in Afghanistan.

“It took me about 90 minutes to travel down the pockmarked road, including over a location where a roadside bomb injured members of the Canadian ambassador’s entourage a few days ago. But the trip was worth it because I got the opportunity to spend over an hour with General Kamiya. He has a solid grasp of the mission, and is moving out smartly; he will make us all proud. He sends his regards to the JAVA membership and their friends.

“I will be traveling throughout Afghanistan in the coming weeks. Later this week, I will join a NATO contingent, which is studying operations here to prepare for the imminent NATO takeover in Afghanistan, for a week in Cologne and Lisbon.

”I hope everyone is enjoying better weather in the United States (it is even getting better here after the worst snowfalls in over ten years). I am still residing in a safehouse at night, and am looking forward to better accommodations when I return! In the meantime, I will keep you posted.”

Prior to this assignment, General Kamiya was the Commanding General, Southern European Task Force (Airborne) (SETAF), located in Vicenza, Italy, the highest ranking U.S. military officer in southern Europe. He was born in Honolulu, the son of Larry Kamiya, Co. C, 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion, who was wounded in action in 1944 near Monte Cassino, Italy.

Bert is the Afghanistan Team Chief for Joint Forces Command’s Joint Center for Operational Analysis – the first team to cull lessons learned from operations and to use those lessons in the counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism campaigns in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

In civilian life, Bert is President of PaxCentric, Inc, a consulting firm. He previously served as a member of the Senior Executive Service assisting the Secretary of the Army and was a professional staff member for the Senate Armed Services Committee. A member of the U.S. Military Academy Class of 1979, he graduated first in his class and served as an infantry officer in Italy and on the Korean DMZ, where he was awarded the Silver Star. Bert has also received Master in Public Policy and Juris Doctor degrees from Harvard University.

*(Editor's note: A picture of Bert and General Kamiya can be found on JAVA website: [www.javadc.org](http://www.javadc.org))*

####

## **JAVA ENTERS NEW OPERATIONAL PHASE; WILL CAMPAIGN FOR VETERANS RIGHTS AND BENEFITS by Terry Shima**

President Bert Mizusawa, in his inaugural address at JAVA's general meeting January 15, called for an expansion of the organization's activities to include issues that affect active duty military personnel and their transition to veteran status and have an impact on all veterans. He noted that this could be done independently or in concert with other veterans' organizations which have similar goals.

In 2004 JAVA, as a member of the Coalition of Veterans Service Organizations under the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), participated in the DVA project to create new U.S. postage stamps to recognize the work of selected veterans organizations. Each member of the Coalition would have a commemorative stamp with the theme "Serving Veterans." Currently, opposition from the postal service has stalled the project, but the DVA is considering revisiting the issue.

Last November, Bert Mizusawa participated in the Veterans Day Program at the Arlington Cemetery where President Bush laid the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns and delivered an address in the amphitheater. This program complemented JAVA's annual Veterans Day Program at the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism.

More recently JAVA has attended meetings of the National Military Veterans Alliance (NMVA), comprised of 30 organizations such as VFW, AmVets and the DAV, which seeks to combine their common lobbying efforts at the executive and legislative branches. We will decide in a couple months whether to seek formal membership.

A JAVA representative attended the annual Joint Senate-House Hearings in March and in April will attend similar hearings with the view of supporting Veterans Service Organizations' testimonies. The remarks by these organizations in presenting veterans views on benefits have been encouraging.

This redirection will require an amendment to JAVA's charter, which will be presented to the general membership in the next Newsletter and voted at the April 23<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Social/Special Meeting.

JAVA Vice President Vic Mukai observed that "this is a glimpse of the direction JAVA is heading and we hope to provide additional information as developments take place. The Executive Council believes JAVA, in concert with other veterans organizations, can make a major impact. However, we need to ensure that we maintain our course in accordance with our by-laws and that our non-profit status is not jeopardized."

We are entering in a new phase and would appreciate any comments or suggestions from members and friends. Please direct them to Terry Shima, Executive Director, 301-987-6746, [ttshima@worldnet.att.net](mailto:ttshima@worldnet.att.net); Vic Mukai, 703-751-1550; [tvictor@attglobal.net](mailto:tvictor@attglobal.net); or Aki Konoshima, Editor, 301-229-1768; [akonos@erols.com](mailto:akonos@erols.com).

###

## **JAVA RANKS GROW AS ACTIVITIES EXPAND & OTHER WWII VETERANS GROUPS DISBAND by Vic Mukai**

JAVA's membership grew by roughly one quarter to 250 members during the current year as its activities expanded and veterans from other WWII organizations which are closing down joined the Washington-based group.

Fifty-four veterans, some 38 of whom were with NorCal MIS which recently disbanded as a veterans' group, joined JAVA during the first quarter of 2005. Other WWII groups which may disband due to their decline in membership are being encouraged to join JAVA as well.

But others joined as JAVA's activities, both in scope and breadth, brought on a new public awareness of the contributions made by Nisei men and women during and since World War II – activities such as JAVA's exhibit at last May's opening of the national WWII memorial, participation in Veterans Day ceremonies, and increased contact with the press. These efforts are attracting post-WWII veterans as well.

JAVA's new members (*\* indicates those with E-mail*) include:

YOSHIHARA, Lynn (LM)\*, Portland OR, Nurse; McILWAIN, James T.\* Seekonk, MA, Major Med C. Brown Univ.; NAGAOKA, Minoru, Washington DC, K Co, 442<sup>nd</sup> RCT; HIKIDO, Katsumi,\* Campbell, CA G Co, 442<sup>nd</sup> RCT; WESTDALE, Virgil W\* Grand Rapids, MI, F Co, 442; Artillery; SHIROYAMA, Brian\* Morgan Hill, CA Col US Airforce; SUZUKI, Clarence\* Fresno, CA, MIS; Tinian Island, WWII; OKADA, Howard S. \* Honolulu, Korean and Vietnam wars; YAMASHIRO, Allan K\* Clinton TWP, MI, Army 69-71;

**Transfers from NorCal MIS:**

OKAMOTO, William\*, Lombard, IL; ISHIKAWA, Mas B., San Francisco, CA; SAIKI, Barry, Stockton, CA; FUKUI, Yoneichi, San Francisco, CA; FUKUDA, Joseph T, Dr. Sacramento, CA; HARA, Akira, Walnut Creek, CA; ISO, James Y\*, Roseville, CA; FUJIHARA, George, Del Ray, CA; IWAHIRO, Shoji, Marina, CA;

MORIYAMA, Charles H. Mililani, HI; ODA, William (Bill)\* San Jose, CA; KOJIMOTO, Mits, San Francisco, CA, Co H, 442<sup>nd</sup> RCT; SUZUKI, George, Newport Beach, CA; ISHIKAWA, Moffet Mitsuo, San Jose, CA; YOROZU, Arthur S., Seattle, WA; YAMASHITA, Kanshi S.\* Lebanon, NH; HAYASHI, Masami, Salt Lake City UT; OUYE, Mitsutomo W., Acampo, CA; MIYAGISHIMA, Teruo T., Fairfield, CA;

SASAKI, Thomas T. Sacramento, CA; SAIKI, Teddy T., Stockton, CA; SAITO, Harry K.\* Fair Oaks, CA; SAKAI, H. Quintus Dr.\* Walnut Creek, CA; SAMESHIMA, Ko, Sunnyvale, CA; KASUGA, Hiroshi Wm., San Mateo, CA; FUNABIKI, Walter, San Francisco, CA; SUGIYAMA, Shigeki J.\* Richmond, CA; MIYAMOTO, Hisao, Hayward, CA; TSUDA, Masuo\*, Grass Valley, CA, Burma; Desert Storm;

TAKAHASHI, Hiroki, San Mateo, CA; Palau, Korean War; TODA, Harry, Dallesport, WA; KUWAHARA, Teri\* Torrance, CA, Go For Broke Foundation; HOSODA, Leo H. Roseville, CA; SHIMAZU, Shigeru H. Sacramento, CA; TANIZAWA, Milton T.\* San Francisco, CA; SHIMODA, Satoru C., Corte Madera, CA; TAKESHITA, Ben T.\* Richmond, CA;

BABA, George S., Selma, CA; SHIBATA, Kaoru, Sacramento, CA; YAMAMOTO, George Y. Watsonville, CA; HASHIMOTO, James M.\* Salinas, CA; KANEMOTO, Jean C., Sacramento, CA; KUMASAKA, Roy, San Jose, CA; KIHARA, Hayato, Claremont, CA; INOUE, George H., Yuba City, CA.; Neishi, Hideo, San Leandro, CA; Suyehiro, George S., Gold River, CA; Kitajima, Fred, San Jose, CA.

####

**SANDRA TANAMACHI TO RECEIVE JAVA AWARD AT ANNUAL VETERANS' DAY PROGRAM by Terry Shima**

Sandra Tanamachi, a school teacher at Lake Jackson, TX, will be awarded the JAVA Courage, Honor, Patriotism Award at the organization's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Veterans Day Program next November 11 in Washington, D.C.

The award will recognize her for her 12-year struggle that culminated in changing the name of "Jap Road" in Fannett, TX. During that lengthy period, the commissioners of Jefferson County

and residents of “Jap Road” firmly resisted any and all requests to rename the road, ironically insisting the street name was to “honor” a pioneer Japanese rice farmer.

For well over a year, Ms. Tanamachi mostly fought alone since many of her supporters eventually gave up as the years wore on. She persevered, however, repeatedly appealing to the Jefferson County commissioners, interacting with those residents of “Jap Road” who would speak to her, and finally taking her case to the court and the press.

Basically, she led on a one-person fight at her own expense and on her own time to intercede with the commissioners and residents.

While steadfastly pursuing her goal, Ms. Tanamachi was threatened, her property was damaged, and fellow school teachers left insulting notes in her mail box. The drawn out struggle drained her personal financial resources and discouraged continued support, but she never gave up and kept her focus firmly on her single goal.

Eventually, she and a small number of like-minded activists formed the “Committee for the Change of ‘Jap Road’” to assist her in the final campaign. A hearing was finally arranged in the commissioners’ court on July 19, 2004, that resulted in their overwhelming approval to remove the street sign and rename the road. Support from veterans throughout the United States, many of them JAVA members, included letters to the commissioners and personal testimonies at the hearing.

After the hearing, commissioners of Fort Bend County, TX, quietly removed a second “Jap Road” sign after they received a letter from Ms. Tanamachi. In a third Texas case, Orange County, where there was a “Jap Lane,” the commissioners there have decided to remove the racially derisive sign.

Ms. Tanamachi will receive her award during JAVA’s ceremony on Veterans Day at the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism in the nation’s capital. Calvin Ninomiya, of JAVA’s Executive Council, has been appointed chairman of the event.

###

### **NORTHERN CALIFORNIA TO HAVE ITS OWN NISEI VETERANS’ SHOWPLACE by Lawson Sakai**

Washington D.C. has its exhibit at the Smithsonian, Los Angeles at the Japanese American National Museum, San Jose at its own Japanese American museum, and now we will have our own exhibit in Northern California at on the former aircraft carrier, the USS Hornet, anchored permanently in Alameda.

Scott Armanini, CEO of the USS Hornet Museum authorizing the exhibit focusing on the Nisei contributions during World War II, is so eager that he wants the exhibit, even temporarily, up as soon as possible. The Friends and Family of Nisei Veterans (FFNV) has been created to create the exhibit honoring the 15,000 men who served with the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team in Europe and the 6,000 or so who served with the Military Intelligence Service in the Pacific.

The plan is to erect a “Future Home” of the exhibit this Spring and a permanent exhibit by early next October.

Armanini has given the FFNV choice locations for the exhibit – the Second Deck near other exhibits currently on display in what were sleeping quarters transformed into an exhibit area with a new tile floor over the steel deck and bunk beds converted into display frames.

In addition, a 60-inch TV set for continuous CD/video viewing is planned along with 25 chairs and several large display cases as well as tables are planned. Veterans are being asked to come forward with memorabilia such as the bright red silk NAZI flag that the family of a G Company veteran had with signatures of several G Company veterans. A NAZI helmet and some

weapons are already in hand. Desirable are such things as the regimental flag of the 442<sup>nd</sup> with Presidential citations attached and MIS citations.

The starting budget for the exhibit is \$7,500 and to save money, most of the work will be done "in house" by JAVA's Brian Shiroyama and his son. To "jump start" the project, the Northern California E Company of the 442<sup>nd</sup> RCT has donated \$1,000 while Mr. and Mrs. Mike McKague have donated \$250 and Lawson and Mrs. Sakai \$100. The Morgan Hill Buddhist Community Center also already has pledged its support of the project as well.

Additional funds are needed as well and should be sent to: Lawson Sakai, P.O. Box 308, Gilroy, CA 95021.

####

**JAVA LUNCHEON TO OFFER HARD OF HEARING (HOH) EXPERT'S BRIEFING by Grant Ichikawa**

Key guidance from a top executive of SHHH (Self Help for the Hard of Hearing People) will be offered for those with difficulty hearing at JAVA's luncheon on Saturday, April 23 at 11:30 a.m. at JAVA Secretary Dave Buto's Home.

Many of us have become **HOH** (hard of hearing) but do not wish to admit it. More will soon approach the age when HOH becomes an issue. We are fortunate in having a JAVA member who will give us a briefing on hearing aid. He is Vic Matsui from Williamsburg. Vic wrote:

"I would be pleased to talk on any topic concerning hearing loss. My perspective would be from a hard of hearing (HOH) as opposed to a deaf person. I joined the SHHH - Self Help for the Hard of Hearing People in 1997 when I bought my first set of hearing aids.

"SHHH is the largest consumer hearing loss organization in the U.S. with 250 chapters in the U.S. plus Australia, Canada and England. SHHH holds annual conventions at which there are research symposiums, workshops, exhibits by hearing aid and assistive listening device manufacturers - Seimens, Motorola, et al. SHHH publishes a bimonthly *Hearing Loss Journal*. Roughly 9-10% of the U.S. population is afflicted with hearing loss. Among those over 60, one in three is afflicted by this silent and invisible illness.

"In 1998-2004 I was elected President of the WISHHH-Williamsburg Chapter of SHHH which has more than 100 members. We hold monthly meetings with guest speakers -- audiologists, psychologists (how to cope with hearing loss), teachers of HOH students, service organizations such LIONS, KIWANIS, DAV (Disabled Vets). I am the editor of the Chapter's monthly newsletter.

"In 2003 I was named the SHHH VA State Coordinator covering nine chapters. I am also a voluntary member of the following:

- ~ Colonial Williamsburg Foundation/ADA/Advisory Committee
- ~ VA Advisory Council for Post Secondary Education for HOH students
- ~ VA Advisory Council for Mental Health, Deaf, LD, DB & HOH."

-- 0 --

**Dave and Joanne's house-address:**

4226 Holborn Ave, Annandale, VA. Tel: 703=425-1444

**Directions to House:**

From Beltway (Rt 495) exit at Little River Turnpike (Rt 236 West) away from DC. Turn left at first signal light Duncan Dr. Turn right after about 2 short blocks on the street with curbs (Holborn Ave) to a fork in the road. The Buto's house is on the right at the fork.

**Directions to park:**

Since this is a residential area, parking may be tight. On Little River Turnpike,

suggest to go to the second signal light and turn right at Wakefield Chapel Road. This will lead you to the Northern VA Community College. Turn left at the parking lot and go all the way to the end. Park your car near a footbridge. Walk across the footbridge and the Buto's house is right there, near the foot bridge.

JAVA couples living in the metro area and those with special culinary talents are asked to bring more entrees and fewer desserts.

A charge of \$5.00 per person will be collected at Dave Buto's house, to cover for miscellaneous expenses. Please make your reservations by calling Marcia Mau at (703-938-8927) , sending her a fax (775-255-8859) or sending her Email (mmau@cox.net) . When you make your reservation, please indicate what you will be bringing. Earl Takeguchi (JAVA Treasurer) will be selling Go For Broke Raffle Tickets @ \$2.00 each. Logoed items will also be on sale.

####

With Luncheon

**DETAILS FOR ORVILLE SHIREY SCHOLARSHIP TO BE ANNOUNCED by Thomas “Vic” Mukai**

JAVA will give details and procedures for applying for a new “Orville Shirey Scholarship Program” at its April 23 membership meeting on April 23.

One or more scholarships are to be awarded by JAVA in honor of Orville Shirey, the former intelligence officer of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team. Shirey, a member of the 442<sup>nd</sup> RCT since its formation in 1943 until its deactivation in 1946, was the author of Americans: the Story of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Combat Team, which is still used as a reference source by scholars and researchers of World War II.

Basically, the scholarships will be awarded to students who display superior academic achievement, demonstrate the ideals of honor, courage and patriotism, and possess and display knowledge of the contributions of Japanese American veterans to and their impact on American society.

JAVA members, their children and grandchildren may apply. Applicants must be U.S. citizens.

####

**TSUKIYAMA TO VISIT NATIONAL ARCHIVES TO SURVEY DIGITIZATION WWII DATA**

JAVA member Ted and Fuku Tsukiyama are planning to visit Washington, D.C. from May 24 to 31, during three days of which Ted will survey records of Nisei participation in World War II which is being digitized. Ted is a Honolulu attorney, historian for the Varsity Victory Volunteers, 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team and the MIS, and legal counsel for the World Bonsai Friendship Federation. Fuku is a writer and registered nurse.

The couple will be attending the World Bonsai Freindship Federation Convention May 28 to 31. From May 25-27, Ted plans to spend his time at the National Archives to survey the research material that must be reviewed to complete the digitization of National Archives data on the 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the 442<sup>nd</sup> RCT and the MIS.

The digitizing is being done by JAVA, under the leadership of Dave Buto. Prior research work on the material to be digitized was done over a ten-year period by Fumi Yamamoto and her late husband, Richard, and Maggie Ikeda.

Ted would welcome the opportunity to have lunch with JAVA members on Friday, May 27, at a time and venue to be determined in College Park. Those interested in joining Ted should contact either Terry Shima (phone: (301) 987-6746), or Grant Ichikawa (703) 938-5857).

###

### **TAPS**

**Shigeva “Shig” Kihara** – The last of the original *Sensei* at the nation’s Army Language School (now the Defense Language Institute) died last January 16 at the home of his son, Ron, in Castro Valley, CA.

Kihara-*sensei*, born September 27, 1914 in Fairfield, CA, was not only one of the best-liked but also, among those who were in his classes, known as one of the most articulate and most effective of the teachers at the school, equally strong in both Japanese and English.

“Many members of our veterans organization remember Shig as the teacher who made a major contribution to the success of the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) in the Asian Pacific theater where his students were members of U.S. and Allied combat and occupation forces,” JAVA’s president Bert Mizusawa said in a letter of condolence to Mrs. Aya Kihara, Shig’s surviving widow, and family.

“You may recall that, in late October 1993, JAVA presented the ‘American Patriot’ award to Shig for his ‘outstanding service record’ at its national reunion of MIS veterans in Washington, D.C. Shig was the only teacher so honored, the other three being his students who served with distinction under combat conditions.

“When General Douglas MacArthur said that ‘never in history has a commander gone into battle knowing so much about the enemy,’ the general was reflecting on the dedication of Shig’s professional skill as a language teacher.

“We will all miss Shig, but we will always remember him for his service to the nation.”

In addition to his widow and son Ron, Shig is survived by a daughter, Terry (and Michael Twomey, Ann Arbor, MI); his brother Hayato of Hacienda Heights, CA; a sister Ann Kaneshige of Kihei, HI, and several nieces.

-- 0 --

**Jack W. McDowell** – Memorial services were held March 2 for the co-founder of the Japanese American Korean War Veterans (JAKWV) Jack McDowell at the Rose Hills Cemetery in Whittier, CA, followed by a full military burial service March 4 at the same cemetery.

“Jack was a humble, quiet individual who was respected by all who knew him. Fellow veterans, relatives, Veteran Administration personnel, members of the community, all were his friends and feel a great loss,” fellow Korean War veteran Victor Muraoka wrote.

“At his funeral, veterans of WWII, Korea, and the Viet Nam (wars) were there to give him a final salute...U.S. Marine Color Guard, firing squad and a bugler laid Jack to rest with a full U.S. Marine Corps Military Service.”

Jack, from Casper, Wyoming, joined the Marines in 1938, was sent to Shanghai, was on Corregidor at the outbreak of World War II, spent 45 months in a Japanese prisoner of war camp in Manchuria until rescued at the end of the that war, was still in the Marines when the Korean War broke out, and was involved in the Inchon landing, according to Bob Wada, charter president of the JAKWV, a close friend and a “calabash Cousin” through marriages of various relatives.

In 1956, when stationed at the Marine Corps Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Jack met and married fellow Marine, Dorothy Katsura, from Hawaii, and both became involved in the formation of the Korean veterans group.



In a final tribute, Wada said, “Jack and Dorothy were a team that provided us with an abundance of help and support and we will truly miss their teamwork guidance in maintaining a liaison with the Veterans Administration.”

In addition to Dorothy, Jack is survived by a sister, Virginia Moriarty, of Casper, WY. former.

-- 0 --

**Kathleen T. Iseri** – A former WAC and JAVA member Ms. Iseri, 83, of Arlington, VA, passed away February 3 at the Virginia Hospital Center in Arlington following a heart attack. She was one of 51 Nisei women who trained at the Military Intelligence Language School at Fort Snelling, MN during WWII.

In Brenda Moore’s book on the Nisei women who served during WWII, Ms. Iseri is quoted as saying she volunteered to be a WAC “...because I am proud that I am an American citizen. I firmly believe in her institutions, ideals and traditions.” She noted that thousands of Nisei men were serving in the war, and said “...it is in the tradition which they have set that I, as a soldier of the United States Army, Women’s Army Corps, shall proudly serve my country.”

Ms. Iseri was evacuated from the U.S. West Coast at the outset of the war and interned at Gila River before relocating in New York, then moving on to the Washington, D.C. area where she retired as chief of the Publications Section of the Water Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey.

She is survived by two brothers, George and Joe, and one sister, Marilyn Hedani, all of Los Angeles. Funeral services were private at Kathleen’s request.

-- 0 --

**Robert Hisatoshi Kitajima** – A graduate of the Army Military Intelligence School at Camp Savage and the Army Air Corps Intelligence School, Kitajima flew over Japan during WWII dropping propaganda leaflets while a younger brother on the ground was catching them.

Kitajima, a member of MISNORCAL, was sent to Nagasaki and Hiroshima with the Atom Bomb Survey Team when the war ended and placed the marker where the bomb was dropped, a site later verified by the pilot who dropped the bomb. With the help of Mike Masaoka and the JACL, he played a part in gaining passage of the Soldiers War Bride Act. Kitajima, 82, died of Lymph Sarcoma.

-- 0 --

**K. Patrick Okura** – A former president of the Japanese American Citizens League and a member of JAVA, Okura, 93, passed away January 30 of a coronary artery disease at his home in Bethesda, MD.

Okura, along with his wife Lily, established the Bethesda-based Okura Mental Health Leadership Foundation in 1988 to provide development for promising young professionals in mental health services.

Among other honors, Okura was named Japanese American of the Biennium in 1978, was inducted into the Montgomery County Human Rights Hall of Fame, received the Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the American Psychological Association in 2002, and the 2005 Kun-Po Soo Award of the American Psychiatric Association Committee of Asian American Psychiatrists.

He is survived by his wife, two brothers and two sisters.

-- 0 --

**William “Bill” Himel** – A linguist fluent in Japanese and proficient in French, German and Spanish, JAVA member Bill Himel died of cancer February 20 at the Charlestown Retirement Community in Catonsville, MD.

Himel, born in Knoxville, TN, was a graduate of Northwestern University in Evanston, IL, and served in both the U.S. Navy and the Army during World War II. He trained to be a Japanese-language translator and instructor at the University of Washington, then the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Colorado. Over the years he took additional language courses at American University, Howard University and through the National Institutes of Health .

As reported in the Washington Post, “Mr. Himel’s embrace of foreign cultures landed him in hot water. Active in Japanese American civic organizations, Mr. Himel was called before a government loyalty hearing in the early 1950’s while working as a document translator for the National Institutes of Health. The investigation stemmed from his activities in Japanese American civic organizations.”

Himel was a member of the JACL and the National Japanese American Historical Society. In addition to NIH, where he worked from the early 1950’s until 1965, he was with the U.S. Patent Office for 14 years. He founded and managed a children’s multilingual choral group and started the Little Singers of Montgomery County to promote an appreciation of foreign languages and cultures, while promoting foreign language instructional programs in the county’s schools.

He is survived by his wife, Mitsuko Furukawa, whom he married in 1999, and three children – Yoshinori Harlan Toso Himel of Sacramento, C. Marie Himel of Falls Church, and James Himel of Catonsville – from his first wife, Sakiko, who passed away in 1985, and a sister, and brother and three grandchildren.

-- 0 --

**Shigeru Iba** – A graduate of the MISLS at Camp Savage in December, 1942, and a veteran of the U.S. campaign in New Guinea, passed away March 16, in Torrance, CA, where he lived. Funeral services were to be held April 1 at the Faith United Methodist Church, 2115 West 182<sup>nd</sup> St., Torrance. Iba served with the 41<sup>st</sup> Division in New Guinea.

-- 0 --

**Fred Korematsu** – the unassuming Oakland draftsman who unsuccessfully challenged the detention of Japanese-Americans during World War II – but was vindicated 40 years later – died March 30 of respiratory failure at the Marin County home of his daughter. Korematsu was 86.

To many Japanese-Americans and other civil libertarians, Korematsu was a civil rights icon who risked not only the legal wrath of his own government, but the scorn of his own people when in 1944 he challenged the internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans.

###

## **SHORT BUT SIGNIFICANT**

**Cherry Blossom Freedom Walk** – In spite of heavy rain, JAVA members turned out in full force April 2 at the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism for the nation’s capital’s 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Cherry Blossom Freedom Walk, dedicated this year to Fred Korematsu.

Barbara Nekoba was JAVA representative on the organizing committee co-chaired by Beth Fujishige and Ben Wada of the National Japanese American Foundation. JAVA’s Joe Ichiuji, 522<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery Battalion veteran and Vietnam veteran Glenn Kikuchi accompanied the color bearers while Grant Hirabayashi, a Merrill’s Marauders veteran and a Ranger Hall of Fame inductee, led the pledge of allegiance.

Speakers at the ceremony included Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta, Japanese Ambassador Ryozo Kato and keynote speaker Captain Bruce Yamashita, US Marine Corps reserves.

-- 0 --

**FOXNEWS** -- Aired a one-hour documentary on January 16 on the Japanese American experiences during WWII. **FOXNEWS War Stories with Oliver North** reported on the loyalty of Japanese Americans during that period in spite of their evacuation from their homes, their internment, the heroism of the 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion and the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team, and the Nisei in the Military Intelligence Service, including the Merrill's Marauders.

The program contained interviews with about ten Japanese Americans, including Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta, Honorary Chair of JAVA, and JAVA members George Sakato, Grant Hirabayashi, Roy Matsumoto, and Marty Higgins. FOXNEWS acknowledged JAVA's assistance in the credit line.

How JAVA became involved was through the website ([www.javadc.org](http://www.javadc.org)) . FOXNEWS reviewed the website, found what it wanted and contacted Dave Buto, webmaster.

-- 0 --

**JAVA's Yeichi "Kelly" Kuwayama** was one of six U.S. veterans given special recognition March 11 by visiting French Minister of Defense Michele Alliot-Marie at a special wreath-laying ceremony at the National World War II Memorial in the nation's capital.

The French minister was in Washington to discuss her nation's strict controls over weapons sales to China with U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, but took time off to lay the wreath and greet the six recipients of France's *Legion d'Honneur*. The six, all of the Washington, D.C. area, were among the 99 Americans who received the special honor in France last June during celebrations of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day.

The honorees all recognized each other, and in Kelly's own words, "It was like old home week." He said that when the minister arrived and laid the wreath "It was quite impressive, since she did not turn and leave right away...She then faced us, the *Legion d'Honneur* recipients and spoke to each of us as though she had known us."

The six later were invited to the French Embassy cafeteria for lunch and Kelly's last comment was, "French food, even on trays, was excellent."

-- 0 --

**Sandra Tanamachi** was to be awarded the Bronze Good Citizenship Medal by the Sons of the American Revolution, the "Cradle of Texas" Chapter in Brazoria County, TX, at a formal meeting of the Chapter on April 9 in Lake Jackson. Local citizens say that Brazoria is where "Texas began...Steven F. Austin, the 'Father of Texas' first settled in this area."

The award by the National Society of the Sons of the American was first approved in 1895 and is given annually by chapters of the parent organization to "persons who have made noteworthy contributions to their community."

Sandra was informed by the local chapter that "in your particular instance, it will be awarded for your exercise of the constitutional citizenship processes to encourage governmental changes to remedy perceived problems, that is the change of the street names from a pejorative word that insults part of the population and your sponsorship of patriotic exercises at your school."

Sandra, through persistent effort, was responsible for focusing attention (by JAVA, U.S. Congressmen, and others) on the derogatory name and getting Jefferson County (Texas) commissioners to change the name of "Jap Road" to "Boondocks Road." The road is located about 15 miles southwest of Beaumont, a port city on the eastern part of the state.

####