

**NATIONAL VETERANS NETWORK
NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL PROGRAM
WELCOMING REMARKS BY GERALD YAMADA
November 1, 2011, 10:30 AM – 12:00 Noon**

**Welcome, General Odierno, Honorees and Fellow Veterans,
Distinguished Guests, and other honored guests.**

**Today, we celebrate an amazing American journey – the Japanese
American story of overcoming racial prejudice.**

**We are here to pay -- special -- tribute to the Japanese American
soldiers who served in World War II.**

**Their journey started with the federal government denying them
the privilege of serving in the armed forces after the attack on
Pearl Harbor.**

They faced prejudice and suspicions about their loyalty.

**The US Army gave them the opportunity to serve alongside
other Americans in the war effort.**

**Those, who served, put country first. Their common bond
was their deep, passionate belief that they were Americans -- and
their willingness to risk all to show their loyalty to America.
They wanted to prove that America was not justified in
imprisoning 120,000 persons merely on the basis of their
Japanese ancestry.**

By putting themselves in harm's way -- with valor and blood -- they won on the battlefields in Europe and in the Pacific -- and against prejudice at home.

And above all else -- they brought honor to their families.

Tomorrow, their incredible journey continues.

The members of the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and Military Intelligence Service will be awarded the Congressional Gold Medal.

With this award, our Nation salutes your "honor", "loyalty", "patriotism", and "valor".

Congratulations -- and thank you for your unprecedented and distinguished service.

We are all -- forever -- indebted to you for your sacrifices.

To share in today's ceremony; we have several special guests that I would like to acknowledge:

**His Excellency Ichiro Fujisaki
Ambassador to the United States
Embassy of Japan**

**The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Former Chief of Staff, United States Army**

**The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
United States Senator
President Protempore of the US Senate
Recipient of the Medal of Honor
Served in Company E, 442nd Regimental Combat
Team**

**Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler III
Sergeant Major of the Army**

**Hiroshi Hershey Miyamura
Recipient of the Medal of Honor for service
during the Korean War**

And finally,

**Students from Spark Matsunaga Elementary
School, accompanied by Principal Judy Brubaker
and Music Director Teresa Potterton.**

Thank you.