



NCR Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Cultural Observances, Awareness Information and Events

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

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Did You Know?

In 1942 the 298th and 299th regiments were organized into a “Hawaiian Provisional Battalion” and sent to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, for training. This battalion was designated the 100th Infantry Battalion.

Those proficient enough in the Japanese language were approached or ordered to join Military Intelligence Service to serve as translators/interpreters and spies in the Pacific Theatre of WWII. The Military Intelligence Service Language School was located at Camp Savage, Minnesota.

In May 1945, the 422nd Regiment Combat Team and the 100th Battalion, fighting in Italy and France, became the most highly decorated U.S. military units of their size. They accumulated more than 18,000 individual decorations for bravery, including 18 Medals of Honor, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses, and 9,500 Purple Hearts, with many Soldiers earning multiple awards. Plus, the two units collectively received seven Presidential Unit Citations.

In 2010, Congress approved the Congressional Gold Medal to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the segregated Japanese American unit, and associated units who served in World War II.

In 2012, all surviving members were made chevaliers of the French Legion d’Honneur for their brave actions contributing to the liberation of France and their heroic rescue of the Lost Battalion.

Lt Col Bonnie Braun
NCR Diversity Officer

100th Battalion and 442nd Regiment

Shortly after the Imperial Japanese Navy’s attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, Japanese-American men were initially categorized as 4C (enemy Alien) and therefore not subject to the draft. Detention camps were established by the U.S. government in February 1942 housing 120,000 Japanese Americans who had been living in Pacific Coast states. On 19 February 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced the formation of the 442nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team, saying “Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry.” The draft was reinstated to obtain more Japanese Americans from the mainland, those held in detention camps and Japanese-Americans from Hawaii to become part of the 10,000 men who eventually served in the 100th Battalion and 442nd Regiment.

These troops proved to be the best at field intelligence work in the Pacific Theater with great success deciphering Japanese military documents detailing signals and codes. This information proved invaluable to U.S. military engaged in the life and death struggle for Guadalcanal. Other intelligence pinpointed the Japanese attack at the battle of the Philippine Sea. These men were employed in direct combat situations in Guadalcanal, the Aleutians, Iwo Jima, the Marianas, the Philippines, Saipan, Okinawa and every other battle in the Pacific. They interrogated prisoners, spied behind enemy lines and parachuted into enemy territory. They fought against the Germans in Italy and France.

Words inscribed on their monument in Los Angeles written by Ben Tamashiro, veteran of the 100th Battalion say, “Rising to the defense of their country, by the thousands they came--these young Japanese American soldiers from Hawaii, the states, America’s concentration camps, to fight in Europe and Pacific during World War II. Looked upon with suspicion, set apart and deprived of their constitutional rights, they nevertheless remained steadfast with indomitable spirit and uncommon valor, for theirs was a fight to prove loyalty. This legacy will serve as a sobering reminder that never again shall any group be denied liberty and the rights of citizenship.”