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BATTLESHIP MISSOURI MEMORIAL HONORS AMERICA'S NISEI SOLDIERS OF WORLD WAR II AT VETERANS DAY SUNSET CEREMONY

New Onboard Exhibit is Unveiled Showcasing the History and Heroics of Nisei Veterans

Pearl Harbor, HI – (November 11, 2013) – The Battleship Missouri Memorial today honored the perseverance, heroics, and sacrifice of America's Nisei soldiers of World War II at its Veterans Day Sunset Ceremony, and also unveiled a new onboard exhibit in tribute to their legacy.

Recognized at the ceremony and in the new exhibit are the thousands of Nisei (second-generation U.S.-born Japanese-American citizens) veterans that served for the U.S. in the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, Military Intelligence Service, and 1399th Engineer Construction Battalion.

Michael A. Carr, President and COO of the Battleship Missouri Memorial, said, "It was 70 years ago when young Nisei men from Hawaii and the U.S. mainland heroically went to battle for America to defeat fascism and tyranny. America's people, our way of life, and our freedoms were under attack – and no one fought harder to protect all that we hold dear as citizens than the Nisei soldiers. We are deeply honored to recognize these proud warriors on this Veterans Day for all they did in fighting for our country."

The Veterans Day Sunset Ceremony was conducted a short distance from the USS *Missouri's* famed Surrender Deck where, on September 2, 1945, World War II ended and peace was restored with Imperial Japan's surrender to the Allied Forces. Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr., Commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet and the first Japanese-American to become a four-star admiral, delivered the keynote address.

Many Nisei veterans, all in their late 80s or early 90s, were in attendance. Taking part in the ceremony were Ted Tsukiyama, who delivered remarks recalling his personal experiences; Jiro Yukimura, who received the U.S. Flag in the Navy's traditional Old Glory presentation, and; Reverend Yoshiaki Fujitani, who delivered the benediction. All three served in the Military Intelligence Service in World War II. Yukimura also has the distinction of being one of only three Americans of Japanese ancestry who were aboard the USS *Missouri* to witness Imperial Japan's surrender ending World War II.

New Exhibit Honors Exploits of Nisei Veterans

In conjunction with today's Veterans Day ceremony, the Battleship Missouri Memorial unveiled a new onboard exhibit in tribute to America's Nisei veterans. The exhibit includes dramatic photos, news articles and descriptive text on large display panels, and a video that tells the story of how these Americans of Japanese ancestry overcame the prejudice and questioning of their loyalty at the war's outset to earn acclaim and respect with their courageous exploits in Europe and the Pacific. The exhibit stretches more than 50 feet and is located one deck below the main deck near the ship's galley.

Added Carr, "This new exhibit highlights the extraordinary achievements of America's courageous Nisei soldiers and shows how they proved to our nation during the most stressful of times that being an American isn't defined by race nor religion."

On December 7, 1941, hundreds of Hawaii's Nisei residents were serving on active duty with the Army or Territorial Guard when Imperial Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and other defense installations. Many of these Nisei were soon removed from their units by a government suspicious of their devotion to America. Most went on to form the 100th Infantry Battalion or to enlist in the Military Intelligence Service starting in 1942. In 1943, thousands more Nisei

answered a call for volunteers to serve in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The 1399th Engineer Construction Battalion was activated in April 1944.

The 100th Infantry Battalion was the first Nisei combat unit, fighting in Italy and France from September 1943 until Germany's surrender in May 1945. The 100th absorbed so many casualties, it became known as the 'Purple Heart Battalion.'

The 442nd Regimental Combat Team lived up to its motto of "Go for Broke" with incredible battlefield exploits in Europe. The 442nd became the most decorated unit for its size and duration of service in U.S. military history.

The Military Intelligence Service took part in every major U.S. military command and battle in Asia and the Pacific, translating Japanese-language communications. The MIS is credited with saving thousands of lives and shortening the war.

The 1399th Engineer Construction Battalion built 54 major defense projects on Oahu. The War Department refused General Douglas MacArthur's request to relocate the 1399th to the Philippines, considering the unit essential to Hawaii's defense.

Contributors and sources for the Missouri's Nisei exhibit are:

- Go For Broke National Education Center "Unknown Warriors" DVD video
- Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii "Honouliuli Internment" Exhibit
- Kapiolani Community College "Honoring the Legacy" Exhibit and 1399th Engineer Construction Battalion
- Eric Saul, Images from the National Archives of the 100th Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and Military Intelligence Service
- Claire Mitani, 442nd Veterans Archives (Consultant)
- Mark Matsunaga, Military Intelligence Service (Consultant)

Battleship Missouri Memorial

The Battleship Missouri Memorial is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. General admission, which includes choice of an optional tour, is \$22 per adult and \$11 per child (4-12). Military, *kama'aina* (local resident) and school group pricing is available. For information or reservations, call (toll-free) 1-877-644-4896 or visit USSMissouri.org.

The Battleship Missouri Memorial, located a mere ship's length from the USS Arizona Memorial, completes a historical visitor experience that begins with the "day of infamy" and the sinking of the USS Arizona in Pearl Harbor and ends with Imperial Japan's surrender aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

Following an astounding career that spans five decades and three wars, from World War II to the Korean conflict to the Liberation of Kuwait, the "Mighty Mo" was decommissioned and donated to the USS Missouri Memorial Association, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which operates the battleship as a historic attraction and memorial.

The Association oversees her care and preservation with the support of visitors, memberships, grants and the generosity of donors.

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Please credit images used to [Hi Shotz Photography](#)



Link to image: <http://i.imgur.com/etN48BF.jpg>

Caption: Vice Admiral Robert K.U. Kihune (left) stands proudly with a group of Nisei (second-generation U.S.-born Japanese-American citizens) soldiers for the rendition of "Star Spangled Banner" by SSGT Eden A. Meadows, USAF.



Link to image: <http://i.imgur.com/FTOXi5f.jpg>

Caption: The U.S. Joint Service Color Guard parade the colors, signaling the start of a special Veterans Day Ceremony honoring the Nisei soldiers of World War II aboard the USS *Missouri*.



Link to image: <http://i.imgur.com/WZrcxIF.jpg>

Caption: Jiro Yukimura (right) received the U.S. Flag in the Navy's traditional Old Glory presentation by Senior Chief Ian Moore (left). Mr. Yukimura was one of only three Americans of Japanese ancestry to witness Imperial Japan's surrender that ended World War II and restored peace.



Link to image: <http://i.imgur.com/PB99NJR.jpg>

Caption: The Veterans Day Ceremony held aboard the USS *Missouri* was the last Veterans Day event to take place in the nation this year.



Link to image: <http://i.imgur.com/GIefjrl.jpg>

Caption: Newly enlisted soldiers of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team gathered on March 28, 1943 in front of the historic Iolani Palace at the heart of downtown Honolulu for a memorable farewell ceremony.

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