



NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

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TEXANS TO BE REUNITED AFTER 65 YEARS 'HOMECOMING FOR HEROES' GALA IN HOUSTON TO HONOR WWII 442nd/141st VETERANS UNITED IN EUROPE AFTER BEING DIVIDED AT HOME

Washington, DC and Houston, TX – August 3, 2009 – Veterans from the Texas 141st Infantry Regiment and the Japanese American 442nd Regimental Combat Team – later to become honorary Texans – will be reunited at a Houston gala hosted by the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF) on November 1, 2009 after more than 65 years.

The honors, to be held at the Hyatt Regency hotel, will recall the rescue of 'The Lost Battalion' on French battlefield by the all-*Nisei* 442nd – a rescue that brought together two uniquely American communities, one of which fought in the US Armed Forces even as tens of thousands its civilians were held forcibly in US Government internment camps.

"The soldiers who fought in the War and who were united against a common enemy weren't the only winners 65 years ago. Many American ideals were rescued on that French battlefield," said Craig Uchida, Chairman of the Board of NJAMF. "The *Nisei* in the US Army did what many others might never have been able to do. Forced to prove their loyalty to the United States, they did first by volunteering to serve and second by giving every measure of sacrifice requested."

"The Houston gala will recognize the heroism of both the 442nd and the 141st. These veterans helped the US to win that war, but they also built a foundation of understanding that decades later led to redress for the injustices of the internment. In that sense, they helped win two wars," Uchida added.

"Houston is delighted to learn of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation's upcoming 65th Anniversary Dinner to recognize the rescue of The Lost Battalion and to honor those brave men in the 442nd and 141st during World War II," stressed Houston-based Donna Cole, Chair of the Gala's Host Committee. "This tribute, unfortunately, is towards the end of their life, and we hope all that are able will travel to Houston for us to thank them for our freedom. Their sacrifices were great and we are reminded that we have to keep their legacy alive by memorials, dinners, and oral and written accounts of our history."

On October 24, 1944, the 1st Battalion of the 141st Regiment of the 36th Infantry Division was surrounded by Nazi forces in the Vosges Mountains of Northern France. The 141st Regiment, originally from the Texas National Guard, had been known for its military successes involving fending off the Nazis.

In 5 days of battle, from October 26th to October 30th, the 442nd fought enemy infantry, artillery and tanks through forests and mountain ridges until it reached The Lost Battalion, breaking through Nazi defenses and rescuing about 230 men. The 442nd then pushed on for 10 more days to take the ridge which was the 141st's original objective. The 442nd suffered tremendous injuries and casualties. The 442nd is the most decorated unit in United States military history for its size and length of service.

The 141st is also famous for securing locations essential to the Allies, assisting in the Attack on Cassino, and liberating Kaufering concentration camps at Dachau. Once surrounded, the 141st became known as "The Lost Battalion."

The 442nd was born from an American tragedy. In February of 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the forced relocation and internment of approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans, mostly U.S. citizens, into "War Relocation Camps" following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii by the Empire of Japan.

In 1943, the U.S. government reversed its decision on Japanese Americans serving in the armed forces, and approved the formation of a Japanese American combat unit. As President Roosevelt then announced, "Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry." Japanese Americans brought this creed to life in service of their country, the United States. Approximately 3,800 Nisei - second generation Japanese Americans born in the United States and many who had families in the internment camps - enlisted as volunteers in the U.S. Army. The 442nd was a segregated unit.

"October 30, 2009 marks the 65th anniversary of The Lost Battalion's Rescue by the 442nd Japanese American Combat Team. It was an amazing rescue in the Vosges Mountains of France. The 275 men of The Lost Battalion had been fighting non-stop for months. Cut off by the Germans, the men of The Lost Battalion were on that hill for 7 days without food and water. They were running out of ammunition. Several regiments of the 36th tried to rescue these men – but it was the 442nd that finally succeeded," said Patricia Barry Rumble, daughter of Pat CR Barry, 143rd out of Beaumont, Texas, who served in the 36th from 1939 to War's end.

"It is important to remember the sacrifice of the valiant men of the 442nd to save the men in The Lost Battalion. The brave men of The Lost Battalion owe their lives to the courageous men of the 442nd. Now, most of The Lost Battalion and their rescuers of the 442nd have gone to glory. But we must preserve the memory of what they did and pay tribute to their bravery. We must honor their names in history. These men were true heroes," Rumble concluded

Proceeds from the event will be used to:

- Develop curriculum educating Americans about the history of The Lost Battalion and the 442nd.
- Launch an ambitious fundraising project – replicating part of the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II in Washington, DC – the crane entangled in barbed wire – in select cities and at former internment camp sites in the

United States. The first replica will be placed in Texas, specifically to honor the 141st and 442nd.

For more information on this event, visit www.njamf.com.

About NJAMF:

The National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to education and public awareness about the Japanese American experience during World War II. NJAMF raised the private funds to build the Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II. The Memorial is not only a monument to the Japanese American experience, but also a reminder that we must not allow anything like this to happen to any minority community again. www.njamf.com

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