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## Another WWII Project Getting Mixed Reviews

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Officials have unveiled a new national memorial dedicated to Japanese American veterans of World War II and to people of Japanese descent who were forced into internment camps in California and other Western states during the war.

The National Japanese American Memorial, near the National Mall, officially opened to the public Friday--the latest monument in the nation's capital dedicated to members of the World War II generation.

Another, higher-profile monument to that era, the World War II memorial proposed for the National Mall, has generated controversy about its location and design. The Japanese American memorial also has had its share of controversy.

When the monument was in development, some Japanese Americans objected to the inclusion of an inscription by Mike Masaoka, a World War II veteran who served with 3,000 Japanese American volunteers in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Critics of Masaoka said they believed he had betrayed Japanese Americans by encouraging them to cooperate with the government, turn over their possessions and go to the camps.

Masaoka's words, which officials decided to include on the memorial, express the pride he felt in being a U.S. citizen. "I am proud that I am an American of Japanese ancestry," the inscription states. "I believe in this nation's institutions, ideals and traditions; I glory in her heritage; I boast of her history; I trust in her future."

Cherry Tsutsumida, executive director of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation, said debate about whether to include Masaoka's name broke along generational lines. Many older Japanese Americans backed inclusion of the quotation and, citing the struggles of being Japanese American during that era, defended Masaoka's position, Tsutsumida said.

Ultimately, the foundation's board of directors voted to allow the inscription to remain, she said.

The memorial, on a triangular site three blocks north of the Capitol building, stands in stark, peaceful contrast to the bustle of nearby traffic. A 14-foot-tall bronze sculpture of two cranes entrapped in barbed wire stands in the middle of the site. A pool with a cascading waterfall lies behind it with five rocks in the middle, representing the islands of

Japan and Okinawa, and the three generations--immigrants, U.S.-born children and grandchildren--who struggled during the war.

The memorial's granite walls include the names of more than 800 Japanese Americans who fought and died in the war, as well as the names of the 10 internment camps.

Besides Masaoka's inscription, there are other quotations on the monument, including one from Rep. Robert T. Matsui (D-Sacramento), which reads: "Our actions here are essential for giving credibility to our constitutional system and reinforcing our tradition of justice."

Matsui said he and his family were sent to a California "relocation camp" in 1942. He was just a baby, and his parents were forced to give up their wholesale produce company and sell their home. His younger sister, Barbara, was born in the camp in 1943.

Matsui said he is pleased that the memorial is finally opening but is sad that many of the Japanese American soldiers, as well as people who lived in the camps, won't get a chance to see it. His sister died in 1987--a year before Congress passed a bill calling for a formal apology to Japanese Americans and their families who had been detained in the camps.

The government also approved compensation for the surviving victims and family members of the more than 120,000 people held in the camps.

The internment, Matsui said, "was something we didn't talk about for years and years, until the early 1980s, when all of a sudden we said, 'Wait a minute, we didn't do anything wrong. We were incarcerated for who we were.' The government, by incarcerating us, was questioning our loyalty."

Davis Buckley, the architect of the monument, said a lot of research, planning and discussion went into the six-year project. Buckley, who also served as a consultant on the World War II memorial planned for the Mall, spoke of the need many feel to honor veterans and others from the World War II era.

"As you see this generation dying, there's a sense of urgency to do a memorial for that time."