



NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN MEMORIAL  
FOUNDATION



## NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

### MISSION

The National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to education and public awareness about the internment of Japanese Americans by the U.S. government during World War II. NJAMF believes that our nation is strengthened by its diversity, and that constitutional rights must be cherished, guarded and upheld regardless of race, religion or ethnicity.

### HISTORY

In the months following the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which ordered Americans of Japanese ancestry to be evacuated from their homes and businesses on the West Coast to desolate internment camps where they would remain until the end of the war. Despite these injustices more than 30,000 Japanese Americans volunteered for military service while their families remained interned at home.

More than 45 years after the internment began, Congress and the president of the United States formally apologized for the internment by enacting the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-383). Through this unprecedented legislation, Congress admitted the nation's error in imprisoning Japanese Americans and offered redress to survivors.

### THE MEMORIAL

Following the Civil Liberties Act, the Go For Broke National Veterans Association (to later become the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation) organized the effort to secure a national memorial on federal land. In 1992, President George Bush authorized construction of a memorial to, "Commemorate the experience of American citizens of Japanese ancestry and their parents who patriotically supported this country despite their unjust treatment during World War II."

NJAMF raised \$13 million to build the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II, and in 2000 the Memorial was dedicated. Ownership of the Memorial was transferred to the United States Government in 2002, and the National Park Service is responsible for the maintenance of the Memorial today.

### EDUCATION

Today the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation strives to promote the history and legacy of National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism as an American story, to remind Americans that what happened to Japanese Americans during World War II must not happen again to any other group, regardless of race, religion or national origin, and to remind the American people that great nations can also admit and redress great mistakes.

NJAMF works to educate and raise public awareness about the Japanese American experience during WW II through various events, outreach programs and publications. The Japanese American experience is relevant today because it is a reminder of the fragility of the U.S. Constitution and how we must vigilantly guard our constitutional rights.



## NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

### FACTS

**120,000** Japanese Americans were forcefully removed from their homes and interred in detention camps during World War II when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law Executive Order 9066.

More than **30,000** Japanese American men and women volunteered to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II.

**20,000** donors contributed to the building of the Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II.

**800** soldiers gave their lives while fighting for freedom. These soldiers names are engraved on the memorial.

**32%** of those surveyed in a study conducted by Peter D. Hard Research Associate, Inc. said they were either unsure or denied that the internment took place.

### NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN MEMORIAL TO PATRIOTISM DURING WW II TIMELINE

**February 19, 1942**

President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law Executive Order 9066

**August 10, 1988**

President Ronald Reagan signs American Civil Liberties Act

**October 9, 1990**

The first redress payments are made to Japanese-Americans

**October 24, 1992**

President George Bush signs into law Federal Statute PL 102-502 authorizing a memorial

**October 22, 1999**

Groundbreaking at site of the Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During WW II

**November 9, 2000**

The National Japanese American Memorial is dedicated

**June 29, 2001**

Completion of the Memorial is celebrated



## NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

**“Here we admit a wrong. Here we affirm our commitment as a nation to equal justice under the law.”**

—President Ronald W. Reagan, upon signing the Civil Liberties Act of 1988

### **NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN MEMORIAL FOUNDATION**

The National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to education and public awareness about the Japanese American internment 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 this to happen to any group again.

### **A PATRIOTIC MEMORIAL**

Seventy-three days after the outbreak of World War II, on February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which changed the lives of Americans of Japanese origin forever. Under this order 120,000 men, women and children, all regarded without trial as potential security risks, were moved under military guard from homes, schools and business into ten desert detention camps surrounded by barbed wire.

The names of the camps and the number confined in each, are engraved on the walls of the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During WWII to recall the injustice of the times. The narrative and historical quotations etched into stone provide an insight into the period when prejudices and war hysteria allowed a grave violation of Constitutional rights to happen. They also commemorate the faith and courage of a people who endured discrimination and demonstrated a stirring loyalty to principles on which this nation was founded.

The memorial, authorized by Congress in 1992 and completed in 2001, acknowledges the nation's error in discriminating against citizens on the basis of their ethnic roots. Further, it is a triumphal statement of loyalty by citizens who never lost faith in America.



## NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

### **A VETERAN'S MEMORIAL**

Even as their families remained imprisoned at home, more than 30,000 Japanese American men and women served in the U.S. Armed Forces to fight for freedom overseas. The combined, racially segregated unit comprising the 100th Battalion and 442nd Regimental Combat Team serving in Europe was cited as the most highly decorated Army unit in U.S. history for its size and length of service. Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service utilized their bilingual skills to shorten the war and save countless lives in the Pacific fronts.

The names of more than 800 of these men who gave their lives in the nation's service are engraved on the Memorial in tribute to their sacrifice. In a White House ceremony welcoming Japanese American troops home, President Harry S Truman said, "You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice—and you won. Keep up that fight, and we will continue to win—to make this great republic stand for just what the Constitution says it stands for: the welfare of all the people all of the time." These words, too, are etched into the Monument as the nation's tribute.

### **AN AMERICAN MEMORIAL**

The Memorial is a testament to the greatness of a nation that does not fear to acknowledge its mistakes and darker chapters and emerges to recommit itself to the principles on which it was founded. It underscores the truth that America is a nation strengthened by its diversity, that constitutional rights must be guarded diligently for all citizens regardless of race, religion or ethnicity. This is an American memorial, created through the efforts of the nation's citizens of Japanese origin, celebrating a recommitment to the historic ideals of equality and justice for all.

The memorial is located in Washington, D.C. at the intersection of Louisiana and New Jersey Avenues and D Street, NW. Nearest Metro Stop: Union Station Red Line.



## NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

### JAPANESE AMERICAN MEMORIAL TO PATRIOTISM DURING WORLD WAR II



Above left: Detail of the Crane Monument.  
Above right: Inscribed names of Japanese American veterans who died in World War II.  
Left: View of the Memorial.



## NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN MEMORIAL FOUNDATION



Image: Nina Akamu © 2001

### CRANE MONUMENT

A central feature of the Memorial is a sculpture by Nina A. Akamu of a pair of cranes entangled in barbed wire. Standing fourteen feet tall, the upper portions of the monument are visible above the confines of the Memorial wall, symbolic of rising beyond limitations.

The base of the sculpture is rough cut from green Vermont marble which has a beautiful serpentine texture. The identical position of the bronze cranes represents the duality of the universe. Their bodies are nestled side-by-side with their free wings pressed against each other, symbolizing both individual effort and communal support, emphasizing interdependency.

Their right wings are held flush to the sides of the base by an incuse strand of barbed wire. The birds have grasped the wire in their beaks in an attempt to break free. The sculpture is symbolic not only of the Japanese American experience, but of the extrication of anyone from deeply painful and restrictive circumstances. It reminds us of the battles we've fought to overcome our ignorance and prejudice and the meaning of an integrated culture, once pained and torn, now healed and unified. Finally, the monument presents the Japanese American experience as a symbol for all peoples.

# The New York Times

## From a Quiet American, a Story of War and Remembrance

Lawrence Downes

August 15, 2008

Harry Abe has swallowed an ocean of pain. At first this is hard to detect, then impossible not to. On a recent Sunday afternoon at his immaculate Long Island townhouse, papered with photos of grandchildren, Dr. Abe, 91, was the picture of a gentle family doctor, comfortably retired.

Talk with him a while, though, and the decades fall away. An astounding story emerges. Pick a beginning: 1916, when he is born in Seattle to immigrant Japanese parents. Or 1939, when he graduates from Oregon State and hopes to head straight to medical school. But schools in those days have strict quotas for the Japanese, and no room for Harry Abe. He bides his time, living with his family while studying for a master's degree and working in a grocery store.

Then comes Pearl Harbor. Tens of thousands of Japanese immigrants and their American-born children are classified as "enemy aliens." In 1942, on the order of President Franklin Roosevelt, they are forced into prison camps. Harry's parents and siblings are sent to Minidoka, in Idaho. Harry volunteers for the Army.

It isn't easy because he has a bad right eye. He memorizes the eye chart and is sent to basic training to become a medic. When the Army creates an all-Japanese-American fighting unit, he and thousands of fellow nisei, the children of immigrants, step forward, eager to prove their loyalty.

The 442nd Regimental Combat Team fights with unmatched distinction in France, Italy and Germany. Its motto — Go for Broke! — sums up its spirit of all-out fearlessness. It becomes one of the most highly decorated units in Army history. Harry Abe is with it the whole way, from Italy to the French forest, where they rescue the Lost Battalion and suffer 800 casualties to save 200 Texans, and on to Dachau.

Dr. Abe unspools his memories slowly, pausing to line up dates and places that have faded. The people, though, live on, fresh as yesterday. "They call us heroes, but that wasn't us," he says quietly. "The heroes were the ones who didn't come home."

There was another medic, moving too slowly, who took a German bullet through the cross on his helmet. And Yoshi Ito, who looked up to Harry like an older brother, and died in Italy.

Anguish seems about to overwhelm him, but after a moment, he continues.

News of the war's end came by leaflets dropped from planes. Harry went home. His father had lost the family business, a chain of millinery stores. Renters had stolen the heirlooms hidden in the Abe home.

And Harry Abe still couldn't get into medical school. One administrator told him that he didn't admit Japs before the war and wasn't going to start now.

A former professor pulled strings and got Harry into Marquette University. Dr. Abe settled on Long Island, married and raised a family. He retired in 1994, after more than 40 years in practice.

Dr. Abe kept in touch with his wartime comrades and worked hard to keep their story alive. He raised money for an internment memorial in Washington and helped to found the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles. He and other veterans still get together. Senator Daniel Inouye of Hawaii, a hero of the 442nd, calls him Doc.

But time has been steadily taking what the war did not. Veterans and internees are dying, and so is the memory of that ugly time. It has been 20 years since the United States officially apologized for the internment, paying \$20,000 in reparations to each victim. That anniversary, on Aug. 10, passed quietly.

"The money didn't mean anything," Dr. Abe said, without anger. Nothing could replace what the country took away. "People lost everything," he said.

The apology closed a chapter, but the country remains as panic-prone as ever. Citizenship was hardly enough to protect Japanese-Americans after Pearl Harbor, and it did not keep thousands of American Muslims from being seized after 9/11. Helpless Latino immigrants have been harassed and brutalized in states from Arizona to Iowa and sent to languish in federal custody.

There is an antidote to America's toxic fear of supposed strangers. It does not rely on late, inadequate apologies, but simply on listening to people like Dr. Abe and remembering who they are. The country owes a debt to those who forgive but do not forget, who live to tell their stories, as often as they need to be repeated.



## **A test America failed**

### **WWII internments provide eternal lessons**

Norman Y. Mineta

February 18, 2009

The United States — the great country that we are — occasionally makes great mistakes. Remembering one mistake, and the ultimate redress that lifted its stigma of shame, is an occasion marked by the Japanese-American community every Feb. 19.

It has been 67 years since that day in 1942 when President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which led to the removal of at least 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast and into internment camps. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor less than three months earlier had been the justification. It did not matter that two-thirds of the internees — myself included — were U.S. citizens. What only mattered during those times of wartime hysteria, racism and weak political leaders was our ancestry.

Most internees lost their homes, their farms, their businesses and their dreams. But we chose not to be victims. The vast majority chose to be what we already were: American patriots.

### **In service of country**

Thousands volunteered from the camps to serve in the U.S. military, where they joined their brethren from Hawaii. But because of Pearl Harbor, our community had to prove its loyalty, and that standard often resulted in unprecedented heroism on the battlefields of Europe and in the Military Intelligence Service, which focused on the Pacific.

After the war, the stigma of shame remained despite efforts to reclaim our good names. It took until 1976 before Executive Order 9066 was repealed by President Ford. During the Carter administration, the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians was chartered by Congress to investigate the internment. The end result was the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, signed into law by President Reagan.

The point we sought to make at the time, and pursue to this day, was that the issues raised by the internment were not Japanese-American issues, but American issues.

## **Test lingers today**

A first test came in 1991. After Iraq had invaded Kuwait, loyal Iraqi Americans found themselves being asked inappropriate loyalty questions by the U.S. government.

The broad national coalition that had supported Japanese Americans was quickly reassembled. A burgeoning pattern of wartime injustice against a U.S. minority was denounced; civil liberties were protected. Our commitment as a nation to justice for all has been tested since; we will no doubt be tested again.

One lesson we have learned, however imperfectly, is that we must not jeopardize civil liberties of any U.S. community in the name of national security. In fact, diverting our nation from its diverse social compact is a goal of those who wish us great ill.

I began my journey standing in my Cub Scout uniform with my family at the rail depot in San Jose, Calif., on May 29, 1942. It is inspiring to review the years since then to see how our nation has grown. Certain forms of bigotry have disappeared or are widely recognized as destructive legacies left to our children unless we act.

We as Americans place great trust in each other through our Constitution. The Constitution is not a document of perfection, however. It is a license to pursue a "more perfect union" among us. It is a document that is only as expert in protecting us as we are determined to protect it.

And every Feb. 19, Japanese Americans remember not only a day when that expertise was lacking, but also the day decades later when the American oath affirming personal justice finally prevailed.

*Norman Y. Mineta is a former Cabinet secretary and a founder of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation.*



## Events recall WWII Japanese detentions Day of Remembrance keeps alive memories of dark chapter in U.S. history

Jesse Washington for The Associated Press  
February 19, 2009



During World War II, tens of thousands of Japanese-Americans were interned at camps like this one, at Manzanar in the California desert.

Ansel Adams / Library of Congress

Kristine Minami was in college before she learned that her father, grandmother and uncle had been essentially jailed by the U.S. government for the crime of being Japanese.

The detention of 120,000 Japanese-Americans during World War II was not discussed in Minami's household. She learned about it in the 1980s through the National Day of Remembrance, which was observed around the country Thursday.

The discovery led Minami to greater understanding of her culture — and herself. Many hope the Day of Remembrance will also lead to greater understanding that Americans come in all types of packages.

"It got me more interested in my history and my roots," said Minami, who grew up in Maryland with a Japanese father and white mother, and says her Asian heritage is not immediately apparent.

"I learned about being Japanese," said Minami, 40, who ended up writing her senior thesis about the effects of the internment. "It led me down the path to my identity."

### **Executive Order 9066**

Executive Order 9066 was signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on Feb. 19, 1942, giving the government power to uproot entire innocent communities due to fears of "sabotage and espionage."

In 1988, President Reagan signed a law that apologized and paid \$20,000 to each survivor.

"We have this shared history," said Bonnie Clark, an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Denver who is excavating materials from a former internment camp. The artifacts will be displayed during the university's remembrance program.

"The internment is very much a Japanese-American story, but it's all of our stories," Clark said. "It's about the decisions we have to make as a populace, holding our politicians responsible for their behavior, understanding that we all come to the table with these different traditions and trying to balance out a vision for ourselves."

The remembrance also serves as a sort of conscience, a reminder of the balance between security and civil rights in the era of global terrorism, Guantanamo Bay and expanded government wiretapping.

"It shows the fragile nature of our civil and constitutional rights, and the importance of holding people accountable and remaining vigilant," said Gordon Aoyagi, a board member of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation, which was holding a panel discussion in Washington D.C. on Thursday to mark the occasion.

For Mary Murakami, who spent three years in a detention camp, the day represents something simple.

"It shows that it did happen," said Murakami, now 82.

Murakami was 14 when she saw a notice posted on a telephone pole outside her San Francisco home saying that all Japanese families would be "evacuated" and taken to camps.

Her parents, fearful that they would be separated from their children, took a portrait of themselves and gave a copy to each child. Murakami still has the photo.

### **Lived behind barbed wire**

Families were told to take only what they could carry. The Murakamis and other families stored their belongings in their church, but thieves soon broke the door down and ransacked the storage room.

Murakami lived with her family behind barbed wire at a camp on a dry Utah lake bed. Instead of sharing family meals, they ate in a mess hall. Toilet stalls faced each other and had no doors. She slept on an Army cot, the family's single room warmed by a potbellied stove.

In 1943 the government decided to test the loyalty of the detainees with a questionnaire, Murakami remembers. One of the questions was, "Would you be willing to serve in the U.S. Army?" Her brother answered "yes" and was drafted out of the detention camp.

After three years of confinement, Murakami's family was released. They were given \$25 each to start over.

Today, Murakami shows little bitterness over this history, just a determination that it not be forgotten.

"We don't want it to happen ever again," she said.

Minami calls the internment saga "a really powerful story about democracy."

"It's an ugly part of American history, but it's important for people to know," she said. "Because of that ugly chapter, we had a renewal of the American democracy."

## 10 Memorable Memorials

Michael O'Sullivan

July 25, 2008

### National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II



One of the city's least known but most moving memorials is designed around an apology – to the 120,000 Americans of Japanese descent who were forced into relocation camps during World War II.

"Here we admit a wrong," read the words ringing a pool of water in which sit white boulders symbolizing the islands of Japan. But it's not all regret. The centerpiece of the park is a

towering sculpture of two bronze cranes, each with one wing raised to the sky and one pinned by barbed wire to the stone pillar on which they perch. Although bound, the avian symbols of good luck in Japan are powerful reminders that adversity can be overcome.

Artist: Nina A. Akamu

Year: 2000

Location: Triangle bounded by Louisiana and New Jersey avenues and D Street NW (Metro: Judiciary Square, Union Station)

# Los Angeles Times

## War memorial set for Little Tokyo

Mike Boehm

May 22, 2008

A new installation at the [Japanese American National Museum](#) in L.A. will be dedicated May 31 as a permanent complement to the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism in Washington.

The East Coast monument was erected in 2000 to honor Japanese Americans who fought for their country during World War II -- and to commemorate the forced internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans during the war.

The L.A. memorial consists of a donor wall of glass, steel and concrete, by Fresno designer Sidney Mukai, recognizing those who helped finance the East Coast memorial. It also will feature a replica of Nina A. Akamu's gold-plated bronze sculpture of intertwined cranes that is a focal point of the Washington memorial.

Craig D. Uchida, chairman of the foundation that created the Washington memorial, said the idea is to "bring the spirit of the memorial closer to home" for the West Coast, where the internment policy took effect.



## myfoxdc Veterans Day Resources

November 11, 2008

### Today's Veterans Hall a Mouse Click Away

WASHINGTON (AP) -- War veterans have always sought one another's companionship but the days of a beer with friends at the local veterans' hall may be giving way to the computer age.



Veterans Day (AP)

Just north of the Capitol there is a memorial not only to veterans, but also the more than 120-thousand civilians who spent time in internment camps during World War II. The National Japanese American Memorial is located on a triangular plot bounded by Louisiana Avenue, New Jersey Avenue and D Street. Joining us is Terry Shima, Executive Director of the Japanese American Veterans Association, and Doctor Craig Uchida, Chairman of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation.

### WATCH THE VIDEO

#### [The Japanese American Veterans Association](#)



Terry Shima and  
Dr. Craig Uchida

In November 1919, President Wilson proclaimed November 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day with the following words: "To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations..."

Veterans Day continues to be observed on November 11 as a celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.