



Military Intelligence Service Veterans Education Society of Hawaii

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MIS VETERANS

Coffman: Nisei Led in Battle and Home Front



Author and historian Tom Coffman (left) delivered a stirring, thoughtful keynote speech at the 13th annual Oahu AJAS' Joint Memorial Service at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific on September 30.

Lawrence Enomoto, president of the MIS Veterans Education Society, was co-chair and master of ceremonies for the event. The audience of about 200 included veterans, Admiral Philip Davidson, commander of the newly renamed U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Governor David Ige, and military and community leaders.

Coffman has written books and produced documentaries about Hawaii's social and political development and is working on a community-

based history of the World War II experience called *How Hawaii Changed America*.

Coffman recounted his childhood in Kansas, his father's service during the war, a visit by a native Hawaiian couple who had befriended his dad in Hawaii, and seeing "Go for Broke" at age 8. After college, he came to the islands to write about politics and became acquainted with many nisei veterans. "Several became mentors and others, friends," he said.

He cited the "visionary interracial movement that preceded the war" and the network of local leaders that "resolved, in the event of war, to prevent a mass internment of Hawaii's Japanese community and to maximize participation in the war effort. Council members came together across ethnic lines, most prominently through the public schools, the University of Hawaii and the YMCA."

The National Guard at the time was integrated and multiethnic, a result of ROTC and the pre-war draft. He pointed out that "no such web of interracial relationships had developed on *Continues on page 2.*

BELOW – Veterans joined the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's Admiral Philip Davidson, Governor David Ige, Lieutenant Governor Doug Chin, Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell, ROTC cadets, active duty military personnel, and others for the memorial event.



Sunday, Jan. 27, 2019
11:00 a.m.

**MIS Veterans
SHINNENKAI 2019**

Natsunoya Tea House
SEE PAGE 3

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
Mele Kalikimaka**



**Best Wishes for
the New Year!**

Story photos by
Jerome Osurman/iHi Photography

Coffman: Nisei Led in Battle and Home Front

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the U.S. West Coast, or elsewhere. It has occurred to me that following December 7th—if Hawaii had been allowed to continue on its prewar path—it would have contributed a racially integrated fighting force to the national war effort.”

In recounting the segregation of the Japanese soldiers, Coffman said, “Two things stood out ... in the life stories of the soldiers. One was their strong spirit—[they were] curious, adventurous, outgoing and if need be, feisty. Second was a fervent belief in the promise of democracy, even if territorial Hawaii was far from democratic. It was the vision that counted.”

He described the achievements of the nisei soldiers in Europe, the Pacific, and the homefront, all of which “underscored the U.S. government’s urgent need to minimize the divisions set in motion by the forced evacuation and incarceration.”

President Truman said of the soldiers, “I can’t tell you just how much the United States of America thinks of what you have done. ... You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice and you have 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 the time.”

Coffman continued, “The first battle was over. The second battle was about to begin. Truman’s call was for America to transform itself. Citing ‘valor and loyalty,’ he recommended to the 1946 Congress that Hawaii be made a state. He later issued an executive order setting in motion the integration of the armed forces.”

He spoke about the groundwork that would lead to the historic 1954 local election and begin enactment of many progressive laws while the national civil rights movement was just barely getting started.

Dr. Martin Luther King traveled to Hawaii in 1959 and addressed the first session of the Hawaii Legislature. “We look to you for inspiration,” Dr. King said. “You have accomplished in the area of racial harmony and racial justice what we are struggling to accomplish. You can never know what it means to those of us caught for the moment in the tragic and often dark midnight of man’s inhumanity to man, to come to a place where we see the glowing daybreak of freedom and dignity and racial justice. We are seeking to free the soul of America and we look to this great new state in our union as an example.”

President John F. Kennedy used his visit to Hawaii in June 1963 similarly, to advocate for his civil rights bill. “Hawaii,” he said, “is what the rest of the world is striving to become.”

Coffman pointed out that Hawaii came to be viewed as the most progressive state of the union. “Nationally, Hawaii’s congressional delegation had an impact far out of proportion to its small size, in the areas of civil rights, labor law, the environment, equal rights for women, civil liberties, and making immigration color blind. Behind the scene, Hawaii’s senators laid the groundwork for the U.S. apology and reparation to the victims of the wartime evacuation and incarceration.”

“What was at work here? And what is at work?”

“The aloha spirit. The legacy of people who worked across ethnic lines. The belief that it was possible to build a real



TOP: Glen Arakaki and Yoshinobu Oshiro represented the MIS Society in presenting a wreath during the ceremony. ABOVE: MIS Society President Lawrence Enomoto with the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command’s Admiral Philip Davidson and wife Tracy.

democracy. No one loses, everyone becomes more fully human.

“So here we give thanks for those who sacrificed. We give thanks for all who helped make our present day possible. Because of them, because of yourselves, we have learned, nothing just happens. Nothing just happens. And because we know that truth, it is also true that the future is ours to create.”



MIS Veterans Education Society of Hawaii

Shinnenkai 2019

Sunday, January 27
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Natsunoya Tea House
1935 Makanani Drive (Alewa Heights)
Valet parking from 10:30 a.m.
RSVP by JANUARY 18

Return this form to:
MIS Veterans Education
Society of Hawaii
P.O. Box 3021
Honolulu, HI 96802

Make checks payable to:
MIS Veterans Education
Society of Hawaii
Submit by:
Friday, January 18

Inquiries:
Sherman M. Takao
Phone: (808) 284-8652
shermantakao@gmail.com

WHY, YES, COUNT ME IN!

Name _____

Address _____ City, State, ZIP _____

Phone number(s) _____ E-mail _____

COST:
\$20.00 per person for World War II veterans, spouses, and MIS widows;
\$40.00 all others

Number Attending	Total Cost
_____ X \$20 per veteran, spouse, or widow =	_____
_____ X \$40 per other person =	_____

Enclosed: _____



Society Awards Scholarships

Two University of Hawaii at Manoa upperclassmen have received scholarships awarded by the MIS and Makiki Japanese Language School for the 2018-2019 academic year.

They are **Joshlyn Alexandria Castillo**, a junior majoring in Japanese, and **Noel Nepomuceno**, also a junior majoring in Japanese. Nepomuceno is a graduate of McKinley High School.

IN MEMORIAM

- SHIGERU AKAMINE
- FRED "DANG DANG" ARASHIRO
- JAMES T. CHATANI
- TOKIO FUJIMORI
- MASAO FUJIMOTO
- HARUYUKI "CHARLIE" FUJIOKA
- ICHIRO HAYAKAWA
- JAMES "JIMMY" Y. HORIKAWA
- MIKE SEITO IKEDA
- YOSHIKAZU IKO
- ARTHUR NOBUYOSHI IYOMASA
- CLIFFORD K. KANEHIRA
- KENZO KANEMOTO
- TERUO KONO
- KUNJI MATSUMURA
- VICTOR M. MORI
- WESLEY OSAMU NAKATA
- FRANCIS KISEI NISHIOKA
- KANAME OKAMOTO
- YEIICHI OMINE
- STANLEY TAMOTSU OOKA
- HIDEO SASAKI
- JENSEN KINYA USHIJIMA
- SATORU "SATS" WATANABE
- GARY MASAHICO YAMAGUCHI

Information courtesy Roger Eaton



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Joint Ceremony Held at Pearl Harbor

Flanked by fluttering flags, Koichi Ito, Japan's consul general in Honolulu, addresses the Joint Japan-U.S. Memorial Ceremony on December 6 on Pearl Harbor's Ford Island. Note the USS *Arizona* Memorial at its flag in the background at left. The ceremony was formally entitled "Lives Remembered: A Tribute to the Fallen of Pearl Harbor." This was the third year for what has become an annual event held in conjunction with the observance of Japan's December 7, 1941, surprise attack on Oahu. The joint tribute is held on a different day than the national Pearl Harbor commemoration held at Pearl Harbor. It grew out of a request from Japan to be allowed to formally honor its personnel as well as Americans who were lost in the 1941 attack. *Photo by Mark Matsunaga.*



MIS Celebrates Bonenkai

Veterans (seated, front row) and their families joined for the annual Bonenkai on November 11 at the Natsunoya Tea House. *Photo by Ann Kabasawa/Clyde Sugimoto.*

