



Military Intelligence Service Veterans Club of Hawaii

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# MIS VETERANS



Photo by Ann Kabasawa.

**MIS Club board for 2018, from left: George Arine, outgoing president; Lawrence Enomoto, president; Glen Arakaki, vice president; Karen Kikukawa, secretary; Sherman Takao, treasurer; and directors Yoshinobu Oshiro, Annie Inouye, Shinye Gima, Gregg Hirata, and Mark Matsunaga. Not pictured is Robert Honke.**

## President's Message

Aloha to our veteran and associate members—taxpayers all, I presume. Congratulations to those who received, or will soon receive, federal and/or state tax refunds. My sympathies go to everyone else who, like me, had to pay taxes for last year.

My thanks to George Arine for stepping up to serve as president after my sudden resignation on July 1, 2016. I am happy to succeed him as your president after a 20-month hiatus, while my wife and I searched for an assisted living facility. We finally chose and moved into One Kalakaua Senior Living in November 2016. We are enjoying the personal care, food, amenities, and activities available to all residents.

I am pleased to serve again with dedicated and experienced officers and directors: vice president Glen Arakaki, secretary Karen Kikukawa, treasurer Sherman Takao, and directors Shinye Gima, Gregg Hirata, Robert Honke, Annie Inouye, Mark Matsunaga, and Yoshinobu Oshiro.

Having lost so many of our World War II nisei veterans in recent years, it may be necessary that we reorganize our club in a way that would allow: (a) non-veteran friends to join our club and support our mission and (b) our club to receive tax-deductible donations. This would require updating our by-laws and strategic plan that we adopted in 2014. An ad hoc committee—open to any member willing to serve—will develop the changes we need to make in our governing documents and road map for our club's future.

The farewell luncheon for Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr., USN, and his wife, Ms. Bruni Bradley (Commander, USN Ret.) was held on April 21 at the Hale Koa Hotel. A report on the event is included in this edition.

*Hawaii Herald* subscribers may have been surprised to read my cover story, "Aloha Sakura

Trees of Friendship: A Living Legacy of Nisei Soldiers in Maizuru," published in the April 20 issue. I tried to reflect the great affection and admiration among its residents for the MIS nisei soldiers who served in Maizuru, but especially for Fujio "Wymo" Takaki, a native of Mokuleia who arranged in 1950 for the planting of 100 cherry tree saplings on a hill overlooking the war-torn Japanese port of Maizuru. An abbreviated version of my *Herald* account is included in this newsletter.

With your support, I look forward to another productive and successful year for the MIS Veterans Club of Hawaii.

**Lawrence M.G. Enomoto**

## Nisei Veterans Bid Aloha to Admiral Harris

Nisei veterans of World War II joined other members of the Japanese-American community in bidding farewell and mahalo to Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr., commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Command, and his wife, Ms. Bruni Bradley, a retired Navy commander.

Admiral Harris is the highest-ranking Asian-American in the history of the U.S. Navy, and the first to attain the rank of four-star admiral. He is also the first Asian-American to command the U.S. Pacific Fleet, as well as the Pacific Command. He is scheduled to retire from the Navy and become the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea.

About 200 attended the aloha luncheon, with a *Continued on page 4*



Inside:  
Wymo Takaki  
and the  
story of the  
Aloha Sakura



Photo courtesy Ann Kabasawa and Clyde Sugimoto.

# “Aloha Sakura”

## A Living Legacy of the Nisei

by *Lawrence M.G. Enomoto*

Sixty-eight years ago, a nisei soldier from Hawaii arranged for the planting of a hundred cherry tree saplings on a hill overlooking the war-torn Japanese seaport of Maizuru. As the sakura bloomed in pink splendor this spring, a group of Japanese citizens gathered to celebrate that simple gesture of aloha.

That soldier was Fujio “Wymo” Takaki of Mokuleia, who had been assigned to Maizuru to interrogate Japanese soldiers being repatriated from Soviet custody, one of whom turned out to be his kid brother, Hideo. As a gesture of goodwill, Takaki obtained the seedlings and donated them to city officials. The trees were planted on a hill in Kyoraku Park. Today, a monument there explains the origin of the trees, dubbed the “Aloha Sakura” as a symbol of friendship and peace between the people of the United States and Japan.

Coincidentally, Takaki and my father, Gulstan N. “Toshi” Enomoto of Maui, studied Japanese together in the February 1944 class at the MIS Language School in Minnesota. Both served in Japan during the occupation—Wymo at Maizuru and my father at Hakodate. However, while my father returned home after the war, Wymo remained with the Army’s Counter Intelligence Corps in Japan and then in Korea during that conflict.

In January 2018, Noriko “Aloha Liko” Noguchi, president of the Aloha Sakura Preservation Society, came to Hawaii to invite nisei veterans and family members to participate in an Aloha Sakura tree-planting reenactment ceremony in Maizuru three months hence.

I decided to participate in the event as president of the MIS

Lawrence Enomoto and Glen Arakaki, representing the MIS Veterans Club, join in the ceremonial sakura tree-planting at Kyoraku Park in Maizuru. They are accompanied by Hidenori Koda (in suit) of the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force and Noriko Noguchi of the Aloha Sakura Preservation Society.

Veterans Club and was accompanied by vice president Glen Arakaki, his grandson Reed Kamimura, and my son, Stephen.

Also joining us were representatives of the 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans, including Ann Kabasawa, Clyde Sugimoto, Isami Yoshihara, and Donna Teshima and her daughter, Kelly, an English teacher at a Japanese high school in Tokyo.

The ceremony was held at Kyoraku Park on March 10. A group of 20 Japanese and non-Japanese volunteers—known as B Company, 100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team Reenactment Group—planted the trees. They were led by Petty Officer 1st Class Hidenori Koda, who serves on the operational staff aboard the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force’s *JS Mashu*, a supply ship homeported at Maizuru.

On behalf of the Hawaii delegation, I thanked everyone who organized the ceremony and acknowledged the reenactor

**Members of B Company, 100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team Reenactment Group, with Enomoto, Arakaki, and others who attended the event.**



Photo courtesy Ann Kabasawa and Clyde Sugimoto.

group, who stood in formation during the event, dressed in authentic U.S. Army uniforms from World War II and depicting MIS soldiers who had served in Maizuru. They even honored us with a salute after I concluded my remarks.

After the program, the reenactors, under the guidance of a landscaper-arborist, planted several cherry tree saplings and invited the attendees to join in the planting.

The Hawaii delegation received the royal treatment, which included a tour of the Japanese Navy Memorial Museum and the *JS Mashu*, a tour of the Maizuru Repatriation Museum, a visit to the World Brick Museum, which is a former torpedo warehouse that now exhibits bricks from ancient civilizations, a visit to Goro Sky Tower, and a number of luncheons and banquets.

One stop on the tour was Taira Bay, the entry point for the nearly 350 ships carrying about 660,000 repatriates to Maizuru between 1945 and 1958. Maizuru was the only port to continue receiving Japanese POWs repatriated from Soviet camps through 1958.

## How “Aloha Sakura” Came to Be ...

*As told by Yoshinobu D. Oshiro*

*In the aftermath of World War II, nisei soldiers from the Military Intelligence Service, including many from Hawaii, were stationed in the port city of Maizuru, Japan. Their task was to screen the tens of thousands of Japanese soldiers returning from overseas after being held as prisoners of war by the Soviets. One of the nisei was Fujio “Wymo” Takaki, who is credited with donating a hundred sakura saplings to the people of Maizuru as an expression of peace and friendship.*

*Yoshinobu Oshiro, another MIS soldier who was stationed in Maizuru, recalls the genesis of what became known as the “Aloha Sakura” project.*

I was a staff sergeant assigned to the U.S. Army's 441st Counter Intelligence Corps detachment in Tokyo during the occupation of Japan. The CIC at the time was responsible for monitoring political activities, screening the news media and entertainment, and reviewing various civilian activities.

As Japanese soldiers were released by the Soviets beginning about two years after the end of the war, I was sent to Maizuru, a port city on the western side of Japan, as an interpreter to screen these returning prisoners of war. We suspected that many of them had been trained as Soviet spies during their imprisonment and our job was to identify them.

One of our Japanese civilian employees in Maizuru was Yayoi Sakomizu. But more about her later.

That's also where I met Fujio “Wymo” Takaki, a local boy who was stationed in Maizuru with an intelligence unit. Wymo wanted to establish a life-long relationship between the residents of Maizuru and the nisei soldiers and also wanted to create a lasting, peaceful memory of the nisei soldiers who were assigned there. He had been so impressed by the cherry blossoms that he thought a donation of sakura trees to the war-ravaged city would be a fitting gesture.

Two facts greatly impressed me during our visit to Maizuru: First, the 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion Reenactment Group, comprised almost entirely of Japanese citizens, are so enthusiastic about the legacy of nisei soldiers from Hawaii who served in Europe, throughout the Pacific, and in Japan, that they have volunteered their time, money, and energy to portraying the nisei at numerous battle reenactments around Japan for the past 15 years.

Second, the Aloha Sakura Preservation Society, established in December 2017 and consisting entirely of Japanese citizens, are so captivated by Takaki's story that they also are devoting themselves to preserving and promoting the Aloha Sakura legacy for generations to come.

I wonder whether the sons, like me, and daughters and grandsons and granddaughters of nisei veterans in Hawaii can show the same degree of interest and enthusiasm as these Japanese citizens do to preserve the legacies of the our nisei veterans who fought and died for America, not for Japan. Don't let these Japanese supporters of Aloha Sakura put us to shame!



**Special agent Fujio “Wymo” Takaki in civilian clothing during his service with the Army’s Counter Intelligence Corps in post-war Japan.**

Wymo made a request through Yayoi to her father, Shukichi Sakomizu, to bring the saplings to Maizuru. Mr. Sakomizu was an executive with a large shipping company and a member of the Rose Plant Society. He followed through on that request and got a commitment for 100 cherry tree saplings or cuttings from a nursery in Ikeda, Osaka Prefecture.

Before the transaction could be completed, the Korean War broke out in June 1950. By the time the saplings arrived at the Higashi Maizuru train station, most of the nisei soldiers had been reassigned to other units elsewhere in Japan or Korea.

The cherry trees were accepted by a group of Maizuru residents and planted near the train station and at schools. The trees were nurtured over the years and eventually became known as the “Aloha Sakura” in memory of Wymo and the MIS nisei who had initiated and supported the project.

And Yayoi Sakomizu (who adopted the name of Cecilia), the CIC employee I worked with and daughter of the Maizuru shipping executive, would marry Wymo and come to live with him in Hawaii.

The celebration held in Maizuru in March 2018 was a tribute to Wymo's dream and his determination to create a lasting symbol of friendship between former enemies.



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## Nisei Veterans Bid Aloha to Admiral Harris

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theme of "A Hero for Our Time," held April 21 at the Hale Koa Hotel. The event was planned by representatives of the nisei veterans groups—the MIS Veterans Club, 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans, and 442nd Regimental Combat Team—and others.

Among the attendees were Governor David Y. Ige and First Lady Dawn Amano-Ige and Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa. Emcee was Barbara Tanabe and entertainment was provided by Nolan and Liz Santa Ana, who go by Kealoha Pauole.

Harry Nakayama, president of the 100th Infantry group, said in his keynote address, "The heroes of yesteryear, our nisei soldiers of World War II, are a group that is well known to us.... We will forever be in their debt for the sacrifices they made.... Their legacy, born from mistrust, prejudice, and fear, should be carried forward as an example, such that the rights for all are protected within our great nation. There are heroes of today among us, at this very gathering. And on this afternoon, we are honoring one of them as a hero of our time: Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr."

Nakayama cited the admiral's military background and highlighted his involvement in community activities, including his keynote address on the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor and his numerous appearances at nisei veterans events.

In his response, Admiral Harris said, "My career ... reflects the special association of the Japanese-American community in general, from which I have drawn much of my strength.... While Japanese-Americans no longer face the widespread oppression of previous years, it's important that we uphold our duty and obligation to push for equality in both the civilian and military sectors. As public stewards we must live up to the highest standards, and I charge all of you to take up the banner of vigilance and stamp out inequality in all its forms.

"Let me be candid here. Our country hasn't always dealt immigrants and minorities a fair shake. Even so, the many cultures resident in the American experience share a common underpinning of honor, pride, and perseverance that has added immeasurably to our strength as a nation.

"We're fortunate to live in a country, and work for a government, that values diversity. As members of that government, we must honor the work of those who've gone before us. Those heroes literally fought for the freedoms we enjoy today. We preserve their legacy by staying resolute and promoting equality, not just for Japanese Americans, but for all Americans.

**Right: Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr., and wife Bruni Bradley.**  
**Below: Head table, seated, from left: Robert and Yoshi Kishinami, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and Governor David Y. Ige and First Lady Dawn Amano-Ige. Standing: Lawrence Enomoto, MIS Veterans; Bruni Bradley; Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr.; Lynn and Kazuto Shimizu, 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans; and Shinye Gima, MIS Veterans.**



Photo by 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans volunteers.



Photo by 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans volunteers.

"America's nisei warriors fought for nothing less than the survival of the free world; their stories of patriotism and courage in the face of adversity must continue to be told. These warriors triumphed over ignorance, oppression, and injustice to make indelible contributions, not only to our military history, but even more importantly to our American history. They are an integral part of our nation's story. Their accomplishments have shaped our world and impacted our lives.

"Indeed, our nisei warriors represent the diversity and character of our great nation. They're leaders and volunteers, inside and outside of the service. They're role models for our citizens. And they exemplify the highest standards of service: at home and abroad; at seas and ashore; in combat and in times of peace.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I'll conclude by saying that the banner of freedom advances in our world only when brave men and women take it up. That's what the nisei veterans did, leaving us a lasting legacy of strength, freedom, and prosperity."