



PASS IN REVIEW

"Shedding Light On Idaho's Military History"

2nd Quarter

June 2001

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP PICNIC

**Mark Your Calendars for 24
July 2001, 6:00 PM!**

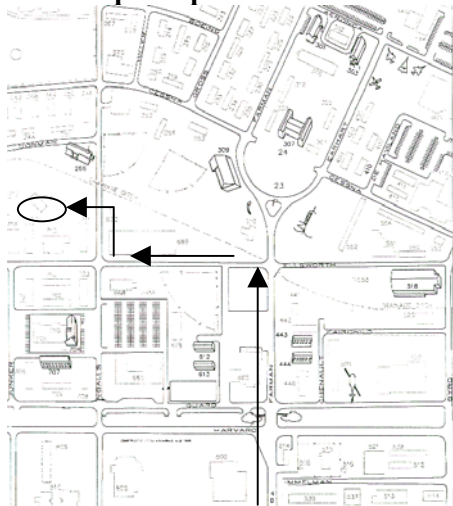


We have reserved the Open Air Pavilion on Gowen Field. It is located between the swimming pool and the base chapel. Parking is available next to the baseball diamonds by the NCO Club and next to the Pavilion.

The Board will provide the hot-dogs, just bring yourself, your lawn chair, and a side dish (potato salad, baked beans, fruit, etc.) and join us for an informal get-together.

It will be a good time to get reacquainted with friends, talk with Board members, ask questions, make suggestions, and so on. **See you on the 24th!**

Map to Open Air Pavilion



After you enter Gowen Field, **continue on Farman Street, then left on Ellsworth** and then **Right at Ingalls**. You will be able to see the Open Air Pavilion on your left. It has a large blue roof and picnic tables.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It was with deep regret that the Board accepted the resignation of Bill Miller as President.

We are very sorry to loose him but under his leadership, we have made a great deal of progress and are moving forward at a rapid pace.

As your new President, I look forward to working with everybody and continuing the work and momentum that our membership has come to expect. - *Stan Herzinger*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Things continue to "keep jumpin" at the Museum. Some of the recent "happening's" are:

Several organizations use our conference room for their monthly meetings, which has improved museum attendance, increased our donations slightly, and increased awareness that we exist!

On April 10, a group of 54 officers including several general officers from Idaho and other state guard units attended a catered dinner in the Museum. The dinner went well and we received numerous compliments on our

exhibits. (The Idaho Military History Museum and Restaurant...hmmm)

On April 20th, five IMHS members attended the Annual History Day Competition at BSU and judged about 15 entries in the Military History Category. (See *Idaho Military History Day Winners*). The students take great pride in their work and we are proud to be a sponsor.

On the 5th and 6th of May we held one of our fundraising breakfasts. Unfortunately this was not one of our well-attended events. Many guardsmen were in the field and our publicity requests went unheeded. As a result, we only raised \$450.

On Memorial Day we held an Open House and were joined by The Military Vehicle Preservation Association and a World War II Re-enactors group. This brought out around 450 visitors who enjoyed seeing the military vehicles on display, talking to the re-enactors and chowing down on hot dogs and soft drinks. Donations, gift shop sales, and the food concession netted \$400.

On June 1st and 2nd, several volunteers manned a booth at the National Guards First Annual Joint Commanders Conference held at the Boise Centre on the Grove. Attendance was lighter than hoped for and though sales were low, we did benefit from exposure to the public.

(Con't on page 2) ➡

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MOST WANTED

The rest of June looks a bit lighter as far as outside activities go, so we can return our concentration to upgrading and adding to our museum exhibits. We have just received a 30-mm gatling gun used in the A-10 'Wart Hog' and in the next couple of weeks anticipate the loan of a fully restored WWII half-track owned by members Larry and Garry Carroll.

Come see our new 'stuff' and think about becoming an active volunteer. What you can do here will make a difference.

-Bob Benbough

VOLUNTEER OF THE QUARTER



Please meet
Melvin 'Mel' Adamson

Mel enlisted in the Idaho Air Guard in December, 1958, serving with his friend "Wild Bill" as an Instrument/Autopilot Repairman, and in 1965 Mel became a full-time technician. He later became the shop chief, and continued working on his college education at Boise Junior College/Boise State University, later earning his degree. He was finally selected to attend AMS (the Academy Military Science - the ANG's Commissioning school at Knoxville, TN) and upon completion was commissioned a Captain and assigned as a Maintenance Officer. Mel continued his progression as a leader in the field of aircraft maintenance management, eventually attaining the posts of Maintenance Squadron Commander and Chief of Maintenance.

After retiring from the Air Guard in 1993, Mel began volunteering at the

Museum, helping out in the accessions & records area and joined the Society in October 1996. Each item accepted into the Museums collection needs to be catalogued and numbered and thanks to Mel's efforts, the backlog of accessions is slowly starting to move from the 'To Do' table to the 'Ready for the Archives' table.

On those day's when he is not at the Museum, Mel keeps busy by golfing, driving cars for the Boise auto auction, fixing up his cabin at Cascade, polishing his favorite white Chevrolet sports car, shooting and polishing his pistols and rifles, puttering around his shop and yard, trying to keep up with his grandkids, and spending time with his old flame, Pat Adamson (who also joined the Society in 2000).

Mel can be found at the Museum on Tuesdays. Stop by and say hello; he'll be glad to show you how you too can become an *expert accessionaire*.

IDAHO HISTORY DAY WINNERS

Congratulations to **Morgan Klaben**es and **Megan Hug** from St. Stanislaus in Lewiston. Their entry *High Heels and Trench Coats, Women Spies from the Civil War to the Present*, was the winning entry in the Military History Category and will be on display at the Museum in the near future! For their efforts, they each received a check for \$50.

There were also two Honorable Mentions. The first group from Meridian Middle School had a performance entitled "*Women Heroines: Women Frontiering America's Wars*". The second group was from Eagle and their exhibit was entitled "*Tanks in Warfare*".

For their Honorable Mentions, each member of the two groups received an IMHS polo shirt. **Congratulations to all three groups. Great work!**

NEW MEMBERS

Special Welcome to:

- ★ Karin Brown
- ★ Bill Downs
- ★ Anna Graham
- ★ James J. Marriott
- ★ Cloren Meade
- ★ Nick Nealis
- ★ Nick Nichols
- ★ Betty Roth
- ★ Loyle Washam
- ★ Ada County United Veterans Council

IN MEMORIAM

On behalf of the Board, we wish to extend our deepest sympathy to Dick Bengoechea in the recent passing of his wife Marcia.

THE LIBRARIANS CORNER

I recently saw a billboard on which was written "history is a collection of lies which the majority agrees upon." I would challenge that cynical statement with some facts found in our IMHS library.

Read the "*Green Beach*" by James Leasor! The voluntary WWII mission that Jack Nissenthal undertook will hold you to the last page. The British were desperate to learn more about the "Freya" radar system being used by the Germans in occupied France. Jack was the most qualified technician in the new field of radar in Britain. He and a band of 'bodyguards' landed on the French beach, scaled cliffs, dodged bullets, overcame nearly impossible obstacles and collected vital information.

The intelligence collected from this daring raid allowed the English military to jam radar signals, reversing the German advantage. The courageous efforts of Jack Nissenthal and his 'bodyguards' made a difference in 1942 and in the outcome of WWII. War is full of quiet heroes. Do you have a story? Come share it with us! - Kay Benbough

MINIDOKA RELOCATION CENTER

December 7, 1941's bombing of Pearl Harbor set in motion a wave of hysteria that swept the entire country. "Unable to strike back effectively against the Japanese Empire, Americans in the Western states lashed out at fellow citizens and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry."¹

On February 19, 1942, Executive Order 9066 was signed by President Roosevelt and became the instrument "that allowed military commanders to designate areas 'from which any or all persons may be excluded.'"¹

With the stroke of a pen Pres. Roosevelt set in motion the relocation of 110,000 Japanese Americans from the Pacific coast region during the spring and summer of 1942. At first 'voluntary' evacuations were allowed.

However, the governors of nearby states "publicly objected to the free immigration of Japanese evacuees. They demanded that no Japanese be allowed to come to their state unless confined to concentration camps under military guard."² On March 27, 1942, further 'voluntary' migration was forbidden.²

In the meantime, "the War Relocation Authority (WRA), a U.S. Government agency was established 18 March 1942, by executive order [9102] of President Roosevelt."¹ 10 relocation camps were established in the United States to house the 110,000 evacuees. One of these was in Idaho. It was called the Minidoka War Relocation Center. The camp was built by Morrison-Knudson; construction began in June 1942. The total construction cost for the three-year project was \$5,992,909.¹

"The residential area... contained 36 blocks that stretched 3 miles. Each block contained 12 barracks, which were the living quarters, one dining hall, a recreation hall and a laundry building that also contained toilet and bath facilities."⁴ "However, former residents said that hot water was never piped to the shower buildings."¹ (A

cartoon, which appeared in the September 25, 1943, *Irrigator* appears to confirm this.) The barracks were tarpaper covered wooden barracks and were grouped into blocks of 2 rows of six or seven barracks.



Minidoka¹⁴

Each barracks was 120 feet long by 20 feet wide with six separate 'apartments'. Each had a pot-bellied stove for heat. No curtains, no windows shades and no bathrooms. A single electrical outlet, a bare bulb, provided electricity, and privacy was provided by curtains. The camp was a two-mile semi-circle that reeked of dust and desolation, surrounded by barbed wire and 8 guard towers. Neither the WRA nor the Army authorized electrification of fences and the generator was disconnected.⁵ When it rained, the dust turned to mud and one report stated that the evacuees made special shoes to enable them to walk through it.⁶



The Mud⁶

"Each block housed approximately 300 persons, with each of the CCC-type barracks providing room for 6 families. A family of four had about 16x40 feet for living quarters, a family of six had 24x20...the buildings had no foundations and the floors consisted of unfinished lumber.¹ There was no insulation and few of the recreation halls were actually built.⁷ "Early evacuees helped prepare the camp, which was never completely finished."¹

"They call the town Hunt [in honor of Wilson Price Hunt, early Snake River explorer⁵] but the mail address is still Twin Falls, the town is about 10,000 and is ...4 miles from one end to the other. And there is no transportation."⁸ "It is 2.31 miles north of Idaho State Highway No. 25, between Jerome and Eden. A railroad spur three miles south of the Project provided transportation by rail. The shipping point was Eden, Idaho, eleven miles southeast of the Project."⁹



Ariel View of the Camp³

The evacuees were given about a week to dispose of all of their property and possessions and move into centralized locations before being transported to the camps. One source mentions that a particular family had one hour.¹ Everyone of Japanese descent, American citizenship was irrelevant, who lived within 150 miles of the west coast was relocated. "59.98 percent of the 8,948 residents in December 1942 were American citizens."⁴

August 9, 1942 saw the arrival of the soldiers who were to serve as camp guards. "The Caucasian soldiers who guarded the camp were housed outside the barbed wire."¹ August 10, 212 of Puyallup's [Washington] advanced crew arrives at Minidoka's 'Garden of Eden', then 75% complete."¹⁰ "Ankles disappear in swirling dust...August 16 - Main movement of evacuees sweats into camp at a rate of 500 a day. Evacuees train themselves not to recoil at the sight and thought of conspicuous outhouses."⁵ The flush toilets were not operational until February 1943.⁵ Each



Sorting Baggage at Minidoka.¹¹

evacuee was given an identification number.¹ "By the time the new year of 1943 had arrived the population of the project was over 9,000."⁴ Most of the evacuees were from Seattle and Washington but some also came from Portland and North West Oregon.¹²

Several reports state that the temperature was over 100° the day they arrived. Being unaccustomed to such temperatures, many suffered heat injuries.

When unloaded from the trains, US military personnel stood guard with machine guns. One report states that evacuees were only allowed a single suitcase and "were brought in on trains where they were required to lower window shades and stay in the train cars throughout the...long dusty journey from their coastal homes to the desert camp."¹ The arrival of almost 10,000 Japanese Americans made Hunt one of the largest cities in Idaho; some sources say 8th largest city, some say 3rd largest.

The school opened on October 19, 1942, after the sugar beet harvest.⁷ The school barracks were not ready on 'opening day' and "classes were held in available rooms in the designated school blocks. Ten teachers... faced 775 pupils... in rooms without chairs or blackboards and only a few used textbooks that were about 20 years old. One was noted as being issued in 1896."¹

Eventually the camp had a "600 bed hospital, schools, library, social halls, churches, ball fields, fire station, store, theater and other facilities"¹³ The evacuees also cleared land and planted crops to help supplement the diet. "1048.75 acres of desert were reclaimed and planted."¹³ "...more than

60,000 dozen eggs were produced in a single year. Experienced Japanese caponized the chickens and 7,215 meat birds were slaughtered."⁴ There was also a newspaper, *The Minidoka Irrigator* and two swimming pools.

"Besides farming, the evacuees filled almost all the jobs concerned with the



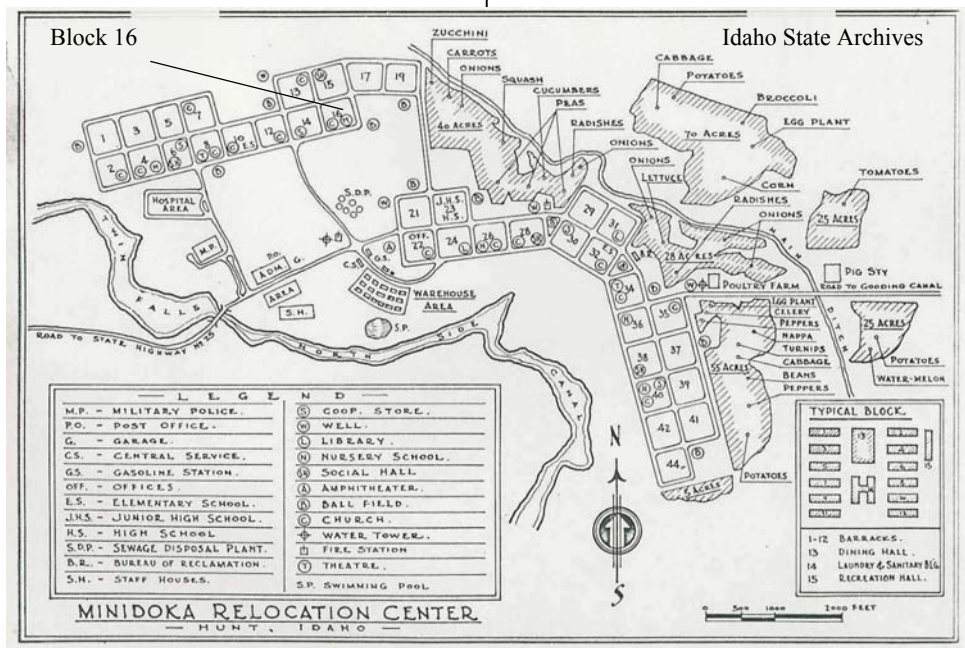
Clearing the fields for planting.¹⁴

day-to-day functioning of the camp. Japanese-American draftsmen, surveyors, and laborers worked with the Bureau of Reclamation to plan, design, and construct the camp's irrigation system and to maintain the nearby Milner-Gooding Canal. Doctors, mechanics, nurses, secretaries, and dentists were just some of the many positions commonly filled by the evacuees—all for the, even then, ridiculously low wages of \$12 to \$19 per month. For comparison, Axis prisoners of war in the nearby Rupert POW camp received \$19.20 for a month's labor in the fields.¹³

"Although original plans for these camps called for incarceration for the duration of the war, demands from agricultural interests for utilization of the labor of the imprisoned people brought a change in policy and significantly altered their experience.¹⁵ Thus, many evacuees were used as contract farm workers by private farmers to alleviate severe labor shortages. "Most of them feel that no matter how hard the work it is worth it to get out of the barbed wire fence and feel free."⁸

"A member of the Utah State Labor Commission praised the Japanese for their part in the harvest. 'We can just as well face the facts,' he said, 'if it had not been for Japanese labor, much of the [sugar] beet crop of Utah and Idaho would have been plowed up.' Area farmers and others began to realize Americans of Japanese descent were not the 'enemy' they had been painted to resemble."⁴

Several reports state that Minidoka was one of the less harsh camps. There were reports that guards shot and killed internees at other camps; there were no reports of internees being killed by guards at Minidoka.¹² The population fluctuated as there were various types of leaves available; indefinite, short term and group.⁵ (Short & long term work, attendance at a university or relocated. The January 6, 1943



Irrigator reported that evacuees could request to move to another camp if they had family there.) The population peaked at 9,397 on 1 March 1943.¹²

*Hideshiro Hasegawa, born in Iona, Idaho and a U.S. citizen, was attending the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. After Pearl Harbor, "eager to demonstrate his loyalty to the U.S., he enlisted in the service. In his words, he was "dumfounded" when he was given 4C status, as if an "enemy alien."*²

"On January 28, 1943, the War Department announced that the doors to military service would be re-opened to Americans of Japanese decent. With dramatic effectiveness over 300 from Hunt put in their claims and volunteered. ...The first contingent of 39 vols left Hunt on April 30 with the rest following in close intervals. Those boys are now training with the 442nd Combat Unit at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, in the preparation for overseas duty in the very near future. They are our 'Ambassadors to Tomorrow.'¹⁰

A special flag dedication ceremony was held in the Administration area and a photo of the 300 volunteers was taken.⁵ Volunteer number 307 was an individual who went by the name Bill Nakamura.⁵ (See *Idaho File Into History*).

They also had to pass a loyalty oath, two key questions were #27 which asked if they would serve where they were ordered to and #28 asked if they would swear allegiance to the US and faithfully defend the US.⁷ In February 1943, question #28 was clarified to read: "Will you swear to abide by the laws of the United States and to take no action which would in any way interfere with the war efforts of the United States?"⁵

The men were not the only ones to join up. "The Women's Army Corps has decided to accept a limited number of Women of Japanese decent beginning Sept. 1, which is when the superfluous 'auxiliary' drops out of what used to be the WAAC."⁵ The same edition also announced a meeting for "girls who are

interested in the corps or planning to enter Nurses' training" Notice was by United States Cadet Nurses Corp.⁵ Several women joined up.

Beginning in December 1942, notices began appearing in the *Irrigator* that 18-year olds must register for the draft. The *Irrigator* began publishing the names of everyone who joined or volunteered for the service and eventually a large sign was constructed which bore all the names. It was called The Honor Roll. It was located by the



Fumi Onodera, 20, proudly points to the names of her 3 brothers¹⁴

flagpole in the Administration area and was 5x12 feet.⁵ Soon the sign was full and two 'wings' were added to either side to hold more names. In the November 4, 1944 *Irrigator*, a chart listing the number of individuals in the service from each of the 10 camps was printed, Minidoka's count was 799.

The March 11, 1944 *Irrigator* also carried an article regarding the apparent segregation of the 442 in response to a "petition signed by a group of mothers at the Minidoka Relocation Center". It read, "The present assignment of Japanese American inductees is very often interpreted as a segregation policy on the part of the War Dept. This is because the reason for the use of Japanese-Americans in a single unit is not clearly understood. There is an urgent present and future need for replacements for the 100th Battalion and the 442nd Combat Team. In order to fill this need, it is necessary to assign inductees for training for these units. ...to avoid an uneconomical and laborious screening process...it has been deemed advisable to train this group as a single unit." It also stated that Japanese - Americans would not

serve in the Pacific Area unless on special assignment due to possible "retaliatory measures which might be taken against Japanese Americans captured in the Pacific Area". It stated that such retaliatory measures are "beyond the normal hazards of battle."⁵

The May 8th 1943 *Irrigator* stated that the Government was seeking Linguistics and the September 16, 1944 *Irrigator* reported that "Nisei soldiers are serving as interpreters and intelligence officers...throughout the Pacific and India". On "April 15[44] - Camp Shelby men adopt 'Go For Broke' as official song for 442."⁵

"During its three years the center supplied 1,201 men to the U.S. Armed Forces...members of the famous all-Japanese American 442nd Infantry Combat unit described as 'the most decorated in United State military history.' There were 82 casualties among the Hunt G.I.'s, 76 of those in action. A Parent-Soldier Association was active to help the parents with any problems or adjustments concerning their sons military enlistment and tour of duty. Hunt also had an active USO chapter."⁴

Even though "the War Relocation Authority is convinced that they are undesirable institutions and should be removed from the American Scene as soon as possible"⁵, it was not until December 1944 that the ban on Japanese Americans living on the west coast was lifted. "However it was October 23, 1945 before the last evacuees left. The Military Police withdrew from the premises September 14, 1945."¹ "On February 4, 1946, the premises were transferred to the Bureau of Reclamation"¹

Some of the remaining internees had to be evicted; they had no home and nothing to go back to.¹ Many remained in the areas where they had been held in camps. "Most people returned penniless to their old homes as they had either sold their property for next to nothing in the rushed days just before evacuation, or found that it had been sold for unpaid taxes while they were in the center."¹³ (Con't on page 7)

IDAHO FILE INTO HISTORY



William Kenzo Nakamura

Rank and organization: Private First Class, Company G, 442nd Inf.

Place and date: Castellina, Italy, 4 July 1944

Entered service at: Hunt, Jerome County, Idaho

Born: Seattle, Washington, 21 January 1922

Citation: "Private First Class William K. Nakamura distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action on 4 July 1944, near Castellina, Italy. During a fierce firefight, Private First Class Nakamura's platoon became pinned down by enemy machine gun fire from a concealed position. On his own initiative, Private First Class Nakamura crawled 20 yards toward the hostile nest with fire from the enemy machine gun barely missing him. Reaching a point 15 yards from the position, he quickly raised himself to a kneeling position and threw four hand grenades, killing or wounding at least three of the enemy soldiers. The enemy weapon silenced, Private First Class Nakamura crawled back to his platoon, which was able to continue its advance as a result of his courageous action. Later, his company was ordered to withdraw from the crest of a hill so that a mortar barrage could be placed on the ridge. On his own initiative, Private First Class Nakamura remained in position to cover his comrades' withdrawal. While moving toward the safety of a wooded draw, his platoon became pinned down by deadly

machine gun fire. Crawling to a point from which he could fire on the enemy position, Private First Class Nakamura quickly and accurately fired his weapon to pin down the enemy machine gunners. His platoon was then able to withdraw to safety without further casualties. Private First Class Nakamura was killed during this heroic stand. Private First Class Nakamura's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the United States Army." ^{End of Citation¹⁶}

William Kenzo Nakamura was born January 21, 1922 in Seattle, Washington to Mr. and Mrs. George Takichi Nakamura. He was born and reared in what is now the International District. He attended Washington Elementary School and graduated from Garfield High School. (One source said 1939, another said 1940.) He went by Bill at school; in the neighborhood, he was called Kenzo.²⁰ He also played football with the Marmots, a Japanese-American football team in Seattle.⁵

He worked as an Alaskan salmon canner for three summers and also picked berries in what was then the countryside, Renton, to supplement the families income. In December 1941, he was attending the University of Washington, planning to study medicine.¹⁶ Along with the hysteria surrounding the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Nakamura family had to deal with the loss of their mother in January 1942. Two months later the family, along with all other Japanese Americans in the Puget Sound area, were sent to 'assembly centers' prior to their transfer to relocation centers.

The Nakamura's were sent to the Puyallup 'assembly center' located at the Puyallup Fairgrounds. Sometime in August 1942, the family was sent to the Minidoka Relocation Center, in Hunt Idaho. There they were assigned to Block Number 16, Barracks Number 1, Apartment D. Sometime thereafter, Bill became acquainted with another individual in Block 16, a young lady by the name of Hisako Deguchi.^{16 & 5}

In January 1943, after the War Department announced that the doors to military service would be re-opened to Americans of Japanese decent, Bill's brother George became one of 300 volunteers and Bill decided to join him.

The *Minidoka Irrigator* headline on October 9, 1943, read: "Bill Nakamura Newest to Join Armed Forces". The article continued: "Hunt's famed military volunteer list doesn't add up to 306 anymore. It's 307, now. A call came from Camp Savage for volunteer Bill Nakamura who is in Boise, Idaho, on an indefinite leave, [work release¹⁶] according to Victor V. McLaughlin, leaves and furlough officer. Nakamura is expected to report to Salt Lake City for induction next week."⁵ (William K. went by Bill; there were two William Nakamuras' living in Hunt).

In March, shortly before Bill left Camp Shelby, Hisako went to see him and they were married.⁵ He became a member of the 442 Infantry. The *Irrigator* reported that his brother George was also at Camp Shelby and that the brothers traveled together to Italy. After arrival in Italy however they were separated.

Then on July 19, devastating news. PFC William K. Nakamura was "killed in action on July 4"⁵ read the telegram. The family had just received a V-mail letter from him two days before. "He was killed by a sniper's bullet, his body found at the edge of a wheat field on the outskirts of a town named Castellina, Italy. He was still clutching the M-1 rifle he fired so relentlessly"²⁰. The entire camp mourned, PFC Nakamura was the first casualty from Hunt. A special memorial was held in August for all soldiers from Hunt who had been killed in action; the toll was then 9.⁵

The November 4, 1944 *Irrigator* published the following. "WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY - Private First Class Bill Nakamura of Seattle, Washington, member of the Japanese American 442nd Regimental Combat Team, singlehandedly neutralized four German Heavy machineguns on the Fifth Army front in one combat with the Germans.

Two platoons of Nakamura's outfit were pinned down by fire from the heavy machineguns near Castellina, Italy. Without awaiting orders, [he] crawled across exposed terrain toward the enemy emplacements. His comrades discovered his action and opened up with supporting rifle fire.

When within 150 yards, he rifled upon one machinegun nest with his Garand rifle. His accurate fire knocked it out and forced the other three gun crews to retreat to disorder.

Returning to his platoon, Nakamura noticed that automatic weapons fired from a farmhouse were harassing his buddies. Nearest to the farmhouse, he signaled his company to withdraw while he covered their movement. Making his way 75 yards to the left, he fired from the protection of a slight depression, holding the enemy and protecting the withdrawal of his unit.

His squad leader, Staff Sergeant Stanley Serikaku of Kancohe, Oahu, credited Nakamura with having saved the lives of many of his fellow soldiers. Pfc. Nakamura volunteered for the combat team from Hunt.¹⁵ The battle took place on what was known on military maps as Hill 140.²⁰

His Commanding Officer put him in for the Medal of Honor but with the racial climate as it was, the award was downgraded to the Distinguished Service Cross²⁰. He also received the Combat Infantryman's Badge, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Victory Medal, American Theatre Service Medal, and European-African-Middle Eastern Theatre Service Medal.²¹ William Kenzo Nakamura was laid to rest in the Evergreen-Washelli Cemetery (Washelli Veterans Section Lexington W Grave 28), Seattle, Washington.²²

Gone but not forgotten. "In 1996 Hawaii Senator Daniel Akaka sponsored legislation ordering the re-evaluation of World War II awards to Japanese-Americans, and other Asian/Pacific Islanders who fought in both theaters. Unlike America's Black veterans of the two World Wars, the Japanese-Americans could claim one

Medal of Honor during the period."²³ In light of the incredible record of the 100th Infantry and the 442 Regimental Combat Team, it was widely accepted that there should be more. On June 21, 2000, 22 Medals of Honor were awarded. **One of the 22 was for none other than William Kenzo Nakamura.**



William's only surviving sister, June Oshima, (Backrow, 2nd from left), accepted the award for the family.¹⁶

Then another honor. A suggestion to rename the federal courthouse in Seattle after William K. Nakamura was made and it rapidly drew wide support. "The U.S. Senate yesterday [November 1, 2000] unanimously passed the bill to name the building after the 22-year-old ...killed during World War II. ...The new name is seen not only as a tribute to Nakamura, who lived and died in obscurity, but as a recognition of the historic injustice done to Japanese Americans during World War II."²⁰

On March 26, 2001, the courthouse at 1010 Fifth Avenue was officially named the "William Kenzo Nakamura United States Courthouse."²⁰

CENTER (Con't)

"Those who cleared and improved the land, had no rights of pre-emption. The land had been taken in part from an Idaho farmer in eminent domain proceedings, and he too had no residual right to it."¹ Buildings and equipment were sold in a public auction and a public drawing was held for war veterans to buy the Minidoka tract land.

Little remains of Hunt except part of the guard house at the center gate.⁴ "[On] June 14, 1947, the first drawing was held to distribute 43 units...to World War II veterans." "Along with his land, each homesteader was allotted

two barracks, 20 x 120 feet, from the relocation center..."¹

On February 19, 1976, President Gerald R. Ford issued a proclamation officially terminating Executive Order 9066. He called it "One of the proudest moments of my presidency".¹⁶

An application for placement of 6.06 acres of the former camp on the National Register of Historic Places was made in 1979. It was so added on July 10, 1979. A public ceremony was



Memorial plaque listing names of those killed in action from Minidoka. ¹ (Wm Nakamura is 3rd name, 3rd column

held on August 18, 1979.¹ One of the speakers was Senator Frank Church. **"May these camps serve to remind us what can happen when other factors supersede the constitutional rights guaranteed to all citizens and aliens living in this country."**¹

In 1982, a Congressional Commission report condemned the relocation camps. It noted that President Roosevelt did not lift the ban until after the election and blamed the evacuations on "racial prejudice, war hysteria, and failure of political leadership."¹⁶

On August 10, 1988, the US Government formally apologized and announced reparations would be paid; payments of \$20,000 would be made to each Japanese American who had been interred.¹⁷ "The payments were authorized under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 and the first payments were made on Oct. 9, 1990.

The Office of Redress Administration, authorized by the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, identified 82,219 individuals still living who were eligible. About 1500 of the eligible people could not be located. All the payments were completed by 1999.¹⁸

On January 17, 2001, A Presidential Proclamation established the Minidoka Internment National Monument.¹⁹ The Center itself, has a small gravel parking area, paths, and interpretative signs about the internment. Also commemorated there are the Japanese Americans from the Relocation Center who died serving during World War II³

"The 'Minidoka Interlude' has come to its end. Let us not look mournfully to our past. Let us look cheerfully to our future. Rather, let us GO FORTH to meet the future with faith in America, confidence in her people and belief that right makes might and the truth will triumph"¹⁰

Editors Note: A very special thank you to Louise Kashino, of the Nisei Veterans Committee and Jimmy Yamashita of the Americans of Japanese Ancestry WWII Memorial Alliance for their assistance with this article and the story on William Nakamura. Also a special thank you to Dr. Robert Sims, the Idaho State Library & Archives, & The State Historic Preservation Office.

Produced By: Idaho Military Historical Society
Editor & Production: Gayle Alvarez
Comments or article suggestions are welcome, contact us at 422-4841 or visit our web site at:
<http://inghro.state.id.us/museum/>

(A complete footnote listing will be available on our web page and at the Museum)

- 1 *Hunt For Idaho*, Bessie M. Shrontz Roberts-Wright
- 2 Rita Takahashi, *Japanese Americans in the Pacific Northwest*
- 3 National Park Service 4,5,9,10 Idaho State Library & Archives
- 6 Colorado State University 7 Robert C. Sims, Presentation at ISHM
- 8,15 *Idaho Yesterdays*, Vol. 44, No. 2. 11 National Archives
- 12 Japanese American National Museum 13 State Historic Preservation Office
- 14 War Relocation Authority (Camera's were contraband; most photos are credited to WRA)
- 16 Louise Kashino and Nisei Veterans Committee
- 17 History Channel, *This Week In History*, 19 Feb 2000
- 18 Robert C. Sims, personal communication 19 White House Publications website
- 20 *Seattle Times*
- 21 Jimmy Yamashita and Americans of Japanese Ancestry WWII Memorial Alliance
- 22 Evergreen Cemetery 23 Home of Heroes.com

MOST WANTED

1) The *Minidoka Irrigator* stated that photos of the *Ambassadors To Tomorrow*, the 300 volunteers, were available for sale at the Co-op. We have been unable to locate a legible copy of the photo; even the state archives don't have one. If you have one we can copy or scan, we would very much appreciate receiving it.

2) We will soon have two M38A1 jeeps, courtesy of Elmore County. If you are interested in helping restore them, give us a call.



Idaho Military Historical Society
4040 W. Guard
Boise, ID 83705-5004

Heroic Past...Proud Future