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## Friends of Minidoka

Upholding the Legacy of the Japanese American Internment Experience

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## Newsletter: Spring 2011

Posted May 15, 2011

### Congressional Gold Medal Awarded

Planning for the Washington, D.C. festivities are in full swing to celebrate the awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest civilian honor bestowed by Congress. The medal will go to the veterans of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the 100th Battalion and the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) for their valiant and dedicated service during World War II and for their steadfast belief in this country and uncommon courage as they faced a double battle of discrimination at home and fascism abroad.



The National Veterans Network (NVN), a coalition of 22 Japanese American veterans and civic organizations nationwide, has been working since August 2010 on the details to celebrate this historic and deserved event. The NVN has been designated to work with the US Mint on the medal design, which will be a 6-8 month process. Once the medal is complete the Speaker of the House will host a Congressional Ceremony in Washington, D.C. to award the Congressional Gold Medal to these units. We estimate the award ceremony will take place in Fall 2011.



A preliminary ceremony was held on December 11, 2010 at the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center where 14 veterans received a copy of the public law in a leather folder along with an American flag that flew over the White House.

If you are interested in attending the upcoming 2011 2-day festivities in Washington, D.C., please sign up on the NVN website [www.nationalveteransnetwork.com](http://www.nationalveteransnetwork.com). If you are interested in helping local veterans attend the ceremony and receive a replica medal, please donate to the Oregon Nisei Veterans in Portland, Oregon. Contact Setsy Larouche, Commander, for more information at [larouche@msn.com](mailto:larouche@msn.com) or 503-698-4656.

### Successful Day Of Remembrance Taiko Festival

In remembrance of the historic signing of Executive Order 9066, the Minidoka Pilgrimage Committee, in partnership with the Friends of Minidoka and Seattle University, presented the 2nd annual Day of Remembrance Taiko Festival on February 20th 2011. The Regional Taiko Group-Seattle, coordinated the participation of six Seattle area taiko groups: Inochi Taiko, Kaze Daiko, One World Taiko, Ringtaro and Asako Tateishi/The School of Taiko, Seattle Kokon Taiko, and Seattle Matsuri Taiko. Over 350 people came to watch the performance as each taiko group wowed them with their passion and artistic form. One of the highlights of the festival was a grand finale featuring all six groups on one stage playing *Gendai ni Ikiru* choreographed by Gary Tsujimoto and ending with a rousing standing ovation. Larry Matsuda



also treated the audience to a special reading of poetry from his book, *A Cold Wind From Idaho*.

During the taiko festival, it was announced that Seattle University would be conferring honorary degrees to the Nikkei who had to withdraw from school because of E.O. 9066 and their subsequent incarceration at the various concentration camps during World War II. The degrees will be awarded at the undergraduate commencement ceremony on June 12, 2011, in Seattle, Washington.

### News from the Superintendent

The park is abuzz with activity as we prepare for this year's Civil Liberties Symposium and Pilgrimage. This year marks the park's 10th anniversary and the site is coming alive!

- An historic mess hall and barrack will be moved back to the site this year. The foundations for both buildings will be constructed this spring and additional stabilization and rehabilitation funds have been received this year for the buildings. The mess hall was donated by Jerome County where it is currently located at the fairgrounds.
- Thanks to Land and Water Conservation Funds, the Herrmann and Robison properties were acquired from our partner The Conservation Fund in December 2010. This acquisition includes the historic fire station.
- The trail plan has been completed and construction of a new 1.6 mile trail will begin soon, including reintroduction of a portion of the historic barbed wire fence along the canal. Once complete, the remaining wayside exhibit panels will be installed along the trail. In addition, a new park entrance sign has been designed and will be installed soon.
- Our Friends of Minidoka and National Park Service team have been working on the Honor Roll project, made possible by an NPS Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) grant to FoM. The Honor Roll unveiling will coincide with the Civil Liberties Symposium, Pilgrimage, and trail construction.
- Construction of a new museum collections storage building is underway which will house collections for Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument, Minidoka National Historic Site, Craters of the Moon National Monument, and City of Rocks National Preserve.
- Work has begun on the Long-Range Interpretive Plan, with successful workshops held in Idaho, Bainbridge Island, and Seattle with park staff, partners, and stakeholders. This plan will guide the development of interpretation and education programs for the next 7-10 years and a draft will be available soon for partner review and comment.
- Planning is underway for the Civil Liberties Symposium and Pilgrimage. The theme for this year's symposium is "Patriotism, Honor, and Sacrifice" with another great line-up of scholars and special events.

All of us at the park hope you can join us in June as we honor the past, celebrate the present, and create the future!

-Wendy K. Janssen

*Superintendent of Minidoka National Historic Site and Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument*

### Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial Wall Dedication

The Board of Directors of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial (BIJAEM), a unit of the Minidoka National Historic Site, invites you to join us in the celebration and dedication of our completed Memorial Wall at Eagle Harbor Drive and Taylor Avenue at Pritchard Park. The event will occur on Saturday August 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the site where the first community of people of Japanese descent were forcibly removed to United States concentration camps during WWII under Exclusion Order # 1.



At the site a 276 foot wall, one foot for each person exiled, will bear the names of each person and their age as well as terra cotta frieze figures and quotes depicting the emotions and

experiences of the Islanders. You will be able to walk in their actual footsteps as they were marched to the waiting ferry Kehloken under armed guards with fixed bayonets on March 30, 1942; the ferry leaving at 11:03 a.m. on a cloudy Monday morning, exiling them from the Island for nearly three and a half years.

The Wall is the completion of Phase II of the five acre Memorial site. Phase III will be the construction of a 4,000 square foot interpretive center and a separate educational building. Phase IV is the building of a 150 foot pier represent of the Eagledale Ferry Landing, from which they departed, one foot for each person who returned to Bainbridge Island.

The event will be followed by the Biannual Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community (BIJAC) BYOB (bring your own bento) reunion picnic from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Battle Point Park. We will put our meals together so we can share food and memories and renew friendships and make new ones.

### **2011 Minidoka Pilgrimage: Register Now!**

69 years ago, almost thirteen thousand people of Japanese ancestry, many of whom were American citizens, were forcibly removed from their homes in Washington, Oregon and Alaska, and sent to a desolate "incarceration camp" near Twin Falls, Idaho. In honor of this historic event, former incarcerated, their families and friends to make a pilgrimage on June 30 – July 3, 2011. The Seattle Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, the Nisei Veterans Committee, and the Friends of Minidoka invite all those who are interested to join us on our pilgrimage. This year's Pilgrimage highlights include:

- Dedication of the re-established Honor Roll. While Minidoka had 7% of the males of all the centers, it provided 25% of the volunteers that made up the most highly decorated regiment in the history of the U.S. armed forces, the all-Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team. As a way of honoring those volunteers, an Honor Roll of their names was constructed in the Victory Garden just inside the entrance to Minidoka.
- A 1.6 mile walking trail will be completed and wayside signs will be installed at the site.
- Optional tours to Hagerman fossil beds to view a small collection of Minidoka artifacts, temporarily stored there until the Visitor's Center is completed.
- A barrack replica will be in place on the historic Block 22 site as well as the mess hall that attendees will be able to tour.
- BBQ hosted by Roy Prescott, local rancher and the town's people of Eden, ID will bring locals and pilgrims together. Eden is the end of the rail line where the incarcerated from Camp Harmony were off-loaded and put on buses for the final leg of their journey to Minidoka.

For registration and hotel information, please visit our website: <http://minidokapilgrimage.org> or email: [minidokapilgrimage@gmail.com](mailto:minidokapilgrimage@gmail.com). Contact: Ann F. Lindwall, 206-367-8749 or 206-251-6713.

### **Cattle Feedlot Still Threatens Minidoka**

The Friends of Minidoka is still working hard to prevent a 15,000 head cattle feedlot (CAFO) from being build 1.2 miles from Minidoka National Historic Site. We continue to wait for a court date with the Idaho Supreme Court. Your support is much needed. Letter writing and donations will further our efforts! Visit our [Cattle Feedlot Action Page](#) to find your legislators' contact information and a donation link.



### **Civil Liberties Symposium VI: Patriotism, Honor, and Sacrifice**

*June 30 and July 1 on the College of Southern Idaho Campus, Fine Arts Building Theatre*

The sixth annual Civil Liberties Symposium will examine civil rights during war and focus on World War II and the Japanese American experience. The program promises to be educational, provocative, and emotional.

Historian Bob Sims and political scientist David Adler will speak again this year, as will an expert on the Tuskegee Airmen. Psychologist Martin Cutler will discuss the impacts of WWII on the Native American community and Hank Floyd will talk about life on the reservation during the war. Poet Larry Matsuda will read from his work. Linda Tamura will discuss her research on Japanese American veterans. Brenda Lee Moore will present her study of Japanese American women during the war. There will be a viewing of the film "Conscience and the Constitution." A panel of veterans and resisters will share their stories. The symposium will conclude with a presentation of "The Betrayal," a play by the Grateful Crane Ensemble.

Register at [www.csi.edu](http://www.csi.edu) (\$35 for students and Pilgrimage folks attending Friday, \$70 for non-students for both days). Registration includes a continental breakfast and lunch each day.

### Honor Roll to be Dedicated at Pilgrimage

After years of planning and information gathering, the Minidoka Honor Roll is becoming a reality. The historic Honor Roll, located at the entrance of Minidoka, included the names of soldiers from Minidoka or whose families were incarcerated at Minidoka. Names were hand-painted on wood panels and an eagle perched on top. It was a source of pride for Minidoka's Japanese American community. The re-establishment of the Honor Roll will be made of durable

materials to withstand the harsh Idaho seasons. Fabrication of the name panels and supporting frames is currently underway. The eagle colors are being discussed as the only available references are black and white historic photos. The foundation design is being finalized to have the least impact on the site and its historic integrity. FoM board member Bill Vaughn and Minidoka Superintendent Wendy Janssen are coordinating the installation for a formal dedication at the 2011 Pilgrimage. Learn more at our [Honor Roll page](#) and [donate](#).

