



Friends of Minidoka

Upholding the Legacy of the Japanese American Internment Experience

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Newsletter: Fall 2011

Posted Dec 14, 2011

Superintendent's Letter

What a year it has been at Minidoka National Historic Site!

For those of you who could not attend the Annual Civil Liberties Symposium and Pilgrimage, it was another successful program presented with partners the Friends of Minidoka and the College of Southern Idaho, with this year's theme being "Patriotism, Honor, and Sacrifice." This year's Pilgrimage was especially meaningful because we unveiled the Honor Roll, which lists the names of all those from Minidoka who served in the Armed Forces during WWII. The Honor Roll project was a partnership with the Friends of Minidoka with support from the National Park Service's Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) grant program. During the July 4th weekend we also opened a new 1.6 mile trail with outdoor wayside exhibits.

As the park celebrated its 10th anniversary this year, we continued to move forward to implement the park's General Management Plan (GMP), with numerous projects such as: an original mess hall and barrack moved back to the park to re-establish Block 22; reconstruction of the historic barbed wire fence at the camp entrance (just completed!); and we hope to receive funds in 2012 to begin planning the new visitor center in the historic warehouse.

We have also established a new partnership with Boise State University's (BSU) Engineering and Construction Management programs, with staff and students excited to assist us with future projects. We are hopeful that the FOM will receive another JACS grant this year to reconstruct the guard tower at the camp's entrance. This would be a partnership between the FOM, NPS, and BSU which will help us complete the entrance area to the park.

Many of you have been involved in the development of the park's Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP), a document that will guide the interpretation and education program for the next ten years. Workshops began in January, with meetings held in Idaho, Seattle and Bainbridge Island. Additional workshops were held in April (with scholars) and August (with partners and the Harpers Ferry Center media team). Participants included over 100 former internees, current local, state, and national partners, scholars, and regional NPS staff. Several draft plans have been routed to all partners for review and comment, and a final draft should be ready for distribution next month. We look forward to finalizing the plan in the new year.

During this season when we reflect upon the year drawing to a close and look forward to the one ahead, I think of all that we have accomplished together and the blessing of having such a wonderful partner in the Friends of Minidoka. It is an honor to work with all of you as we protect and preserve this hallowed ground for future generations.

*Wendy K. Janssen, Superintendent
Minidoka National Historic Site and Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument*

New Honor Roll Unveiled at Minidoka

By Emily Hanako Momohara

It's hard to believe that Japanese Americans were incarcerated in camps, yet drafted into the US Army. But, it happened. Minidoka's men volunteered for the 442nd all Nikkei unit more than any other camp. Even more young men at Minidoka were drafted. The families of the soldiers stayed in Minidoka and prayed for the safe return of their husbands, sons, and brothers. These family members built a Victory Garden and erected an Honor Roll with the names of the men who were serving



in the US Army. The original Honor Roll is long gone. But, the sacrifice and honor displayed is still a source of pride for the veterans and their families.

With the blessing of Superintendent Wendy Janssen, the Friends of Minidoka set out to fund a reestablishment of the Honor Roll at Minidoka. I wrote a Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant, which was generously selected by the National Park Service to fund. Bill Vaughn used his skills as a former architect to be the project manager. You, the members of Friends of Minidoka, donated all of the matching funds we needed to satisfy the grant. Bill worked with Wendy Janssen and her team to bring the drawings to fruition.

This summer at the 2011 Pilgrimage, the new reconstructed Honor Roll was unveiled. The Honor Roll sat majestically in the now desolate Minidoka Victory Garden. Seattle Nisei Veteran, Kay Endo, read the names of all the fallen soldiers who were at Minidoka. A team of local veterans and Seattle veterans dawned the Victory Garden with the American Flag. Around the whole Honor Roll was a huge red ribbon, which was cut by Nisei veterans and those involved in the project's completion. After the ribbon cutting ceremony, Pilgrimage participants gathered around to find the names of their loved ones who served in the war. It was a wonderful and long awaited event, which I will personally never forget.

Idaho Supreme Court to Hear Case Against Animal Feeding Operation Near Minidoka

For several years, Friends of Minidoka has been legally fighting a permit to build a concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO) near Minidoka. It has been a long, expensive battle, however we have diligently worked to protect Minidoka from contaminants that would endanger its historic resources. On February 10th, the Idaho Supreme Court will hear our case. Minidoka needs as much support as possible in this fight. Please join us at 451 West State Street, Boise ID on February 10, 2012. You can help by donating on our [CAFO page](#). If you would like more information please contact Emily Momohara at ehmomohara@yahoo.com.

2012 Japanese American Confinement Site Grant Program

The Friends of Minidoka just finished writing a Confinement Site Grant for the reconstruction of a guard tower at Minidoka. The guard tower would sit in its historic location at the entrance of Minidoka. This grant would be a matching grant 2-to-1, just like the Honor Roll and Civil Liberties Symposium grants. So, we would have to raise a third of the funds should we win a grant. We will find out who is awarded grants in the spring and we are crossing our fingers!

Civil Liberties Conference a Success

By Hanako Wakatsuki, Chairperson

The 6th Annual Civil Liberties Symposium, Patriotism, Honor and Sacrifice, was a huge success this year. The Friends of Minidoka was a grant recipient of the 2011 National Park Service Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program. The grant allowed us to bring in national scholars and artists to share the military impact on those incarcerated at Minidoka.

This year's theme was Patriotism, Honor, and Sacrifice. We explored the reasons why people serve in the Armed forces; we looked at the Tuskegee Airmen, Nisei men and



women who served during WWII, as well as draft resisters and the No-No Boys. The symposium committee felt the need to show all sides of patriotism that the JA community exhibited. In all instances, it took great courage, sacrifice, and patriotism to stand up and enlist in the military or to stand up and resisting the draft or declaring No-No on the loyalty questionnaire.

Featured speakers included emeritus historian Bob Sims, David Adler, director of the University of Idaho's

McClure School on Public Policy, psychologist Martin Cutler, poet Larry Matsuda. The symposium examined two films, *Honor Bound* and *Conscience and the Constitution*, as well as a play, *The Betrayed* by the Grateful Crane Ensemble. The Symposium was sponsored by the College of Southern Idaho, the National Park Service, and Friends of Minidoka.

The 2012 Civil Liberties Symposium theme will be *Children of the Camps* and will be held on June 21st and 22nd in Boise, Idaho at Boise State University. More information on the Symposium will be available in the upcoming months.

2011 Pilgrimage Recap

by Ryan Kozu

The 2011 Minidoka Pilgrimage was held from June 30th – July 3rd in Twin Falls, ID. This year, we had over 160 participants participate in the four-day event that coincided with the College of Southern Idaho's Civil Liberties Symposium and pilgrimage participants were able to attend the second day of the two-day symposium, whose theme was: Patriotism, Honor and Sacrifice.



As part of the pilgrimage, pilgrimage participants were also able to visit the Minidoka National Historic Site and tour the grounds of the former camp. This year's pilgrimage also was the first to see some of the new physical changes happening out at the site. The first barrack was moved into place onto the site of the Block 22 re-creation. At this year's closing ceremony, the recreated Honor Roll was officially dedicated and unveiled to the delight of all those in attendance. The Honor Roll lists the names of all those who were serving in the 442nd RCT from Minidoka.

For many of the former incarcerated, it was their first trip back to the camp since they were held behind the barbed wire. For others, it was a chance to hear the former incarcerated recall their experiences while in camp.

Some other major highlights of this year's pilgrimage included a Legacy Session led by Mako Nakagawa, which allowed incarcerated to share their experiences and stories. Eden was the closest town to Minidoka and a place where incarcerated got much of their supplies. Sponsored

by Jerome County, the town of Eden hosted a picnic dinner for the entire Pilgrimage group.

To see pictures from the pilgrimage and to read personal stories from pilgrimage scholarship recipients visit: minidokapilgrimage.wordpress.com.

Next year's Minidoka Pilgrimage will mark the 70th anniversary of the opening of the Minidoka Camp and will be held from June 21-24, 2012.

American Exclusion Memorial Wall, "Nidoto Nai Yoni, Let it Not Happen Again"

By Frank Y. Kitamoto,
D.D.S., President,
Bainbridge Island
Japanese American
Community (BIJAC) and
Friends of Minidoka Board
Member

On Saturday August 6,
Fumiko Hayashida, 100
years old, cut the ribbon
and led the way for about
20 survivors to the Wall
honoring the 276
Islanders who were the
first to be forcibly
removed under armed
guards to America's concentration camps during WWII.



Frank Kitamoto shared a series of quotes from that time that brought history to life. Earl Hanson and Jim Johanson reminisced about their classmates from the Bainbridge High School class of 1941. Mary Woodward, daughter of Bainbridge Review publisher Walt Woodward gave historical context while highlighting the necessity of community caring and consciousness. Deborah Hickey- Tiernan, a member of the Interfaith Council that initiated the idea of an honoring memorial and Karen Yoshitomi, from the Japanese American Citizen League, Northwest District followed. Rick Barrenger supplied a musical interlude with his guitar and leading everyone in a moving rendition of singing "Don't Fence Me In".

Emcee Clarence Moriwaki wove the speakers together with thoughtfully chosen contemporary quotes. A letter from Governor Christine Gregoire was read by Kandee Yamaguchi, the Executive Director of the Washington State Commission on Asian American Affairs. Sallie Maron, Memorial Association President concluded the honoring remarks. Ken Matsudaira read the names of the survivors present at the ceremony. After singing "America the Beautiful", as a moving tribute to our togetherness, the crowd parted and applauded as the survivors wound their way to the Wall to cut the ribbon and hang ceremonial origami cranes. The crowd of approximately 800 people then followed to hang more of Jan Buday's colorfullycrafted cranes.

The design is based on these words, "We are Japanese Americans!" Prior to December 7, 1941, their lives were moving along in a very organic way, like a beautiful sinuous line. The Memorial design has a circle of life's beginnings, a series of sinuous curving walls, a middle section where the Wall is "broken", with a basalt (Manzanar- Minidoka) intrusion, and an ending—yet to be built—the over-water wooden pier.

All memories deal with difficult emotional experiences. We hope that this design helps you feel some of our neighbors' past, so we all "Let it Not Happen Again", "Nidoto Nai Yoni" ---
Johnpaul Jones - architect.

The next phases of the Memorial site development will be to work with our partner agencies to design and build an interpretive center and a pier symbolic of the historic Eagledale ferry dock.

Congressional Gold Medal Festivities in Washington D.C.

by Mari Watanabe

For three days in early



November, our nation celebrated the awarding of our country's highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold Medal, to the Nisei veterans of World War II. Over 300 veterans from the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and the Military Intelligence Service along with two thousand friends and family members participated in the festivities from November 1-3, 2011. Day 1 included a special Bronze Star medal ceremony held on November 1st at the Washington Hilton. The Bronze Star was presented to 30 veterans and 10 family representatives by General Raymond Odierno, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army.



Following the Bronze Star medal ceremony, veterans that flew to Washington D.C via Honor Flight, a nonprofit that provides free trips to Washington D.C for all WW II veterans to visit the National WWII Memorial, participated in a special wreath laying at Freedom Wall. Wreaths were laid in honor of all three units plus those killed in action. Day 2 held the long awaited Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony. All honorees boarded buses starting at 6:30 am headed for Emancipation Hall in the U.S. Capital Building. House Speaker John Boehner kicked off the ceremony followed by several representatives from the House and Senate. After the presentation of the Gold Medal to a representative of each unit, Senator Daniel Inouye from Hawaii, representing the 100th Infantry Battalion spoke on behalf of all the veterans. Inouye stated, "70 years ago we were enemy aliens, but today, this great nation honors us in this special ceremony. We, gathered here this morning, are all proud Americans, and grateful to our nation for giving us the opportunity to serve our nation as loyal, patriotic citizens."



That evening a Gala Dinner for 2300 capped off this special day. Via video, President Obama congratulated the veterans. Secretary Eric Shinseki, Department of Veteran Affairs, gave a moving keynote speech. Day 3 was the last of three memorable and moving days. An intimate program for the families of KIA was held at the Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism. Secretary Shinseki was in attendance with 200 family and friends. Congratulations to our veterans for this long overdue honor.

Videos of the Congressional Gold Medal ceremony, speeches from all programs, more photos, and a list of local celebrations can all be found on the National Veterans Network websites: www.nationalveteransnetwork.com.