

Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



*"Here we admit a wrong.
Here we affirm our commitment
as a nation to equal justice under
the law."*

PRESIDENT RONALD W. REAGAN
Upon the signing of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988

*"O, America
Imperfect, stumbling,
striving;
Lessons from the past"*

BILL HOSOKAWA
Former Editor of the *Denver Post*
Noted Japanese American Historian

Cranes—Japanese cultural symbols for happiness, auspiciousness and longevity—emerge from a pedestal, wings reaching high into the sky for freedom as they seek release from entangling barbed wire. The statue projects a sense of struggle against oppression, courage and ultimate triumph.

"The lessons learned must remain as a grave reminder of what we must not allow to happen again to any group."

DANIEL K. INOUE

U.S. Congressman; U.S. Senator; Captain, 442nd Regimental Combat Team

A Patriotic Memorial

Seventy-three days after the outbreak of World War II, on February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which changed the lives of Americans of Japanese origin forever. Under this order 120,000 men, women and children, all regarded without trial as potential security risks, were moved under military guard from homes, schools and businesses into ten desert detention camps surrounded by barbed wire.

The names of the camps and the number confined in each, are engraved on the walls of this Memorial to recall the injustice of the times. The narrative and historical quotations etched into stone provide an insight into the period when prejudices and war hysteria allowed a grave violation of Constitutional rights to happen.

But equally important, they commemorate the faith and courage of a people who



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endured discrimination and demonstrated a stirring loyalty to the principles on which this nation was founded.

The Memorial, authorized by Congress in 1992 and completed in 2001, acknowledges

the nation's error in discriminating against citizens on the basis of their ethnic roots. Further, it is a triumphal statement of loyalty by citizens who never lost faith in America.

A Veterans' Memorial

Even as their families remained imprisoned at home, more than 30,000 Japanese American men and women served in the U.S. Armed Forces to fight for freedom overseas.

The combined, racially segregated unit comprising the 100th Battalion and 442nd Regimental Combat Team serving in Europe was cited as the most highly decorated Army unit in U.S. history for its size and length of service. Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service utilized their bilingual skills to shorten the war and save countless lives in the Pacific fronts.

The names of more than 800 of these men who gave their lives in the nation's service are engraved on the Memorial in tribute to their sacrifice.

In a White House ceremony welcoming Japanese American troops home, President Harry S Truman said, *"You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice—and*



Cheron Carlson

you 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 of the time." These words, too, are etched into the Monument as the nation's tribute.

An American Memorial

While sometimes referred to as the Japanese American Memorial, it is more. It is a testament to the greatness of a nation that does not fear to acknowledge its mistakes and darker chapters and emerges to recommit itself to the principles on which it was founded.

It underscores the truth that America is a nation strengthened by its diversity, that constitutional rights must be guarded diligently for all citizens regardless of race, religion or ethnicity.

This is an American memorial, created through the efforts of the nation's citizens of Japanese origin, celebrating a recommitment to the historic ideals of equality and justice for all.

The Memorial is located in Washington, D.C. at the intersection of Louisiana and New Jersey Avenues and D Street, NW. Nearest Metro Stop: Union Station Red Line. For further information, visit the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation website at www.njamf.com.



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