

Robbins,
William G
Tue 2/1/2022 10:43 AM
To: testimony.techissues@oregonlegislatur

Senate Bill 1509
Meeting, Feb. 3, 2022 at 3:15 p.m.

Testimony in support of naming U. S. Hwy 35 the ***Oregon Nisei Veterans WWII Memorial Highway***

I strongly urge your committee to designate U. S. Hwy 35 as the ***Oregon Nisei Veterans WWII Memorial Highway*** to commemorate the heroism and patriotism of Japanese Nisei who enlisted in the Armed Forces in the face of the forced evacuation and removal of their families to Internment camps during the Second World War. I have written about the Nisei veterans from Hood River who enlisted in the Army, some of them with the famed 442nd Infantry Regiment, the most decorated military unit in the Second World War. Those who returned home, including veterans in Hood River Valley, were subject, for a time, to continued abuse.

One Hood River enlistee, Frank Hachiya, who served in the Pacific theater of war as an interpreter, was killed on Leyte Island on January 3, 1945. Hachiya was buried in Grave 4479 in the Military Services Cemetery on the island. Three years later, Hachiya's friends had his remains returned to the valley of his birth where, amid a small ceremony, he was reinterred in Hood River's Idlewild Cemetery.

As a historian (and military veteran), I cannot think of a more deserving group than Oregon's nisei veterans for this honor. I hope soon to drive down Hwy 35 past the memorial signs and visit Frank Hachiya's grave in Idlewild Cemetery.

William G. Robbins
Emeritus Distinguished Professor of History
Oregon State University
Corvallis, Oregon 97330
brobbins@orst.edu
(541) 602-3867
