

Submitter: Dwight Onchi
On Behalf Of: Epworth UMC
Committee: Senate Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
Measure: SB1509

My name is Dwight Onchi, I am a retired Sherwood, Oregon police officer and a Sansei (3rd generation) Japanese American.

My father, Jim Onchi and my two Uncles, Joe Onchi and Arthur Iwasaki were all Congressional Gold Medal recipients, as members of the famous all Japanese American Nisei (2nd generation) WWII 442nd Regimental Combat Team from Oregon, who fought valiantly as heroes for the freedom that we have to this day.

I was born and raised in North Portland post WWII during the 50's and 60's. My parents, who were both Nisei Japanese American never talked about the emence injustices and racism they had endured during WWII. All I knew was that my father was a Master Carpenter, custom home builder, who worked hard and that my mother took care of all the office paperwork, our North Portland home and five sons.

For us 5 brothers life seemed good. I attended Peninsula Grade School, Benson Polytechnic High School and Portland State University, all while working for my father's Onchi Construction Company, where he instilled a strong work ethic and an even stronger need to serve our community. We all attended Epworth United Methodist Church as children, a predominantly Japanese American congregation in SE Portland, where I am presently a member of the church council.

I am also a Goldstar family member. On March 24, 1969 our oldest brother, US Army 1st Lt Curtis Onchi, was killed in combat in South Vietnam. During the time of my brothers death I was a US Army Reserve Supply Sgt, stationed at Fort Vancouver HHQ Division for both Oregon and Washington and still attending school at Portland State University. My brother's death was a time of sadness and brought to home the ultimate sacrifices that many of our soldiers give to our Nation that seems to in time become forgotten.

The heroism, patriotism and resilience that the Nisei Veterans showed during and after WWII made them the most decorated unit for it's size for all wars to this very day.

In closing, signage along Oregon's Hwy 35 from the east end of Hood River up to Mt Hood would be a wonderful way to remind future generations of the emence and ultimate sacrifices these brave Japanese American Nisei Soldiers made for the freedom we all enjoy to this day.

Please not only consider, but vote in favor of Senate Bill 1509.

Sincerely,
Dwight Onchi