

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

My name is Dwight Onchi and I would like to add further testimony in support of Senate Bill 1509.

While at Camp Shelby the upper command would not allow my father, Master Sergeant Jim Onchi, to deploy overseas right away, because they indicated he was too important as a combat trainer, teaching the troops combat Judo. Upon returning to Portland, Oregon from post war Germany in 1945, my father worked temporarily in the Kaiser shipyards and the family lived in the City of Vanport. Unfortunately in May of 1948 the family lost everything for the 2nd time in the Vanport flood. (The 1st time his and my mothers family lost everything was when all people of Japanese Ancestry on the West Coast were ordered to internment camps at the beginning of WWII).

It was during the early 1950's that my father was one of the main leaders that helped to reopen the Obukan Judo Club, that still operates to this day. The Obukan Judo Club has taught thousands of students from all walks of living the ancient Japanese martial art that translates as being the "Gentle Way". As a way to give back to society my father continued to teach Judo into his 90's and was awarded as being one of highest ranking Judo teachers not only in the United States but in the world.

As a Master Carpenter and custom home builder my father continued his community spirit of giving to his community and by the early 1960's he built the Oregon Buddhist Temple in SE Portland, a beautiful building, in which the community still gathers year round not only for weekly services, but also for special community events. Our family have been members of the Epworth United Methodist Church from the early 1960, a predominantly Japanese American congregation. And in the late 1970's my father conducted a major remodel of the Epworth United Methodist Church, of which, besides weekly services to this day, community volunteers offer weekly lunch meals for all seniors in the basement of the church, as well as meals once a month to community shut-ins.

My Uncle Joe Onchi, as part of the Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team fought in France, where he was wounded in his leg and upon returning to Oregon he graduated with a degree in Optometry. My father built a several unit office complex just off E Powell Blvd on Kelly St in Gresham for my Uncle, Dr Joe Onchi, where he served the Gresham community with his Optometry practice for 40years.

My Uncle Arthur Iwasaki, who married my mothers younger sister, upon returning to

Oregon at the end of WWII, as part of the Nisei 442nd RCT fought in France and was part of the 442nd unit that rescued the Texas "Lost Battalion". Uncle Arthur received 2 silver stars for bravery and he was also wounded in combat. Upon returning to his families Iwasaki berry farm in Hillsboro, Oregon their family later started a flower nursery, of which the Iwasaki Nursery still operates to this day. Uncle Arthur later started Tanisacers Nursery. In 2009 Uncle Arthur and my Aunt Teri established 2 scholarship programs. The Oregon Nisei Veterans Scholarship and the Art and Teri Iwasaki Scholarship for outstanding academic achievement and community service through the Japanese American Living Legacy Organization.

These three great Oregon Japanese American Nisei Heroes, and all the other Japanese American Nisei 442nd solders of Oregon left a legacy during and after World War II that still continues to resonate to this day and your vote in favor of Senate Bill 1509 will help future generations to remember these great American Heroes.

Sincerely,
Dwight Onchi