

February 14, 2022

House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management  
Testimony in support of SB 1509, naming U. S. Hwy 35 the ***Oregon Nisei Veterans WWII Memorial Highway***

Chair Grayber and Committee Members:

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 442<sup>nd</sup> 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.

I have also written about Hood River enlistee, Frank Hachiya, who served in the Pacific theater of war as an interpreter. Hachiya was killed on Leyte Island on January 3, 1945 and 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 Idlewilde Cemetery.

As a historian (and Navy veteran 1953-1957), 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 Idlewilde Cemetery.

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