

***National Japanese American Memorial  
To Patriotism During World War II***

**Located at Louisiana Avenue and D Street NW  
Washington, DC**

**Little Known Facts**

1. **Question:** Which national memorial in Washington, DC, did Congress specifically authorize to be built to recognize the patriotism of a specific American group and why?

**Answer:** In 1992, a Federal law was enacted that authorized a memorial to honor Japanese American patriotism during the Second World War. This Memorial was dedicated in 2000 and is located at Louisiana Avenue and D Street NW--a short walk from the US Capitol and Union Station.

When the Empire of Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941, the patriotism and loyalty of Japanese Americans came under intense suspicion and scrutiny. More than 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were ordered by the US Government to leave the West Coast and were then interned in 10 desolate Federal detention centers for the duration of the war.

Despite these personal injustices and denial of constitutional rights, Japanese Americans demonstrated their loyalty and patriotism throughout their internment and combat valor on the battlefield in defending the United States. No person of Japanese ancestry interned during the Second World War was convicted of espionage, treason or sabotage against the United States. More than 800 Japanese Americans died in military service to the United States during the 4-year global conflict, and their names are inscribed on the walls of *National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II*.

2. **Question:** What Washington, DC, memorial was built with a symbol for the protection of American civil even in a time of war, and what is the symbol's significance?

**Answer:** The *National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II*, located at Louisiana Avenue and D Street NW, Washington, DC, has as its centerpiece a 14-foot high bronze sculpture of two cranes representing freedom and equality. The cranes are entangled in barbed wire that symbolize hatred, prejudice, and hysteria.

The *Memorial* was built to remind the American public that unequal treatment of a minority group by the government is not justified by hatred, prejudice, and hysteria even during a time of national crisis. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066--a presidential directive that was based on military necessity and that was used to evacuate 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast and intern them in 10 desolate internment camps without regard to their constitutional rights.

Forty years later, the US Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians concluded that “Executive Order 9066 was not justified by military necessity” and was in fact shaped by “race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.” The *Memorial* was built to share the aspiration with all that America’s promises of freedom and equality are to be enjoyed without the constraints of hatred, prejudice, and hysteria.

3. **Question:** Do the five boulders in the water fountain at the *National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism* represent the five islands of Japan?

**Answer:** No.

The five boulders located in the fountain at the *National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II* represent the five generations of persons of Japanese ancestry who were living on August 10, 1988, the day Congress and the President enacted unprecedented legislation making a national apology for the internment of persons of Japanese ancestry by the US Government during the Second World War.

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which was used to justify the evacuation of 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast and their internment in ten desolate relocation centers. There were no trials. American constitutional rights were ignored. Personal justice was denied.

In 1982, the US Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment issued its report and concluded that “Executive Order 9066 was not justified by military necessity” and that Executive Order 9066 decisions were shaped by “race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.” Based on the Commission’s report, Congress passed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

This legislation apologized on behalf of the nation for the losses, human suffering, and violations of basic civil liberties and constitutional rights of persons of Japanese ancestry. When he signed the legislation into law, President Ronald Reagan said, “Here we admit a wrong. Here we affirm our commitment as a nation to equal justice under the law.” His words are inscribed on the retaining wall of the *Memorial’s* fountain.

4. **Question:** What group of Americans had members who demonstrated their loyalty by serving overseas as military intelligence translators during the Second World War while at home family members and friends were interned without charge, trial, or personal justice?

**Answer:** Japanese Americans.

When the US Army needed Japanese-speaking soldiers for military and combat duty in the Pacific during World War II, Japanese Americans answered the call. The Military Intelligence Service was formed with primarily Japanese Americans. Their service was invaluable and their missions included interrogating prisoners, intercepting messages, translating captured documents, and infiltrating enemy lines. All the while, family members and friends

were behind barbed wire in US internment camps – loyal Americans ordered from their West Coast homes for no reasons apart from their ancestry.

Much of the contributions of the Military Intelligence Service was classified by the Defense Department for many decades. National leaders such as Secretary of State Colin Powell have recognized their contributions as having saved countless lives and shortened the war in the Pacific, perhaps by as much as two years. The Military Intelligence Service was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation.

The contributions of the Military Intelligence Service is part of the story of the *National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II*, located at Louisiana Avenue and D Street NW, Washington, DC.

5 **Question;** Which World War II military unit had the motto “Go For Broke”?

**Answer:** The motto “Go For Broke” was the battle cry of 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion/442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team, which were segregated World War II military units composed of Japanese American soldiers. Over 30,000 Japanese American men and women served in US military units during World War II, while many of their families and friends were interned in ten desolate relocation centers and other detention camps.

Japanese American soldiers used battlefield valor to prove their loyalty and patriotism to the United States. This valor underscored their motto “Go For Broke.”

Members of the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> were awarded 18,143 individual decorations including more than 9500 Purple Hearts for combat wounds. The Medal of Honor was awarded to 21 members of the 100/442<sup>nd</sup>. The 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> also received 7 Presidential Unit Citations. The 442<sup>nd</sup> RCT is the most decorated unit in US military history for their size and length of service.

When the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> returned from the European battlefields, President Truman received them at a 1946 White House Ceremony, where he said “You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice – and 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 of the people all of the time.” President Truman’s statements and the names of the more than 800 Japanese American soldiers who died during World War II are inscribed on the walls of the *National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II*, located at Louisiana Avenue and D Street NW, Washington, DC.