



## Three Ranger Hall of Fame members among Nisei warriors receiving Congressional Gold Medal

*by Jonnie Melillo Clasen*

Roy Matsumoto, 98, the late Grant Hirabayashi and the late Henry Goshu, all Ranger Hall of Fame members, were among Japanese American warriors of WW II to be honored with the Congressional Gold Medal Nov. 2, 2011, in Washington, DC.

All three men were with the Military Intelligence Service and volunteered for Merrill's Marauders in the China - Burma - India Theater of Operations.

Other Nisei serving as Marauders were William H. Laffin, Howard H. Furumoto, Ben S. Sugata, Robert Y. Hondo, Edward Mitsukado, Thomas K. Tsubota, Calvin T. Kobata, Herbert Y. Miyaski, Jimmie Yamaguchi, Russell K. Kono, Roy K. Nakada and Akiji Yoshimura.

Japanese American soldiers of the U.S. Army's 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry BN and the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team also received the Medal.

The Congressional Gold Medal (seen above), designed and struck by the US Mint, was presented collectively to the Nisei soldiers in recognition of their "dedicated service during WW II." The ceremony was held at the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center's Emancipation Hall.

One side of the coin "features Nisei, second generation Americans of Japanese ancestry, soldiers from both the European and Pacific theaters. The 442<sup>nd</sup> RCT color guard is depicted in

the lower field of the medal. The inscriptions on the outer rim are NISEI SOLDIERS OF WORLD WAR II and GO FOR BROKE, the motto of the 442<sup>nd</sup> RCT, which was eventually used to describe the work of all three units," according to the U.S. Mint.

The reverse side depicts insignias of the 100<sup>th</sup> INF BN, 442<sup>nd</sup> RCT and the MIS. "The 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry BN insignia features a taro leaf and a traditional Hawaiian helmet, both of which are emblematic of the unit's Hawaiian roots. The 'Go for Broke' Torch of Liberty shoulder patch represents the 442<sup>nd</sup> RCT. The MIS insignia is represented by a sphinx, a traditional symbol of secrecy."

After WW II had ended, President Harry S. Truman said while addressing the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team on the White House lawn in July 1946, "You are to be congratulated for what you have done for this great nation of ours. . . . You fought for the free nations of the world along with the rest of us. . . . You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice -- and you have won. Keep up that fight, and we will continue to win."

**CAPTIONS:** Far left-- General Frank D. Merrill with Roy Matsumoto. Bottom left - Matsumoto at an event last year. Bottom right – The late Henry Goshu. Below - The late Grant Hirabayashi with documentary film maker Ken Burns.

