



The real story. Japanese American History told by those who lived it.

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NEWS RELEASE
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Fox Company Reunion, Las Vegas, NV



Every year, Fox Company of the 442nd RCT gathers in Las Vegas to meet, greet and chat about the “good times.” This year, Ron Oba and George Nakasato played host to newcomers: KIA Fox Company soldier Clifford Hana’s nephew, Howard Hodges and JA Living Legacy’s Susan Uyemura and Russell K. Shoho.

A few months ago, Susan Uyemura received an e-mail requesting assistance on finding information on anyone who might have known KIA soldier, Clifford Howard Hana. Immediately using the online database, www.ajawarvets.org, Uyemura was able to get a profile and basic information to which she forwarded to Staff Sgt. Howard Hodges. It turns out that Clifford Hana was a member of Fox Company. Uyemura got in touch with Ron Oba in Hawaii and introduced Staff Sgt. Hodges to Oba. It was decided everyone would meet in Las Vegas during the reunion. Hodges had hoped to meet anyone who might have known his uncle after whom he was named. Hodges’ journey to find out

about his uncle introduced him into a new world of 442nd veterans, a world relatively unknown to him except through books and websites.

Another newcomer was Russ Shoho from JA Living Legacy. For the past six months, Shoho has been working on a book titled, *“From the Battlefields to the Homefront: The Masuda Legacy.”* He needed to do some research on KIA Kazuo Masuda. Thanks to Fox Company members, Shoho was able to receive feedback and find out a lot of new information first-hand. Shoho also made contacts that could assist him with information on his next memoir on Fox Company veteran, Mineo Inuzuka.

During the banquet, Ron led a “twenty-one balloon” salute while Richard Murashige read the list of Fox Company veterans who had passed away this past year. Munro Shintani’s family attended the banquet wearing matching shirts that read “Shintani’s Sukiyaki Restaurant.” Cal Shintani explained that prior to World War II, Mrs. Shintani (Issei) had owned and operated a small restaurant in Chicago. Unfortunately the restaurant was one of the many casualties of WWII.

On the last day of the reunion, Wataru Kohashi related a poignant story to Uyemura about his service. He told her that during the war, he split a dollar bill into four pieces. Kohashi pulled out of his wallet one quarter of the dollar bill and said he wished he could find the other three pieces. Kohashi knew that one quarter belonged to a KIA and that it was unlikely the dollar bill survived his death. Another quarter belonged to another man who is deceased and Kohashi had contacted the family to see if that man had carried his quarter of the bill – but unfortunately, the family was unable to locate it. The last quarter went to a man named Gilbert T. Ogata. The only thing Kohashi knew was that Gilbert Ogata had enlisted from California. Kohashi asked Uyemura for some assistance because he knew she was a Gerontology researcher. Uyemura immediately contacted her volunteer team of researchers (Roger Eaton and Marcia Mau) and within less than 24 hours came back with a Gilbert T. Ogata living in Idaho, born in 1943. No other information was found. The guess was that this was probably Gilbert’s son. Even though it was a long-shot, Uyemura decided to call and find out if the son knew anything about this mysterious quarter of a dollar bill. Gilbert Ogata’s wife answered the phone but when questioned if Gilbert was born in 1943, she said, “That’s my son and he is at work.” Uyemura cautiously asked if Gilbert T. Ogata the father was there. The wife responded with yes, but he was hard of hearing. Gilbert T. Ogata is alive! Ogata got on the phone and Uyemura asked him if he was part of the 442nd. When Ogata responded with a yes, she asked him if remembered Kohashi and the dollar bill. Unfortunately, Ogata did not recall the dollar bill but did recall the name Kohashi. Ogata was surprised to learn that Fox Company had annual reunions and stated, he was healthy and if notified would join the men of F Company at their next reunion.

Although this story did not have the ending that Kohashi wanted, when Uyemura telephoned Kohashi to let him know Ogata was still alive, it was indeed a happy moment. Gilbert T. Ogata at age 90 and his wife, will be joining Fox Company in April 2009 in Las Vegas for his first reunion. “This is what it’s all about. I feel very satisfied to have found Gilbert Ogata alive and helped bring closure for Wataru Kohashi,” said Uyemura.

Regular reunion attendees included Frank Fukuzawa, Ben Hiraga, Ike Ikeda, Enoch Kanaya, David Katagiri, Wataru Kohashi, Stan Matsumura, Ocean Miyake, James Mita, Frank Mizufuka, Richard Murashige, George Nakasato, Ron Oba, Steve Shimizu, Munro Shintani, Tadashi Tamagawa, Mas Tamayei, Mike Tsugawa, Junior Uranaka, Sam Yamaguchi, Masaru Yoshida, and family members.

After four days, another reunion was over. JA Living Legacy will be back next year. Uyemura noted, "I have made too many new friends to miss any more reunions." For more Fox Company reunion information, please contact Ron Oba at ronoba@hawaii.rr.com.

Japanese American Living Legacy is a California non-profit 501c(3) organization based out of California State University, Fullerton. All of the board of directors, staff and advisors are volunteers. For more information on Japanese American Living Legacy, please visit their website at www.jalivinglegacy.org or call them at (714) 278-4483.

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