

*Coris K. Okada - Abe*

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## Hawaii Soldiers Died Fighting As Loyal Americans, Col. Fielder Says

(Following is the text of an address delivered by Col. Kendall J. Fielder, USA, assistant chief of staff for military intelligence, central Pacific area, on the occasion of the presentation here Saturday and Sunday of Purple Hearts to families of 60 American soldiers of Japanese ancestry killed in action in Italy:)

Families of honored American dead:

This is not a happy occasion for you or for me, but it is a proud one.

You are the mothers and fathers—the wives—the sisters and brothers—and the children of American soldiers who gave their lives for our country.

The United States army, through its commanding general in the central Pacific area, Lt. Gen. Robert C. Richardson Jr., sent me here today to honor these brave American soldiers and, by so doing honor you.

For you are the people who, in any war, must be among the bravest of the brave. You are participants in this war, participants in a very real and touching way, through the soldier who bade you a loving goodbye and went out bravely to fight for his country—and for you—but never came back.



Col. Fielder

But his soul has, for he fought in the most splendid cause known to man, the cause of human liberty. He fought as an American; not as our enemies who fight to enslave the helpless in order that people and lands might be conquered for the bloody glory of a Hitler or a Tojo.

Your soldier did not die grabbing lands and loot and vassals for the profit of the reich or the greater east Asia co-prosperity sphere.

Your boy was an American and he fought and died as hosts of good Americans have always done and always will do when the cause of freedom is threatened.

Your American soldier knew that freedom was an ideal, but he knew also that it was much more, for he could see it all around him in the blessed United States of America.

He knew that freedom in America has never been something hollow for propagandists to babble about—as the Japanese babble about Asia for the Asiatics (meaning for the Japanese Asiatics) and as the Germans babble about more living room—(meaning more living room for the Germans only).

Freedom, as your American soldier knew it, was a real, living thing. It found and always will find expression in many ways, but at its roots are the dignity and the decency of mankind.

George Washington fought for that freedom; Lincoln died for it, and many another good American has done the same.

Your soldier is one of a famous legion, the army of those who loved America and loved the practical American ideal—the reality of human liberty.

He—and you—and others of and in America enjoyed that liberty, as all of us are enjoying it today and will continue to enjoy it because of soldiers such as those we are here to honor now. Your soldier saw that liberty threatened.

He saw the shadow of the swastika and the shadow of the red cannon ball flag fall over it.

He went to the battlefields of the Mediterranean and there fought the Nazi, the pitiless instrumentality of a machine of death and torture and pillage which was the duplicate of one in the Pacific.

He knew it well, because its twin in this ocean had attacked his homeland with stealth and with treachery and with death the morning of December 7, 1941.

He knew the sweetness of liberty and he knew the foulness of the totalitarian system, for he had seen both of them at first hand.

He knew also, as you must know, that there were some good Americans who, out of righteous anger, were slow to accept the fact of his wholehearted Americanism. He didn't need to die to prove to himself—or to you—or to other Americans that he was fine and loyal and brave. His willingness to serve America by fighting for her proved that.

Neither did it take his death to prove that he was a hero. What he did on the battlefields of Italy proved that; and it is to our great sorrow that he could not have lived to see the fruits of his bravery, his sacrifice and his suffering.

I am here today to honor your soldier as we are honoring other American soldiers and sailors and marines who have made the supreme sacrifice for their country.

On behalf of the war department and Gen. Richardson, it is my privilege to give into your custody this Purple Heart Medal, which has been awarded your late beloved American soldier.

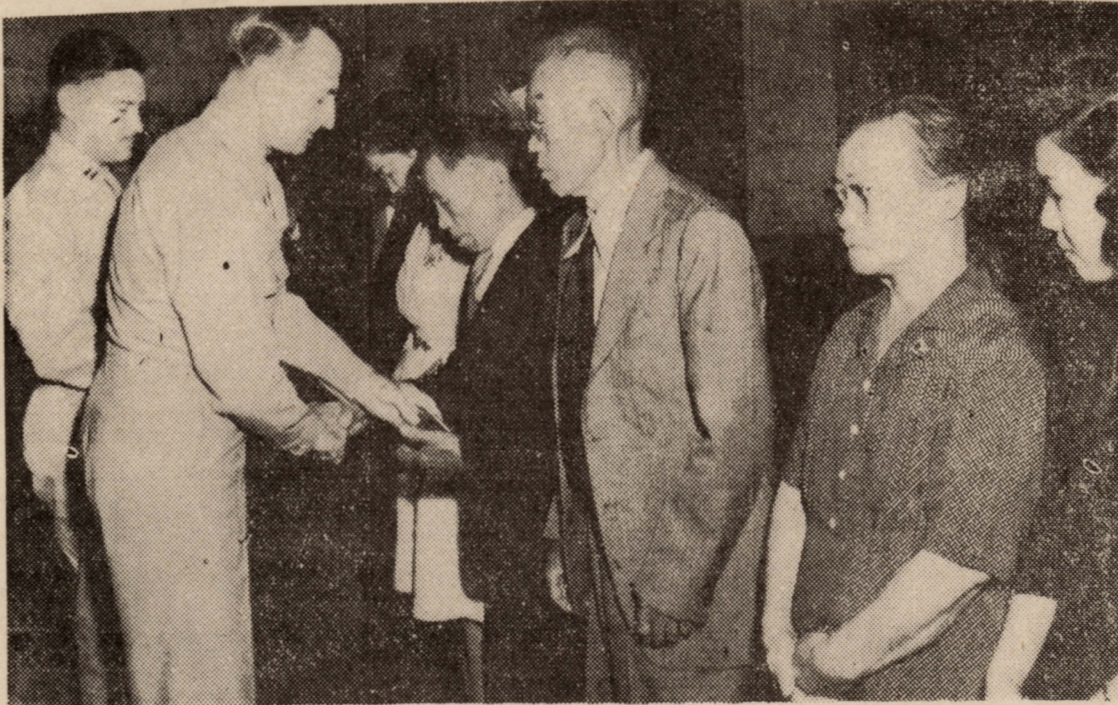
Regulations do not permit you to wear this decoration, because it is rightfully an award to the deceased, to be retained by you as a sign of the homage which the United States government pays one of America's sons who is wounded or is killed in the valorous service of his country.

The war department believes that this Purple Heart Medal, which has a history dating back to its inception by Gen. George Washington, will always occupy a place of honor in your hearts.

The war department through Gen. Richardson wants you to accept this medal as a token of recognition of your soldier's complete devotion to duty and as a symbol of sincere sympathy with you in your bereavement and of our pride in your boy's valor.



## In Italy Given Posthumous Awards Families of Isle Soldiers Killed



ON BEHALF OF the war department and Lt. Gen. Robert C. Richardson Jr., commanding the army's central Pacific area, Col. Kendall J. Fielder presents Purple Heart medals posthumously to families of 60 American soldiers of Japanese ancestry killed in action in Italy at ceremonies here Saturday and Sunday. Left to right are Capt. Millard

S. Purdy, Col. Fielder, Mrs. Edith Wasada, widow of Kenneth Wasada; Mrs. Yone Tahira, mother of George Tahira; Yoshio Kayo, father of Satoshi Kayo; Matagi Hiramama, father of Yutaka Hiramama, and Mrs. Hilda Yamanaga, widow of Thomas Yamanaga. This ceremony was at the University of Hawaii. — Army signal corps photo.



PURPLE HEART MEDALS are awarded posthumously by Lt. Col. Charles A. Selby to the next of kin of 60 soldiers from Hawaii who were killed in action in Europe. This ceremony was held at the Kaimuki YMCA. Pictured, left to right, are Takashi Miyata, brother of Tamotsu Miyata; Mrs. Tokio Asai,

mother of Ralph Y. Asai (receiving medal); Mrs. Eleanor M. Masumura, widow of Lawrence K. Masumura; Shizuo Ichimura, brother of Kenichi Ichimura, and Mrs. Masa Mashita, mother of Masa Mashita. — Signal corps photo.



By ELMONT WAITE

Associated Press Staff Writer

A proud United States army has given Purple Heart medals to the Japanese-American families of 60 soldiers who died in action in Italy—because, said the colonel to each of his little audiences, “your boy was an American.”

“Your soldier did not die grabbing land and loot and vassals for the Reich or for the Greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere,” he said. “Your boy was an American and he fought and died as hosts of good Americans have always done . . . when the cause of freedom is threatened.”

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The colonel and the sergeant made the speeches Saturday and Sunday—Col. Kendall J. Fielder, because he represented Lt. Gen. Robert C. Richardson Jr., commanding army forces in the central Pacific area, and Sergeant Howard K. Hiroki of Honolulu because he speaks Japanese, a tongue more familiar than English to some of the audience.”

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There were five little ceremonies—widely separated little neighborhood meetings, so the families could more easily attend.

The people came in quietly, some of them rather timidly, with polite bows to each other.

Some of the mothers and widows wept during the speeches, and once one of the grave-faced fathers reached hastily to borrow his wife’s handkerchief. He made it look as though he were wiping his forehead.

“ \* \* \*  
One woman who looked as though she would always bring the finest cakes to the church socials lost her determined, cheerful air, leaned over against her neighbor and made soft little moaning noises when Col. Fielder came to the part of his speech that said boys didn’t need to die to prove loyalty and bravery:

“Your soldier knew, as you must know that there were some good Americans who out of righteous anger were slow to accept the fact of his wholehearted Americanism.

“He didn’t need to die to prove to himself—or to you or to other Americans—that he was fine and loyal and brave. His willingness to serve America by fighting for her proved that.

“Neither did it take his death to prove he was a hero. What he did

on the battlefields of Italy proved that; and it is to our great sorrow that he could not have lived to see the fruits of his bravery, his sacrifice and his suffering.”

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The first of the little group meetings was held at the University of Hawaii where many of the absent soldiers had been students.

“I’ve slept through many a class in this hall,” Sergeant Hiroki confessed.

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The sergeant said his knees shook just a little as he unrolled his big manuscript of Japanese characters to translate the colonel’s speech.

But it was not like talking to strangers; these were the sergeant’s own people, and one of the medals was for Masaharu Takeba, the boy he used to play baseball with.

They were together on the mainland for army training, these two volunteers, before Masaharu went to Italy’s battlefield and the sergeant back to the Pacific war.

The recipients of the medals sat in the front row during the presentation speeches, then stood facing the audience to receive the medals.

“ \* \* \*  
Gravely Col. Fielder grasped each by the hand, and gave each a medal. The only sound was the voice of the chairman, calling out the names of the dead.

Young, attractive Mrs. Hilda M. Yamanaga, who received her husband’s medal, had to bow her head quickly a time or two, and others were near tears, but no one wept. They all stood proudly erect.

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Another young widow, Mrs. Edith Y. Wasada, who seemed no older than a schoolgirl, made a quiet little speech of response.

She said all the relatives of the lost soldiers, despite their sorrow, were “happy to know that . . . they have helped to prove Americanism is not and never was a matter of race . . .”

“ \* \* \*  
“It is up to us,” she said, “to carry on.”

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Sergeant Hiroki, who knows his people well, said afterward that he thought they were taking it pretty fine.

They haven’t said a lot about it, he explained, “but they took it all right.”

And when you get a death-in-action notice, he added, what is there anyone can say?