

From the Director: Tom Ikeda

This February 19th marks the 73rd anniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's [Executive Order 9066](#), which authorized the forced removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast and their subsequent incarceration into American concentration camps during World War II. Japanese American community organizations around the country stage [Days of Remembrance](#) on or around this date to remember and pay tribute to the 120,000 victims of this unprecedented action by the U.S. government. See our [blog post](#) for a listing of some upcoming Day of Remembrance events.

This date is also a time to reflect on what went wrong in our country when many were filled with fear and hatred after the attack at Pearl Harbor. We learned that when threatened, imaginary enemies can appear and we can easily discard our democratic ideals of justice and equality to try to feel safer. Furthermore, false rumors, sensationalized and given credence by a profit-seeking media, can overwhelm and contradict research and evidence-based analysis.

These are valuable lessons to remember as we grapple with topics like the brutal ISIS executions or the targeting of African American men and women in America. Seek truth by looking deeper into the facts and history of these issues and don't rely on the soundbites of cable news. Join a discourse about these issues with a commitment to listen deeply and openly to diverse perspectives. This will help as we go through the joy and "curse of living in interesting times." Drop me a line and let me know what you think at tom.ikeda@densho.org.

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Archive Spotlight

Gene Akutsu: The Importance of Speaking Out

During World War II, Gene Akutsu was incarcerated in the Puyallup Assembly Center, Washington, and the Minidoka concentration camp, Idaho. In 1944 he was arrested for resisting the draft and imprisoned at McNeil Island Penitentiary. In this clip, Gene talks about why he thinks it's important to speak up for what you believe. Gene Akutsu's full interview is available in the Densho Digital Archive.

>> [View the interview excerpt](#)

>> [Register for the free Densho Digital Archive](#)

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Change Your Facebook Profile Picture for Day of Remembrance

In observation of this year's Day of Remembrance, please [join Densho in changing your Facebook profile picture to artist Frank Fujii's "ichi-ni-san" barbed wire logo for the week of February 15-22](#). The "ichi-ni-san" logo is composed of the Japanese characters for the numbers 1 through 3, and represents first, second and third generation Japanese Americans.

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Community News and Events

Join the Washington State Legislature in Observing the Day of Remembrance

Senator Bob Hasegawa and Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos invite you to join the Washington State House and Senate in observing the Day of Remembrance on Thursday, February 19, at 10:00 AM in Olympia. The event will be in the South House Gallery. Please RSVP by February 9, 2015, to Omar.Jackson@leg.wa.gov.

>> [More information about other Day of Remembrance events around the country](#)

Mustard Gas Testing on Nisei Soldiers

National Public Radio reporter Caitlin Dickerson is looking for Nisei World War II veterans who were involved in the testing of mustard gas and/or Lewisite during the war. She is also interested in reaching Nisei veterans who were involved with the Chemical Warfare Service at any point during their service. She would also encourage the family members or friends of such veterans to reach out to her if the veteran has passed away. If you are a veteran (or know one) who was involved in this type of chemical testing, Ms. Dickerson would very much like to hear from you. She can be reached any time by phone at (202) 513-2272 and her email address is cdickerson@npr.org.

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