

TRIBUTE IS PAID NISEI WAR DEAD

A group of more than 1,300 persons, attending a testimonial banquet for Nisei war veterans last night in the Civic Auditorium, paid solemn homage to the Japanese-American soldiers who fought and died for the country of their birth rather than the country of their ancestry.

Fifty-three white candles, flickering on a flower-bedecked table, served as a memorial to the 53 King County Nisei who fell on Second World War battlefronts as a bugler sounded "Taps" in the darkened hall.

The banquet, sponsored by the Seattle Chapter of the Japanese-American Citizens' League, was an impressive affair. Honor guests included 50 "Gold Star" parents, mothers and fathers of the men who stayed overseas asleep in foreign graves.

General Speaks

The principal speaker was Maj. Gen. Paul W. Kendall, who commanded the famed "Purple Heart Battalion," a Nisei unit attached to the 88th Infantry Division during the Italian campaign.

General Kendall, now commanding the 2nd Infantry Division at Fort Lewis, declared:

"Nisei soldiers began to fight at 7:35 o'clock on the morning of December 7, 1941, and throughout all theatres of operation set an unparalleled record. In Italy alone, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (which included the Purple Heart Battalion) won 4,000 Purple Hearts and 1,254 other awards ranging from the Distinguished Service Cross and the French Croix de Guerre to the Soldier's Medal and division citations.

Only Difference

"The only difference that could be seen between Nisei and American soldiers was in the spelling of names on the roster."

General Kendall pointed out that the Pacific Northwest had the largest share of 20,000 Nisei who volunteered for war service before the draft was extended to apply to them.

"Now that most of the Nisei are back in the United States," he said, "I trust they are repeating in civil life the wonderful record they set in the Army. I trust they are shouldering the burden of American citizenship and assisting the nation to bind up its wounds and to begin again a life which will show the same devotion to the welfare of the nation."

Testimonials paying tribute to the Japanese-American veterans were presented by Henry H. Okuda, Toru Sakahara and Col. John J. Sullivan. More than 500 Nisei veterans attended the affair.

Clarence T. Arai acted as master of ceremonies.