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Members of Congress Announce National Tour of the Congressional Gold Medal Awarded to Japanese American World War II Veterans

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA), Congressman Adam Schiff (D-CA) and Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI) held a ceremony kicking off the national tour of the Congressional Gold Medal awarded to World War II veterans that served in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, 100th Infantry Battalion and the Military Intelligence Service. They were joined by representatives from the Smithsonian Institution, the steward of this Congressional Gold Medal, and the National Veterans Network, an organization that advocates for Japanese American war veterans.

“For adults who may have some connection to World War II and children who have only studied it in their history books the Congressional Gold Medal Tour is an invitation to dig further and learn about the personal stories and experiences behind the Medal,” said Congresswoman Matsui. “The men of the 442nd, 100th IB and MIS are heroes. By sharing their stories we can ensure their legacies live on and that their sacrifices, as well as the sacrifices of their families that were forced into internment camps, were not in vain.”

“I was proud to play a role in providing the Congressional Gold Medal to these extraordinary veterans. And I am thrilled that the Gold Medal will tour the country, helping to tell the story of these remarkable men who fought for this country while their own families were being interned. No group is more deserving of the accolade and this is a story that must be told,” said Congressman Adam Schiff.

"On December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor, was bombed by Imperial Japan, and everything changed. Soon thereafter, the government of the United States issued a directive designating all Japanese, citizens of this nation and immigrants as 4-C. 4-C was the designation for an 'enemy alien.' We were designated 'enemy aliens' of the United States, however, we did not sit by and do nothing. We petitioned the government to give us the opportunity to demonstrate our love of country and our patriotism. That opportunity was granted and thousands of men rushed to the draft boards to volunteer for military service. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team was formed in 1943. The men of the 100th Infantry Battalion were those in service prior to December 7th, and the MIS was also established in 1943. When the war ended, the men of the 100th Battalion, the 442nd, and the MIS went home and found themselves declared to be members of the most decorated military unit in the history of the United States. 71 years ago we were enemy aliens, but now this great nation has honored us with the Congressional Gold Medal. We are all proud Americans, and grateful to our nation for giving us the opportunity to serve our nation as loyal, patriotic citizens. And we will never forget the sacrifices of our brave brothers who did not return from the war," said Senator Daniel K. Inouye.

The Congressional Gold Medal is an award bestowed by Congress, and is the nation's highest civilian award. It is awarded to individuals or units who perform an outstanding service on behalf of the security and prosperity of the United States. The Congressional Gold Medal that will be touring was awarded to the U.S. Army's 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service for their service during World War II. These units were composed almost entirely of persons of Japanese ancestry who fought for America even while their families were forced to live in internment camps.

The Congressional Gold Medal National Tour will travel to seven cities across the country beginning in January 2013. The planned tour will bring the Medal to some of the top museums in the country:

- National World War II Museum, New Orleans – Jan. 12-Feb. 17, 2013
- Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, Honolulu – March 9-April 14, 2013
- Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles – May 4-June 9, 2013
- De Young Museum, San Francisco – June 29-Aug. 4, 2013
- Oregon History Museum, Portland, Ore. – Aug. 24-Sept. 29, 2013
- Chicago History Museum, Chicago – Oct. 19-Dec. 8, 2013
- Holocaust Museum, Houston – Dec. 26, 2013-Jan. 24, 2014

At the conclusion of the tour, the Congressional Gold Medal will be on permanent display in "The Price of Freedom" exhibition at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.

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