

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 6, 2009

Postmaster General John E. Potter  
United States Postal Service  
475 L'Efant Plaza SW  
Washington D.C. 20260-0010

Dear Postmaster General Potter,

I am writing in support of efforts to recognize WWII Nisei veterans through a commemorative stamp. I understand that the USPS's Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee will be meeting next month, but reportedly, a commemorative stamp honoring Nisei veterans will not be considered (see The Oregonian Newspaper Article "Bill would urge U.S. to honor Nisei Vets" dated March 26, 2009).

I urge you and the Committee to reconsider its decision. The 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team, in which the Nisei veterans served, is the most decorated unit in military history and deserves special commemoration. They served with honor and distinction during World War II, even after suffering harsh discrimination at home, and the USPS has honored similar groups before by issuing commemorative stamps.

Shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor on Sunday December 7, 1941, Japanese-Americans were reclassified to 4-C (Enemy Alien) and were forbidden to enlist in the U.S. Military. Many Japanese-Americans (mostly on the west coast) who were U.S. citizens were relocated and incarcerated in internment camps which were located in numerous wasteland areas of the western United States.

However, in January of 1943, President Franklin Roosevelt and the War Department decided to allow Japanese-Americans to volunteer to fight in the "All American-Japanese Regiment" during WWII. By May of 1943, approximately 4,500 Japanese-Americans volunteered to fight. In 1944, they were sent off to Europe and joined the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion.

The 442<sup>nd</sup> Regiment fought in eight major campaigns in the countries of Italy, France and Germany, while battling at Belmont, Bruyeres and Biffontaine. During the battle at Biffontaine, the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regiment lost over 800 troops while rescuing 211 members of the Texan 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 141<sup>st</sup> Regiment. In less than 2 years of combat operations, the 442<sup>nd</sup> earned more than 18,000 individual decorations including several Medals of Honor, 53 Distinguished Service Crosses, 588 Silver Stars, 5,200 Bronze Star Medals, 9,486 Purple Hearts, and 8 Presidential Unit Citations. Again, the 442<sup>nd</sup> is the most decorated unit in U.S. military history.

The USPS has previously issued commemorative stamps to WWII veterans and others in military service, such as:

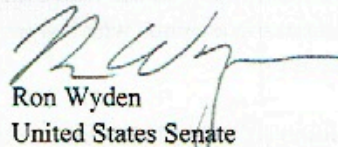
- Buffalo Soldiers (issued in 1994);
- Women in military service (issued in 1977);
- United Confederate Veterans (issued in 1951);
- Grand Army of the Republic (issued in 1949);
- A sheet of 10 stamps commemorating WWII titled "1941: A World at War," which included an individual stamp commemorating the sinking of the U.S.S. Reuben James (DD-245), a unit of the U.S. Navy (issued in 1991);
- A sheet of 10 stamps commemorating WWII titled "1942: Into Battle," which included an individual stamp honoring the U.S.S. Yorktown (CV-10), a unit of the U.S. Navy (issued in 1991);
- A sheet of 10 stamps commemorating WWII titled "1943: Turning the Tide," which included individual stamps honoring military escort ships and the V-mail service (issued in 1991);

I urge you to reconsider adding the "Nisei stamp" onto the committee's agenda for immediate approval. We are losing veterans of the "Greatest Generation" on a daily basis and soon they will all be gone. By approving this commemorative stamp you will be honoring those who lost their lives on the battlefield and those who are with us today.

All our best,



Jeff Merkley  
United States Senate



Ron Wyden  
United States Senate