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JAPANESE AMERICAN WORLD WAR II VETERANS TO RECEIVE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ON NOVEMBER 2ND

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 23, 2011 -- House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH), Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Members of Congress today announced that the Congressional Gold Medal ceremony to honor Japanese American soldiers of the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, as well as veterans of the Military Intelligence Service will take place on November 2, 2011. All three units are being recognized for dedicated service during World War II.

The 442nd RCT was established in February 1943 and fought primarily in Europe until 1945. The 442nd, including the 100th, is one of the most highly decorated units in U.S. military history, having earned thousands of Purple Hearts, more than 500 Silver Stars, nine presidential unit citations and 21 medals of honor. The Military Intelligence Service, whose highly specialized contributions helped hasten the end of the war, was honored with a presidential unit citation in 2000.

The Gold Medal represents Congress's highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions. Legislation awarding this Gold Medal was signed into law on October 5, 2010. S. Con. Res. 28, approved by both the House and the Senate, authorizes the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for the November 2 ceremony.

Their heroes' welcome and recognition comes some 68 years after the war, but it is moment many of the veterans and their families have long awaited. More than 3,000 people are expected to attend the three-day celebration in November.

"It is an incredible moment for generations of Japanese Americans to celebrate and honor the contributions these brave veterans have made to the American story," said Christine Sato-Yamazaki, granddaughter of a 442nd veteran and chairperson of the National Veterans Network (NVN) who led a coalition of organizations nationwide to ensure the Medal is bestowed upon this group of veterans.

"We are the beneficiaries of their sacrifices and contributions, and we owe a debt of gratitude to 100th, 442nd and MIS for their valiant service to this country. Because they answered the call to serve, we enjoy a life of equal opportunities, freedom and privileges that some from their generation did not have."

In commemoration of the Congressional Gold Medal ceremony, the NVN will host three events:



Nov. 1: National World War II Memorial event - Program to honor the service of all Japanese Americans who served during World War II. The Army Chief of Staff (invited) will present 50 bronze star medals to 100th Infantry Battalion and 442nd RCT veterans.

Nov. 2: The Congressional Gold Medal Gala Dinner- Recognizing the Congressional Gold Medal honorees, the Gala will take place in the evening at the Washington Hilton Hotel.

Nov. 1-3: The National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism - Memorial dedicated to the Japanese American World War II experience and the 800 soldiers who gave their lives during World War II. Docents, etchings, flowers and a photographer will be available during the three-day period. A private ceremony for KIA families will take place on November 3.

About the National Veterans Network

The National Veterans Network is a coalition of 25 Japanese American veteran and civic organizations whose mission is to serve the interests of Japanese American World War II and subsequent war veterans. If you are interested in donating, would like to register and get additional information about the upcoming celebration activities, visit the National Veterans Network web site at www.nationalveteransnetwork.com.

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