A Museum Visit

The U.S. Army Museum of Hawaii Hours:
Tuesday through Saturday
10:00 AM until 5:00 PM

MUSEUM STORE HOURS:
Tuesday through Saturday
10 AM until 5:00 PM
CLOSED Christmas, New Year’s Day and Federal Holidays

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From the Desk of the Executive Director

Aloha!

It’s already December and it seems like the year flew. As I reflect on the past year, I remember a year with its ups and downs. Not only personally but for this nation of as a whole.

I guess some would say a fitting end to a decade. Let’s deal with all the “stuff” and begin the new decade fresh. WE are a culture of very different people…the list so long and so diverse to categorize. However, these differences allow us to see the possibilities this world has to offer. We are stronger as one. But beyond that we are respected when respectful. And most importantly Americans know the sacrifice and determination it takes to better injustice.

Americans are good people with good hearts – great minds – incredible spirit – and unsurmountable hope. All of us are here because our ancestors wanted better and this is where it could happen. We must not lose sight of who we are and what the generations before us have accomplished. We must not let their fight fall in vain. We are so much better than the tragedy, division, intolerance and anger that’s plagued us this past year.

President Truman once said, “America was not built on fear. America was built on courage, on imagination, and unbeatable determination to do the job at hand.” So in 2020, we have a big job. To get back to finding solutions through collaboration. Crossing political differences, extending a helping hand, and making concessions for the greater good. It is a tall order, but as an American and I am determined to do the job at hand. We must channel our civility, our decency, our gentleness and remember to keep our disagreements in a caring perspective. So for 2020 I hope to keep things in that light. And we hope that you will too from this season to next.

From all of us here at the Hawaii Army Museum Society, we wish you a Joyous Holiday followed by a Wonderful New Year!!

Mele Kalikimaka,

Cyndi
Hawaii Army Museum Society

An excerpt from “The Go for Broke Spirit; Portraits of Legacy” by Shane Sato. A continuation of his first publication. This excerpt is designed to give you a flavor of the spirit and integrity of these men who served so proudly.

Terry Shima
Born: January 20, 1923, Laupahoehoe, Hawaii
Service Company, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, US Army

“Truman removed the stigma of disloyalty placed there by FDR and facilitated Japanese Americans’ entry into America’s mainstream.”

After Pearl Harbor was attacked, life took a whole different turn for Terry Shima. His brother Hideichi – or as his friends called him, “Buck” – left Hawaii to train at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin with the newly designated 100th Battalion (Separate). Their exemplary training record helped to secure the formation of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The brothers met again when Terry reported to Schofield Barracks on his way to ship out and Buck, who had been wounded, was returning home. Terry was sent to Italy; however, Germany surrendered the day his ship arrived in Naples. It was in Italy that Terry met Sgt. Mike Masaoka, the former secretary-general of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the civil rights advocacy group. Masaoka was the director of public relations for the 442nd. He was conducting interviews at the replacement depot and offered Terry a position in the public relations office. Before Masaoka’s discharge, he made sure that Terry succeeded him in title and rank.

When the 442nd returned to be reviewed by President Truman, Terry returned with the unit to handle public relations. While aboard the troopship, he was invited to work on the daily bulletin, the ships newsletter. Seeing the typewriters and mimeograph machine (a duplicating machine), he realized the opportunity he’d been given. “That gave me an idea, I guess my first big-time public relations idea,” he said, adding, “no doubt, not new to an experienced PR person.” Terry prepared information kits listing campaigns, awards, other relevant facts, and personnel backgrounds that he anticipated the press corps might ask for. When they arrived to a great celebration at New York Harbor, Terry was sent in as the lead to meet with the journalists, armed with his “press kits.” He also coordinated interviews for the press, radio, and the then-embryonic TV networks with the 442nd men. Seeing that the next day’s newspapers were filled with stories about the 442nd, Terry’s commanding officer and staff were very happy with the results of his preparations, causing him to reflect on his lack of experience: “I guess this is the way the job is done!” Terry pointed out that while he was there to do his job, he was not one of the honorees – the soldiers were the ones deserving this recognition.

July 15, 1946 was a rainy day as the men of the 442nd stood at attention on the White House grounds for a ceremony honoring their achievements. Standing with the pool of journalists, Terry overheard that President Truman’s military advisor had recommended that Truman skip the event, causing Truman to respond, “Hell no! For what these boys have done, I can stand a little rain.” Terry noted that in his later years, he realized the significance of Truman’s remarks to the 442nd. Truman stated, “You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice—and you won.”

The read the excerpt in its entirety turn to page 163 of the “Go For Broke Spirit; Portraits of Legacy” book by Shane Sato.
Curator’s Corner

An update from our Museum Curator, Kathleen Frazier

A small program from August 7, 1941 has been preserved in the U.S. Army Museum of Hawaii’s Archival Collection for many years. The program tells of an event that we later discovered hosted intrigue and subterfuge. Two months before the attack on the Hawaiian Islands on December 7, 1941, Wheeler Airfield opened its gates to the general public for a ‘Galaday’ event. The celebration was in honor of the completion of two buildings on Wheeler Field, the airdrome and Post Office. The establishment of flying fields and new equipment and capabilities were essential to Army readiness should the United States enter the war. The Cachet Director of the gala said this about the dedication, “Now, at this time of national emergency, we have the finest network of flying fields of any country in the world.”

The event was open to the general public, drawing large crowds with both military and civilians attending. After the dedication ceremony, American pilots performed aerobatics to the delight of the crowd. There was an All-Star Baseball Game with the Honolulu All-Stars versus the Wheeler Field team, and music was performed by the Wheeler Band. Photography was restricted and precautions made, but a single Japanese spy was able to gain access to the base. He observed the flying skills of the pilots, mentally noted the airplane’s capabilities, paced off the length of the airfield, and identified possible targets. Wheeler Airfield was targeted by the Japanese military for its aerial capabilities. We do not know if the information the spy gathered was passed on to enemy intelligence, or if it was, whether it contributed to the fate of Wheeler Field on December 7th, 1941. Wheeler Field incurred quite a bit of damage from the attack, but it wasn’t crippling to its mission. The airfield was cleared, repairs made, and operations up and running shortly after the attack.
Each year for over two decades, the Hawaii Army Museum Society (HAMS) has honored a person or organization for outstanding contributions to both Hawaii’s military and civilian communities. The award, known as the Ihe (Hawaiian for spear) Award has been presented to leaders in government, business, communications, and the military, as well as major non-profits. Dr. John Henry Felix is the 2019 Ihe recipient.

John Henry Felix patterned his life after Albert Schweitzer.

“The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others.”

He has worked for over eight decades to support local groups such as the Boy Scouts, March of Dimes, the Red Cross and major veterans programs. But his work has extended beyond Hawaii’s boarders. It included efforts to resettle 150,000 Southeast Asian refugees in host countries, as well as setting up programs to help orphans in Southeast Asia and Africa. He serves on the faculty of Oxford University and has contributed both financial support and leadership to that institution.”

Born in Honolulu on June 14, 1930 to Henry and Melinda (Pacheco) Felix, John Henry Felix exemplifies the best Hawaii has to offer. He was educated locally at Chaminade College (1947) as well as on the mainland ultimately receiving his Doctor of Philosophy from Walden University in 1975.

Drafted into the U.S. Army in 1952 as a Combat Infantryman, he is a decorated Korean War
veteran, who also served in the Army Reserve as well as the Hawaii Army Guard.

Chuck Cardinal, President of the Hawaii Army Museum Society commented, “I guess one could say he was always an entrepreneur at heart. As a boy he got his start shining shoes and diving for coins to pay for school tuition.”

In 1961, John Henry Felix built, operated and served as Chair and CEO of the world’s first revolving restaurant (The La Ronde Restaurant), atop the Ala Moana Building. He later expanded the company into 12 restaurants.

But with his entrepreneurial spirit came an understanding of the importance of giving back to one’s community.

Locally, he has been an instrumental player in helping Honolulu and the state of Hawaii prosper and grow. Appointed as Chief of Staff to Hawaii’s first elected Governor (William F. Quinn (R)), John Henry Felix oversaw the realignment of 100+ departments down to less than 20. This transformed Hawaii’s Territorial Government to conform to the State’s new Constitution.

He served on the City Council for 14 years and in that time introduced a resolution to establish the Honolulu Fire Commission as well as passed the Nation’s first smoking ban in public places.

He is also the founder and first Chair of Hawaii Public Radio.

In addition, John Henry Felix was as an instrumental influence is mounting a campaign to restore membership to the Honolulu Chamber of Commerce (now known as Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii). He personally secured over one hundred memberships.

Much of his volunteer service has been focused at the national and international levels. His volunteer service includes the Salk Institute, the March of Dimes, Boy Scouts of America, The American Red Cross, as well as the Consular Corp of Hawaii.

As a result of his efforts with the Red Cross, he received the Harriman Award and is the first American and only person to receive the International Red Cross Dunant Medal of Honor. This is the highest recognition bestowed by the International Red Cross for extraordinary service under adverse conditions. John Henry Felix was the first American to receive this medal. It was presented by President Ronald Reagan in 1983. He also received the Portuguese Red Cross Medal of Honor, the Portuguese Government’s Order of Prince Harry and the Navigator award.

The depth and breadth of his extraordinary life was summed up by President Ronald Reagan who wrote to John Henry in October of 1983 – “You exemplify the true spirit of volunteerism for humanitarian aid to your fellow man.” John Henry has given freely of his time, talent and treasure. He has truly lived a life of service above self.

His work with the Red Cross included refugee assignments in Africa, Timor and South East Asia. John Henry was especially concerned
about the care of orphans in these countries. He set up special facilities for them and personally directed their care, often feeding them and consoling them at the end of a grueling day in spite of being constantly harassed and “detained” by rebel forces in Mozambique, Angola and Timor, by the Viet Cong in Vietnam, and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and Laos.

While working as a Red Cross Delegate in remote parts of the Pacific, he devised the “Walking Blood Donor Program”. Because of the scarcity of proper refrigeration and storage, he recruited potential donors, had them properly registered their contact information and tested for blood type. Calls for donors by name could be made via local radio stations, or the “coconut wireless” as well as two-way radios (prior to cell phones).

The Consular Corps of Hawaii honored John Henry Felix at its Inaugural dinner in Feb of 2016, by honoring him as Doyen of the Corps for being the longest serving active Honorary Consul (Portugal and Spain) in the World.

He has also been a strong advocate for our military in Hawaii. Collaborating with the late Senator Daniel Inouye, Governor John Waihee, and State Senator Neil Abercrombie to establish a state veteran’s cemetery in Kaneohe. He personally donated 30 acres to the project to help spearhead the effort. In addition, he was appointed by the Veterans Administration Director to be Chair of the Homeless Veterans Task Force to address the plight of approximately 400 homeless veterans in Hawaii.

Cardinal concluded, “Few have touched the lives of so many as has John Henry Felix. His efforts have impacted so many for the better. He is the best of us.”

Donors

Thank you to all who donated to making this a wonderful success!!

DONORS

AMVETS

LTC (Ret) Les Bise
COL (Ret) Charles N. Cardinal
ADM (Ret) Thomas B. Fargo
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Honolulu Navy League
Matson Navigation Company, Inc.
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Maude C. Williams
Event Highlights

Thank you to all that attended and helped to recognize Dr. John Henry Felix. We hope you enjoyed yourselves and will continue to support this event!!

In Memory of
Leo Guss Kerlick
(Former Museum Volunteer)

On the morning of November 13, 2019, at the age of 89, Leo Guss Kerlick (former Museum Volunteer) passed away in Richmond, TX.

Leo was born in Cogar, Oklahoma in a log house on August 6, 1930. He was the eighth of nine children and attended Oklahoma A & M University (now OSU), and graduated in 1954 with a degree in Animal Husbandry, paying his way with the money he won while attending high school showing his champion steer at the Tulsa Livestock Show.

A former U.S. Army Artillery Officer, Leo Kerlick served in the Korean War as a forward observer and during the Cold War he was an instructor of Anti-Aircraft Artillery & Guided Missile Systems. Leo continued to serve his country for the next 31 years as an instructor and field engineer at the Defense & Space Training Center, while employed by Westinghouse Electric Corp.

Leo called Hawaii his second home since 1964. He became a devoted member of the Army Museum volunteer staff in 2001. And in 2006, was named Volunteer of the Year.

Leo’s military background and sincere hospitality was an asset to the Hawaii Army Museum. Visitors were warmly greeted and he always shared a wealth of information with them. In Hawaii, he relaxed and soaked up the sun for 19 years before he moved back to Oklahoma. Last year he and his sister, Jewell, move to Richmond, TX where he enjoyed the rest of his days under the care of his nephew.

Leo we thank you for your service and your support to the U.S. Army Museum of Hawaii. May you rest in peace and know that your contributions made a difference and will not be forgotten.
Volunteer of the Year

On December 14, 2019, HAMS and the U.S. Army of Hawaii staff held their annual volunteer breakfast at the Hale Koa Hotel to thank all of our volunteers for their continued support. Traditionally we recognized our Volunteer of the Year at this breakfast and this was no exception. This year’s annual recognition goes to Rick Cox who is a regular volunteer at the museum’s visitor desk on Wednesday mornings and Thursday afternoons. In addition to providing an outstanding museum visitor experience by greeting visitors and orienting them to the museum, Rick has also ably assisted in the museum store and helped to on-board new volunteers.

The Volunteer of the Year Award is presented to highly deserving volunteers in recognition of their considerable contributions to the museum and is awarded in honor of the memory of Shiroku "Whitey" Yamamoto, an exceptional volunteer who devoted 30 years of dedicated service to U.S. Army Museum of Hawaii.

Rick is originally from Hull, Massachusetts and is a 20 year veteran of Army Intelligence retiring as a LTC. Should you visit the museum, please reach out and say hello to this year’s Volunteer of the Year, LTC (Ret) Rick Cox.

Mark Your Calendars!
2020 HAMS Schedule

HAMS Board of Trustee
15 January
15 April
15 July
21 October

HAMS Executive Committee
19 February
18 March
20 May
17 June
19 August
16 September
18 November

MG (Ret) Herbert E. Wolff Annual Memorial Golf Tournament
June 19, 2020

Help support the museum by becoming a member of the Hawaii Army Museum Society. Society members receive a 15% store discount on all merchandise

On-line ordering available at: www.hiarmymuseumsoc.org
Or contact us at: (808) 955-9552