

Belated Salute



Nine Hawaii Guardsmen added to NGEF Medal of Honor Gallery for actions in World War II, Korea

By Ron Jensen

THE NATIONAL GUARD EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION added nine names last month to its Medal of Honor Gallery at the NGAUS headquarters in Washington, D.C. The nine men who earned their nation's highest award for valor were members of the Hawaii National Guard before they went to war.

They were initially awarded Distinguished Service Crosses, but efforts to upgrade their awards to more accurately reflect the valor of their actions proved successful.

Eight of them earned their medals during World War II and were awarded the Medal of Honor in 2000. In April 2011, another Hawaii Guardsman was recognized for his actions during the Korean War.

The Medal of Honor Gallery, however, did not reflect these upgrades, an oversight noticed a year ago by two members of the Hawaii Guard, Lt. Col. Mark Takai and Maj. Dion Kaimihana. With the help of Anne Armstrong, the deputy director of NGEF, a plaque bearing the names of the nine Guardsmen from the Aloha State is now on display.

"This is significant," said Takai, the immediate past president of the Hawaii National Guard Association. "Not only does it recognize soldiers who deserve the Medal of Honor, it identifies these men as National Guardsmen from Hawaii. For those of us who are Hawaii National Guard members, this is very important."

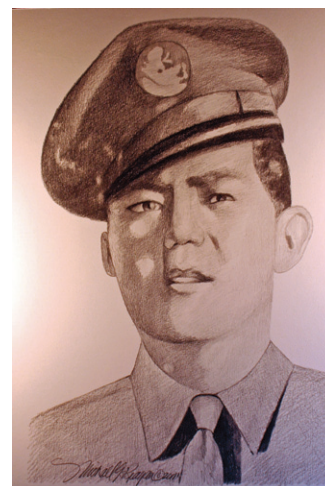
Armstrong and Takai were joined by Maj. Gen. Darryll Wong, the Hawaii adjutant general and the entire Hawaii congressional delegation—Sen. Mazie Hirono, Sen. Brian Schatz, Rep. Tulsi Gabbard and Rep. Colleen Hanabusa—at the dedication ceremony Jan. 28.

The Medal of Honor Gallery now includes the names of 137 recipients of the nation's highest award for valor who have served in the National Guard.

Below are the nine American heroes along with accounts of their actions based on their award citations.

Pvt. Mikio Hasemoto

Pvt. Mikio Hasemoto distinguished himself Nov. 29, 1943, near Cerasuolo, Italy. About 40 enemy soldiers armed with machine guns, machine pistols, rifles and grenades attacked the left flank of his platoon. When two enemy machine gunners advanced on him, Hasemoto, an automatic rifleman, challenged them, firing four magazines before his weapon was hit and damaged. He ran 10 yards to the rear, secured another automatic rifle and continued to fire until his weapon jammed.



Hasemoto

Hasemoto and his squad leader had killed about 20 enemy soldiers. Hasemoto ran through a barrage of enemy machine-gun fire to pick up an M-1 rifle. He and the squad leader killed 10 more enemy soldiers. With only three enemy left, the two GIs charged forward, killed one, wounded another and captured the third. The next day, Hasemoto was killed while repelling an enemy attack.

Pvt. Shizuya Hayashi

Pvt. Shizuya Hayashi was cited for heroism Nov. 29, 1943, near Cerasuolo, Italy. During a flank assault on high ground held by the enemy, he rose alone in the face of grenade, rifle and machine-gun fire. Firing his automatic rifle from the hip, he charged an enemy machine gun, killing seven enemy soldiers in the nest and two

more as they fled. The platoon then advanced about 200 yards when an enemy anti-aircraft gun opened fire on the men. Hayashi returned fire, killing nine enemy soldiers, capturing four and forcing the others to flee.

Tech. Sgt. Yeiki Kobashigawa

Tech Sgt. Yeiki Kobashigawa distinguished himself in action June 2, 1944, near Lanuvio, Italy. During an attack, his platoon encountered strong enemy resistance from a series of machine guns. Observing a nest about 50 yards away, he crawled forward with one of his men, threw a grenade and then charged the enemy with his submachine gun while a fellow soldier provided covering fire. He killed one enemy soldier and captured two prisoners.

Even as Kobashigawa and his comrade took the first nest, another machine gun opened fire on them from 50 yards ahead. Directing a squad into the captured position, Kobashigawa and another soldier advanced against the second gun. After throwing grenades into the position, he provided cover fire while his comrade charged and

position to face the enemy alone.

As enemy troops concentrated their strength on his emplacement, Kaho'ohanohano fought fiercely, delivering deadly accurate fire. When his ammunition was depleted, he engaged the enemy in hand-to-hand combat until he was killed. Kaho'ohanohano's heroic stand so inspired his comrades that they counterattacked and repulsed the enemy. Upon reaching Kaho'ohanohano's position, friendly troops found 11 enemy soldiers dead in front of the emplacement and two inside it, killed in hand-to-hand combat.

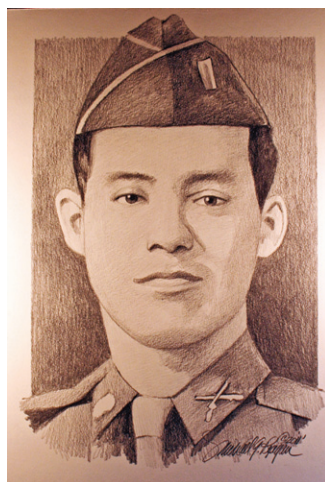
Pfc. Kaoru Moto

Pfc. Kaoru Moto distinguished himself July 7, 1944, near Castellina, Italy. While serving as first scout, Moto observed a machine-gun nest that was impeding his platoon. Making his way to within 10 paces of the hostile position, he killed the enemy gunner, but came under fire from the assistant gunner.

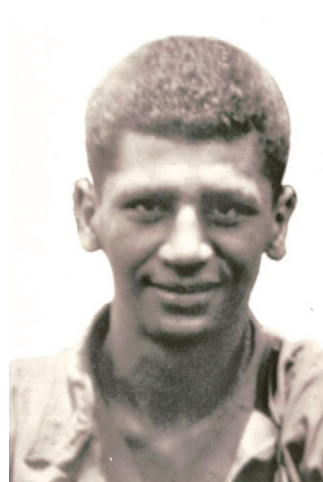
Crawling to the rear of the position, Moto surprised the enemy soldier, who quickly surrendered.



Hayashi



Kobashigawa



Kaho'ohanohano



Moto

captured four prisoners. Discovering four more machine-gun nests, he led a squad in neutralizing two of them.

Pfc. Anthony T. Kaho'ohanohano

Pfc. Anthony T. Kaho'ohanohano was cited for heroism Sept. 1, 1951, near Chupa-ri, Korea. Kaho'ohanohano was in charge of a machine-gun squad defending his unit's position when a numerically superior enemy force attacked, forcing friendly troops to withdraw. As the men fell back, Kaho'ohanohano ordered his squad to reposition and provide covering fire. Although wounded in the initial attack, Kaho'ohanohano gathered a supply of grenades and ammunition and returned to his original

Taking his prisoner with him, Moto holed up near a house and guarded it to prevent the enemy from using it as an observation post. Observing an enemy machine-gun team moving into position, he opened fire and forced them to flee.

An enemy sniper in another house severely wounded Moto. Applying first aid to his wound, he eluded sniper fire and made his way to the rear for treatment. As he crossed a road, he spotted an enemy machine-gun nest and opened fire, wounding two of the three soldiers occupying the position. He advanced on the nest, ordered the enemy to surrender and opened fire when he received no answer. The enemy soldiers then quickly surrendered.

Pvt. Masato Nakae

Pvt. Masato Nakae was cited for heroism Aug. 19, 1944, near Pisa, Italy. When his submachine gun was damaged by a shell fragment during a fierce attack, Nakae quickly picked up a wounded comrade's M-1 rifle and fired rifle grenades at the steadily advancing enemy. He also threw six grenades and forced the enemy to withdraw. Seriously wounded by shrapnel during an enemy mortar barrage, Nakae refused to surrender his position and continued firing at the advancing enemy. He inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy, breaking up the attack and causing the enemy to withdraw.

armed with machine guns, machine pistols and rifles. He posted an automatic rifleman 15 yards to his left, and together the team delivered effective fire against the enemy. The automatic rifleman called for assistance when his weapon was shot and damaged.

Disregarding his own safety, Ohata sprinted through heavy machine-gun fire, reached his comrade's position, immediately sprayed 10 enemy soldiers and successfully covered the man's withdrawal to replace his damaged weapon. Ohata and the automatic rifleman held their positions and killed some 37 enemy. Then the men charged and captured the three remain-



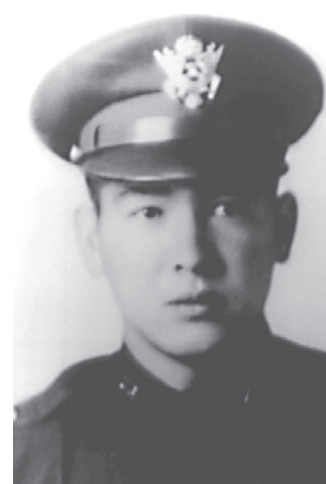
Nakae



Nakamine



Ohata



Wai

Pvt. Shinyei Nakamine

Pvt. Shinyei Nakamine received the Medal of Honor for valor June 2, 1944, near La Torreto, Italy. When his platoon was pinned down by intense machine-gun cross-fire, Nakamine crawled within 25 yards of one position and then charged it firing his submachine gun, killing three enemy soldiers and capturing two.

Later that afternoon, Nakamine discovered an enemy soldier on the right flank of his platoon's position. Crawling 25 yards, Nakamine opened fire and killed the enemy. Then, seeing a machine-gun nest about 25 yards to his front, he led an automatic rifle team against it. Under covering fire, he crawled to within 25 yards of the nest and neutralized it with hand grenades, wounding one enemy soldier and capturing four. He was leading the automatic rifle team against a second nest about 100 yards to his right when he was killed by a burst of machine-gun fire.

ing soldiers. Later, the two stopped another attacking force of 14, killing four and wounding three while the others fled. The next day, the two men again held their ground against waves of enemy soldiers and staved off all attacks.

Capt. Francis B. Wai

Capt. Francis B. Wai was honored for valor Oct. 20, 1944, at Leyte, the Philippines. Wai landed at Red Beach, Leyte, in the face of accurate, concentrated enemy fire from gun positions in a palm grove bounded by submerged rice paddies. Finding the first four waves leaderless, disorganized and pinned down on the open beach, he immediately assumed command.

Disregarding heavy enemy fire, he moved inland without cover through the rice paddies. The men, inspired by his cool demeanor and example, followed him. During his advance, Wai repeatedly pinpointed enemy strong points by exposing his position and drawing their fire. He was killed while leading an assault on the last Japanese pillbox in the area. 🦋

Sgt. Allan M. Ohata

Sgt. Allan M. Ohata was cited for heroism Nov. 29 and 30, 1943, near Cerasuolo, Italy. Ohata, his squad leader and three other men were ordered to protect their platoon's left flank against an attacking force of 40 men,

RON JENSEN *may be contacted at 202-408-5885 or at ron.jensen@nga.us.org.*