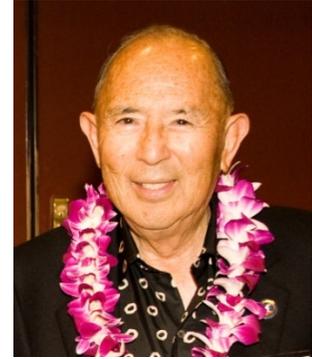


Manabi Hirasaki
522nd Field Artillery Battalion, C Battery

“I just figured I was doing my share...I was proud to be with the 442nd.”

Manabi Hirasaki knew the power behind the 100th/442nd/MIS story. A group of young men battled both the enemy and American prejudice, emerging successful and providing a shining model for future generations. That is why, after fighting in World War II, Manabi battled for decades to ensure that his fellow soldiers’ legacy was never forgotten.



Manabi was born in San Jose, California, in 1923. He was the eldest of eight children born to Japanese immigrants Kiyoshi and Haruye Hirasaki. Manabi was a student at UC Davis when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. His father, influential in the Japanese American community, was picked up by the FBI shortly after.

After his father was released, Manabi sought to enlist in the US military. After he passed his physical, he was turned down by the Navy, the Marines, and the Army, due to his Japanese ancestry. About two months later, the Army began accepting Japanese American volunteers, and Manabi joined.

Manabi was assigned to the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion, part of the all-Japanese American 442nd Regimental Combat Team. He deployed to Europe in May 1944, and fought in campaigns throughout Italy, France, and Germany.

After the war, Manabi became a successful farmer and businessman. He was the owner of Manabi Farms, Inc., and became the first non-family member to serve as a director of the world-renowned Driscoll Strawberry Association.

But Manabi’s true passion was philanthropy and educating the public about the legacy of the 100th/442nd/MIS. Manabi and his wife Sumi became staunch supporters of numerous Japanese American groups, causes, and organizations. The family has been a strong supporter of Go For Broke National Education Center (GFBNEC) and its worldwide educational outreach.

Manabi passed away in 2012 at the age of 89. But the efforts that he started continue strong.

Again this year, Pacific Global Investment Management Company is sponsoring the GFBNEC Student Essay, Poetry & Video Contest in honor of Manabi and fellow philanthropist Sig Kagawa. True to Manabi’s vision, hundreds of high school and college students nationwide will get the chance to research and write about the Japanese American soldiers of World War II. Many will even take up their cameras and film short videos, all in the effort to sustain this important legacy. Manabi once said that it was his goal to “ensure that the Japanese American story remains accessible to all.” Thanks to his lasting efforts and the continuing efforts of Pacific Global Investment Management Company, his dream has become a reality.

“We did the battle...and I think we did it honorably. We never thought about ourselves. We did it for the generations to come. That’s what people got to remember, that a lot of them sacrificed themselves.”
- Manabi Hirasaki, 1999

2018 High School and College Essay, Performance & Visual Arts Contest– Honorees

The contest has been made possible by the generous support of two Supporting Sponsors: Ken and June Shimabukuro, and an anonymous donor in memory of World War II Veteran Masao Takahashi.