



**Ranger Hall of Fame
inductees
Roy Matsumoto and
Grant Hirabayashi
to be honored by
Oct. 5, 2010
Congressional Gold
Medal**



Nisei warriors Roy Matsumoto, left, and Grant Hirabayashi, right, attend a November Japanese American event.

Ranger Hall of Fame inductees Grant Hirabayashi, 91, and Roy Matsumoto, 97, are among WW II Japanese American veterans who will be honored by the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest honor for civilians, in 2011.

President Barack Obama in October 2010 signed Senate Bill 1055, which will honor the WW II Japanese American veterans with the Military Intelligence Service CGM. George Washington received the first Gold Medal in 1776. Others have gone to the Wright Brothers, Thomas Edison, WW II Tuskegee Airmen and WW II Navajo Code Talkers.

Both Hirabayashi and Matsumoto were interpreters in the China - Burma - India Theater of War with the 5307th Composite Unit Provisional, known today as Merrill's Marauders. Today's Army Rangers trace their lineage to the Marauders.

"I am so pleased that the Senate is honoring these courageous soldiers with a Congressional Gold Medal for their service to the United States during WW II," said California Senator Barbara Boxer, who introduced the bill. "These brave Japanese Americans enlisted in the Army and fought for their country even as many of their family members and friends were sent to internment camps. This recognition of their service and patriotism is long overdue."

Senator Boxer and Congressman Adam Schiff, who introduced a similar bill approved by the House of Representatives last year, agreed that the bills, which initially honored only Japanese Americans in the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, should be amended to include the Military Intelligence Service (MIS.) Hirabayashi and Matsumoto were with the MIS.

The recommendation to include the MIS was by the National Veteran's Network (NVN,) an ad hoc group of 22 Japanese American veteran's organizations, which will also coordinate in the design of the Gold Medal.

A month after the bill was signed Oct. 5, 2010, Hirabayashi and Matsumoto attended a November 9 ceremony in Washington, DC, honoring the 10th anniversary of dedicating the Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism. Photos of the two Nisei in this Anet are from that November ceremony.

The Gold Medal will be produced by the U.S. Mint and presented during a special 2011 Washington, DC, ceremony. It will be awarded to all qualifying WW II Japanese Americans, living or deceased, who served with the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd RCT and the MIS between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946. Those wanting additional information should contact Yuzo Tokita at yuzotokita@gmail.com.

CAPTION: *Matsumoto claps as Hirabayashi, his long-time friend and "battle buddy," is recognized in November. Hirabayashi died two weeks after this photo was taken.*

