

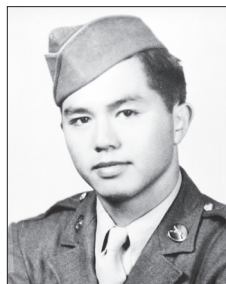
Kazuo Masuda: A Hero's Story

Handout 3-A (1)

39

Name _____

**Read this true story and answer the questions at the end in full sentences.
As you read, think about what makes a person a hero.**



Kazuo (Kaz) Masuda, born in 1918, was one of eleven children in a farming family of Japanese descent in southern California. He and his brother Takashi were drafted into the peacetime army in October, 1941 and were in basic training when Pearl Harbor was bombed by Japan. The Masuda family was removed from the West Coast under Executive Order 9066. The family spent the next several years in concentration camps in Arkansas and Arizona.

Meanwhile both brothers in army training were placed in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, an all Nisei (second generation Japanese American) unit. The 442nd is famous for having been the most highly decorated unit in military history for its size and length of service. Altogether over 33,300 Nisei soldiers served during World War II.

Kaz Masuda's first notice by his superiors was in awarding him the rank of Staff Sergeant. It might be because they recognized his spirit matched the regimental slogan: "Go for Broke." When his battalion reached Italy he was also recognized for his part in the landing at Anzio. His squad was the only group to remain on the beach throughout the entire battle.

As the 442nd pushed north into Italy it met heavy resistance from the German lines, and enemy shells had cut off communications. Unwilling to risk the men under his command, he obtained a mortar tube, 20 rounds of ammunition, and an extra helmet. He then crawled 200 yards with this heavy load under extreme enemy fire, packed dirt into the helmet and used it for a mortar base. When the Germans attacked he fired all 20 rounds and turned them back. The Germans found his location and poured mortar and artillery fire on his position. He returned for more ammo and held his position for 12 hours. He was awarded the second highest decoration the United States gives, the Distinguished Service Cross, for his bravery.

However, he did not live to receive it. A few weeks later S/Sgt. Masuda volunteered to lead a squad on a night patrol across the Arno River. The riverbanks were mined and booby-trapped and he and his men were surrounded by enemy forces. He ordered his squad to withdraw, leading them to believe he would follow, and he covered their retreat. They found him the next morning, his sub-machine gun still in his hands, facing the enemy, lying over a dead German machine gunner.

It was General Joe Stillwell who presented the Distinguished Service Cross to Kazuo Masuda's family, assisted by a young lieutenant who would one day become a president of the United States, Ronald Reagan. General Stillwell said: "...the amount of money, the color of one's skin, do not make a measure of Americanism. ...The real American is a man who calls it a fair exchange to lay down his life in order that American ideals may go on living. Judging from such a test, S/Sgt. Masuda was a better American than any of us here today."

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Kazuo Masuda: A Hero's Story

Handout 3-A (2)

40

In 1948 when S/Sgt. Masuda's remains were brought from Italy to be buried in his hometown, his family was denied a burial plot because he was of Japanese descent. His family made this rejection known in the community, and the public reacted intensely, supporting his burial as a hero. The family was allowed to bury him in the cemetery, with full military honors.

Today, there is a middle school in California bearing his name. He is honored on a monument at the site of the Gila River Concentration Camp near Phoenix, Arizona, and several veterans' and youth organizations are also named after him. More than that, Kazuo Masuda is remembered and honored by those who knew him, who owe their lives to him, and who realize that the ultimate self-sacrifice of one human for others, is the most extreme measure of courage, and of a true American.

1. How old was Kaz Masuda when he was drafted? _____
2. Explain what the word "Nisei" means. _____
3. What was the regimental slogan of the 442nd? What does it mean? _____

4. Where did S/Sgt Kaz Masuda fight in Europe? What is the shape of this country on a map? _____

5. Where was S/Sgt Masuda's family living while he fought in Europe? Why? _____
6. Summarize in one or two sentences what General Stillwell thought of S/Sgt Kaz Masuda. _____

7. Why did the cemetery refuse to bury S/Sgt Kaz Masuda's remains? _____
8. If you wanted to honor S/Sgt Kazuo Masuda as an American hero, what would you do? _____

9. Can you guess which American President in the 1980's signed a bill to redress persons of Japanese descent for their confinement during WWII? _____

10. Write a 5 sentence paragraph on what you believe makes a human a hero. Use the other side if necessary.

How Racial Discrimination Feels

Activity Ballots

Handout 3-C (3)

46

You are Issei. You were born in Japan. You are not allowed to become a citizen. You are not able to vote. You are not allowed to own land. You do not speak English, and rely on your children to translate. You have your life savings in the bank which has been frozen. Your favorite sport is sumo. You are ordered to report to an assembly point with just what you can carry. Meanwhile you must follow a curfew and may not travel more than 5 miles from home. You are also instructed to turn in your binoculars, cameras, radios. Your religion is Shinto.

You are Nisei, the second generation of a family of Japanese descent. You were born in the U.S. and are a citizen. You vote. You speak English and have a college degree. You do not own land, but you do have a savings account that has been frozen. You are ordered to report to an assembly point with just what you can carry. You must follow a curfew and may not travel more than 5 miles from home. You are also instructed to turn in your binoculars, cameras, radios. Your religion is Buddhism.

You are the child of a Japanese mother and a Euro American father. You were born in the U.S. and are a citizen. You are 19 and cannot vote until you are 21. You graduated from high school. You just started college when you received a letter from your mother that you and she must report to an assembly point. Meanwhile you must follow a curfew and may not travel more than 5 miles from home. You are also instructed to turn in your binoculars, cameras, radios. You are Christian.

You are the fourth generation in your family who came from Ireland during one of the 1800 potato famines. You were born in the U.S. and are a citizen. You vote. You speak English. You finished the 10th grade and then went on to get a good job in a factory. You mean to open a savings account, but you currently don't have any savings. You do not own a home. You are a Protestant.

Your ancestors have been in America so long you do not even know when they came. You are a college student who plays part time in a rock and roll band. You speak English. You could have voted in the last election but did not. You have no savings and live from pay check to pay check. You live at home with your parents. You are Irish Catholic.



How Racial Discrimination Feels

Activity Ballots

Handout 3-C (4)

47

You were born and raised on the Navajo Reservation at Window Rock, AZ. You have an Associates Degree (2 years) in accounting and work in a bank. You have a savings account. You speak English, Navajo, and Spanish. You are a citizen and vote. You own your own home which is a hogan. You follow your tribe's traditional religion.

You were born and raised on the Hupa Reservation in California. You are $\frac{1}{4}$ Hupa, $\frac{1}{4}$ Japanese, and $\frac{1}{2}$ Italian American. You finished high school. You are in the army and you are 20 years old, so you cannot yet vote. You have no savings. You are stationed in Hawaii. You speak English and Hupa. You are a member of the Protestant church.

You were born and raised in Georgia, a descendent of slaves. You are a citizen and vote. You do not own a home, but are saving money in your savings account towards that goal. You finished high school and college. You speak English. Your religion is Protestant.

You were born in Germany but have grown up in the U.S. You have never become a citizen, but you plan to sometime. You finished high school. You are 21 years old and are a college student. You live at school and do not own a home. You do have some savings. You speak English and German. You are a Lutheran (Protestant).

You are a third generation German American. You are over 21 and you did not vote in the last election. You speak English. You have savings. You did not complete high school, but you plan to finish. You own your own home. You are a Catholic.

You are a naturalized American, born in Rome. You have full citizenship rights and vote. You own a piece of land that you are building your own home on. You have a savings account. You are Catholic.

You were born and raised in Arizona and are of Mexican descent. You have full citizenship rights and you vote. You do not own land. You have a savings account. You are Catholic. You just finished high school. You speak English and Spanish.

You were born and raised in New Mexico and are of Chinese descent. You have full citizenship rights, and you vote. You own a home and land. You have a savings account. You finished high school. You speak English and Mandarin. Your religion is Buddhism.

