

11-23-03

Thomas Kuwahara  
15 Trillium Triangle  
Lafayette, La 70507

Dear Mr.Kuwahara,

I am writing in regards to your concerns about the road named Jap Road. I too find this name offensive.

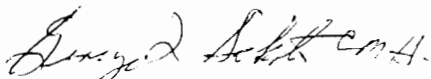
I am a Japanese American veteran of the 442 Regimental Combat Team. I fought in France during World War II. The 442 was in the campaign to rescue the 141<sup>st</sup> Battalion, also known as "The Lost Battalion", of the 36<sup>th</sup> division. Mr. Saburo Tanimachi was a member of our unit. Saburo was a native to San Benito, Texas. He received the Silver Star for his heroism on the battle field.. During this campaign he was fatally injured by machine gun fire. He died in my arms, resulting in my charging the hill to retake it. For this I received the Distinguished Service Cross. In the year 2000 it was upgraded to the Medal of Honor. There were 800 casualties from our unit to rescue 280 men. The Governor of Texas at that time made the members of the 442 honorary Texans.

As the recipient of the medal of honor, to hear that there is a road named Jap Road in Texas is unbelievable to me. I have held being made an honorary Texan very dear to my heart up to this point. The bond that men make in battle means a great deal to me as we were brother's in arms fighting a similar enemy, however the knowledge that this road exists with a racial slur as it's name brings back the feelings of discrimination that we experienced during WWII. The honorary title of Texan, feels like an embarrassment.

This issue makes me appreciate the struggle against discrimination that African Americans experience. I understand that there was a bill enacted regarding the elimination of racially offensive names given to geographical features, as it relates to "Black features." I am surprised that a similar bill has not been passed regarding this offensive name for that road..

You have my support regarding the battle against this present day discrimination.

Sincerely,



George T. Sakato

CC: Governor Rick Perry ✓  
Mayor Evelyn M. Lord ✓  
President George W. Bush ✓