



# JAVA ADVOCATE



Navy CAPT Nakagawa and his A6A Intruder.

## Navy Captain Nakagawa Achieves Two Major Goals

By Larry Oda

*Monterey, California.*

Who is the late retired Captain Gordon R. Nakagawa, USN? Gordon was born in Auburn, CA, on June 13, 1935. At age 6, he and his family were forcibly imprisoned at the Tule Lake internment center. After the war, Gordon's family relocated in Lincoln, California. He received his commission through the Navy ROTC program when he graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1958. He then completed flight training, and received his designation as a Naval Aviator in August 1959. Gordon flew 185 combat missions, with four combat deployments to Vietnam. In December 1972, his aircraft was struck by enemy fire, resulting in Gordon being taken as a Prisoner of War (POW) in Hanoi, North Vietnam. He was one of the last POWs released from the "Hanoi Hilton," on March 29, 1973. Following his release, Gordon was assigned to command and teaching assignments at domestic posts, including at the US Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland.

Captain Nakagawa's awards include two Legions of Merit, two Bronze Stars, two Purple Hearts, and a POW Medal. He was an advocate and champion of education. For 8-1/2 years, he was an elected trustee on the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District Board and a Board Member Emeritus of Leadership Monterey Peninsula. (continued on page 3...)

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## Retired New Jersey Legislator Visits China to Meet Her Rescuer from WWII POW Camp

*Haddonfield, New Jersey.* During WWII, Mary Taylor Previte, then age 12 and daughter of Christian missionaries, who ran a Bible School in Fenghsiang, Shensi Province, China, was confined as prisoners of war (POW) to the Imperial Japanese-held Weihsien Civilian Assembly Center in Weihsien, China. Mary was held for three years along with 1,500 other foreign nationals. On August 17, 1945, a seven-man rescue team from the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) parachuted from a low-flying B-24 bomber to liberate the camp. The liberation team consisted of six Americans and one Chinese national, an interpreter.

After the rescue, members of the Team scattered across America to pursue their lives. Previte settled in Haddonfield, where she was elected as a member of the New Jersey State Assembly from 1998 to 2006. Wanting to say thank you face to face to each hero, Previte began a two-year search in 1997. She met her four heroes and two widows, including Tadashi "Tad" Nagaki, an OSS Japanese linguist. Nagaki operated a farm in Alliance, Nebraska, where he grew corn, beans, and sugar beets. In 2013, invited by Nagaki's two grandsons, Previte flew to Alliance for a town-wide celebration of her hero's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Previte wrote an article of this reunion for the *JAVA Advocate* Spring 2013 issue.



Previte and Nagaki in Denver, CO. Photo from Previte.



Previte and Eddie Wang in China. Photo from Dazhong Website.

Previte had one more mission: to locate a Chinese national, Eddie Wang Cheng-Han, who served as the rescue team's Chinese interpreter. In 2015, Wang Qian, Eddie's grandson, a student from China studying in America, read an article about Previte on the Internet. The article said that Previte was attempting to locate Eddie Wang. The student contacted Previte, who, in turn, telephoned Eddie. The Dazhong Website noted that Previte, now 83, visited Guiyang, capital of Guizhou Province, on July 27, 2016. Previte went to Wang's home for the reunion. They embraced each other and discussed the rescue operation. Wang said in 1943 he was enrolled in the Department of Physics at Sichuan University. In 1944 he joined the Army and entered into the English interpreter training program following which he was assigned to OSS. Previte's 19 year search for her rescuers is now complete.

*[EdNote: Assemblywoman Previte contributed to this article.]*

## CAPT (Dr) Macri Speaks at Asia Pacific American Heritage Month Celebration

On May 6, 2016 CAPT (Dr) Cynthia Macri, USN (Ret), head of JAVA Speakers Bureau, (white uniform) was invited to Ft. Lee, Virginia on the occasion of the Asia Pacific American Heritage Month celebration. The theme of the event was: honor the 442nd, 100th, and MIS. Macri spoke about the history of the segregated Japanese American units and the legacy they left, opening doors for all Asian Americans and new immigrants to truly dream big. The program featured performances from India, Vietnam, China, New Zealand, and Tahiti. This photo was taken with the Vietnamese dancers, all active duty soldiers on post. Photo from CAPT Macri.

