

Iva Toguri "Tokyo Rose" Receives Citizenship Award

World War II Veterans Committee presents the Edward J. Herlihy Citizenship Award to wrongly labeled patriot.

LOS ANGELES—The World War II Veterans Committee presented its Edward J. Herlihy Citizenship Award to Iva Toguri, the patriotic American woman who was wrongfully dubbed the infamous "Tokyo Rose," in a ceremony on Jan. 15, in Chicago, Illinois.

It seemed the defining moments of Ms. Toguri's life have revolved around citizenship. Born on July 4, 1916, Iva was the first in her family to be an American citizen. Her parents were immigrants to the country, and insisted that Iva and her siblings assimilate into the local culture. In a twist of fate, Iva, who was visiting relatives in Japan, became trapped in the country at the outbreak of World War II.

Though pressured to renounce her American citizenship by the Japanese secret police, Iva refused. She worked odd jobs to support herself, all the while trying to find a way out of the country, and back home.

One of these jobs was as an English-language typist for Radio Tokyo.

While working at the station, she was chosen to appear on a Japanese radio propaganda broadcast entitled Zero Hour, intended to be aired for American servicemen in the Pacific. Iva protested, claiming that she knew nothing of radio. However, as a stranger in a strange land, she really had no choice, and was assured that she would say nothing derogatory about her native country. In fact, the Australian prisoner of war who was put in charge of the program, Major Charles Cousens, secretly planned on sabotaging the program, making it useless to the Japanese as propaganda. It was for this reason that he lobbied for the pro-American Iva Toguri to be on the show.

Zero Hour became the farce of a program that Cousens envisioned, and Iva's appearances were limited to mainly introducing records and making jokes. She adopted the nickname "Orphan Ann," partly intended to be a subtle reference to the fact that, like the American servicemen in the Pacific, she too was stuck far from home.

Meanwhile, however, the legend of "Tokyo Rose" was growing throughout the Pacific. An all-knowing reporter of American troop movements, Tokyo Rose was said to taunt the soldiers, sailors, and Marines. In fact, there was no Tokyo Rose. Rather, she was a composite of about a dozen women broadcasting over Japanese radio. At least one of these women was a former American, who, unlike Iva, had given up her citizenship. Still, the legend grew, and following the war, a witch-hunt for the real Tokyo Rose ensued. Incredibly, Iva Toguri was fingered by the Japanese, due to her pro-American sentiments. In turn, she was prosecuted for treason, a charge only made possible because she had refused to ever give up her American citizenship. She was convicted, based largely on the testimony of two former Radio Tokyo employees, Kenkichi Oki and George Mitsushio, both of whom were Americans who had renounced their own citizenship. She was sentenced to a decade in prison, and in a sad twist of irony, Iva was stripped of the citizenship



Iva Toguri's friends and supporters following the presentation of the Edward J. Herlihy Citizenship Award (left to right): Barbara Trembley, Committee President James C. Roberts, Ron Yates, Donna LaPietra, Iva's long-time lawyer Wayne Merrill Collins, Iva Toguri, and Bill Kurtis.

she had fought so hard to keep.

Almost immediately, questions arose about the trial. The case against Iva was weak, and due to the hysteria surrounding the ordeal, it appeared that the government was more interested in convicting the myth of Tokyo Rose than the actual person of Iva Toguri. Over the years, the truth gradually came to light, due to the efforts of a few dedicated journalists. Bill Kurtis, now host of A&E's Investigative Reports, was news anchor for WBBM-TV in Chicago during the 1960s. He took a keen interest in the story after learning that the woman dubbed "Tokyo Rose" had moved to Chicago following her release from prison. Kurtis approached Iva with the idea of a documentary on her ordeal, and though she wanted an opportunity to clear her name, she was understandably wary of media attention. In time, Kurtis earned her trust, and the result was the 1969 documentary *The Story of Tokyo Rose*, the first time Iva had been able to tell her story the way it really happened.

In 1976, Oki and Mitsushio, the two men whose testimony was most responsible for Iva's conviction, admitted to reporter Ron Yates that they had lied—committed perjury—during the trial, after being pressured by the government. To those familiar with the case, it was becoming more and more obvious that Iva Toguri was innocent. The movement to clear her name gained even greater momentum following an in-depth examination of the case by 60 Minutes later in 1976. Iva was finally vindicated when, in his last act in office, President Gerald Ford granted a full and unconditional pardon, declaring that she had been wrongfully convicted and restoring the American citizenship that she held so dear.

Though her conviction was erased and her citizenship restored, Iva Toguri has never been able to fully escape from the shadow of Tokyo Rose. So many Americans have heard the myth of Tokyo Rose for so long that it has become a part of World War II history. In recent years, the World War II Veterans Committee has become aware of the story of Iva Toguri

and Tokyo Rose, and has joined the effort to separate the myth from the reality. The Committee published the story, "Convicting a Myth: Debunking the Legend of Tokyo Rose and the Real Woman Who Took the Blame" by Tim Holbert in the Winter 2004/05 issue of *World War II Chronicles*. The article is, to date, the most comprehensive account of the story of Tokyo Rose and the vindication of Iva Toguri (copies can be requested by contacting the World War II Veterans Committee).

The response to the article was overwhelmingly positive, and mirrors the response of most Americans when they are told the true story of Tokyo Rose. Perhaps more significantly, due in large part to the article, the FBI has removed its official history of the trial of Iva Toguri from its web site while the case is reviewed by the Bureau's historians. This history was especially damaging to Iva's reputation, as it often mixed rumors and innuendoes with fact, leading many journalists, historians, and researchers to misinterpret the case, and continue the myth of Tokyo Rose.

As difficult as Iva Toguri's life has been, it has at the same time proven inspirational to so many who have come to know her story. It is true that her story demonstrates that America, and our government, are not always perfect. However, the question must be asked, what, if any, other country in the world could inspire a person to risk their life to hold onto their citizenship, then refuse to lose faith once it was taken from them? This speaks volumes about America's ideals, and the decency of its people.

Due to her indomitable spirit, love of country, and the example of courage she has given her fellow Americans, Iva Toguri was presented with the Committee's Edward J. Herlihy Citizenship Award for 2005 in an emotional ceremony on Jan. 15.

Visibly moved, Iva said upon being presented with the award by James C. Roberts, "This is a great honor...I am embarrassed to be able to receive this award, but at the same time I thank you very much. I thank you Mr. Roberts. I thank all of the World War II veterans."

The Edward J. Herlihy Citizenship Award is given each year to an individual who exemplifies the ideals of American citizenship and the World War II generation. It is fitting that the award presented 60 years following the Allied victory in World War II be given to a woman who, through all of that time, has wanted nothing more than to be recognized as a loyal and patriotic American.

To obtain a copy of the article, contact the World War II Veterans Committee, Tim Holbert, 1030 15th Street NW Suite 856, Washington, D.C. 20005, or call (202) 777-7272 ext. 220

Tsukimi Kai's Photos of Cuba to Be Shown

A collection of photographs taken by Tsukimi Kai members during their trip to Cuba will be displayed from Feb. 11 to 28 at the National Japanese American Historical Society, 1684 Post St. in San Francisco Japantown.

An opening reception will be held on Saturday, Feb. 11, from 2 to 5 p.m. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday from 12 noon to 5 p.m.

Tsukimi Kai is an intergenerational group of predominantly Nikkei musicians, artists, dancers, students, educators, researchers and community activists who share a common goal: to explore and celebrate the parallel histories and lives of people of Japanese and Okinawan ancestry in Cuba and the United States.

In August 2005, 19 Tsukimi Kai members, aged 12 to 86, traveled to Cuba to participate in the Obon festivities on the Isle of Youth, perform taiko drumming and Obon dancing in three cities, and conduct interviews of Nikkei Cubans.

"Through cultural exchange and dialogue, we reach across

the boundaries of physical space, language, culture, history and politics to build peace, friendship and solidarity with the Cuban people," said a spokesperson for the group.

"You are cordially invited to view a stunning and rare collection of photographs ... These photos are not only artistically rich but tell a moving story of the lives of the Cuban people we connected with, seldom seen in this country.

"Proceeds from the sale of these beautifully framed photographs will go to supporting our efforts to continue to exhibit and share the images and information gained from our trip."

A presentation on health care, alternative medicine and Santeria in Cuba will be given on Saturday, Feb. 18, from 2 to 5 p.m. The speakers will be Fumi Suzuki, Jean Ishibashi and Barbara Morita.

The exhibition is presented by Tsukimi Kai, NJAHS, and JAM (Japantown Art and Media) Workshop. For more information, call (415) 921-5007.

Umeboshi Workshop in Japantown

A workshop on umeboshi will take place on Saturday, Feb. 25, at 2 p.m. in the Issei Memorial Hall of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California, 1840 Sutter St., San Francisco.

This is the second workshop of the "100 Years of Culture and Traditions" series, which is part of the 100th Anniversary of Japantown celebration.

Kent Takeda, a local Sansei, will present the umeboshi workshop.

"During the month of February, you will start to see plum blossoms starting to bloom," said a spokesperson for the anniversary committee. "The blooming of the blossoms is to indicate the very first signs of spring.

"For many of us, the fruit of

the plum is more appreciated than the flower, so what better way for us to celebrate February other than to learn how to make umeboshi?"

"Umeboshi still remains a favorite food dish for all generations of Japanese Americans. Even the mainstream society is learning how nutritious and yummy it is to eat ume in their temaki sushi and as a dip for cucumbers."

An ochazuke snack will be offered after the presentation. There will be umeboshi, tsukemono, rice and tea.

Participants can bring their own chawan and reusable hashi with them.

This event is free and open to the general public. For more information, call (415) 567-5505 or visit www.sfbjapantown100.org.

Watsonville Buddhist Temple to Celebrate 100th Anniversary

WATSONVILLE—To the Japanese immigrants who arrived in the Pajaro Valley in the 1890s, the Buddhist temple they established in 1906 served as a religious and social focal point to a community far from its homeland.

To their children and grandchildren, returning to a not-entirely welcoming community after internment during World War II, the Bridge Street temple became "kind of a home base," said Norman Uyeda, president of the Watsonville Buddhist Temple.

But more recently, Uyeda said, as an older generation passes into memory and younger Japanese Americans move into a wider and more accepting world, the congregation, known as the sangha, has seen its membership shrink, reports the Sentinel.

So as the temple celebrates its centennial year, members will host a series of lectures and celebrations throughout the year aimed at reconnecting younger Japanese Americans to their heritage and sharing their traditions with the wider community.

Historian Sandy Lydon will launch a lecture series with a talk about the past, present and future impact of the Japanese American community on Santa Cruz County.

"In the way certain events call us back to our families, this is a way of calling ourselves back to our religious family," Uyeda said. "The centennial events will call our family back to what we and our grandparents experienced together."

By 1900, close to 1,300 Japanese were living in an area run

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