

Film about legendary WWII Japanese-American combat unit to screen at **Cleveland International Film Festival**



**“ONLY THE
BRAVE” called a
“powerful, haunting
feature” by the
*Honolulu Star
Bulletin***

LOS ANGELES – February 27, 2006 – The film that the *Honolulu Star Bulletin* called “long overdue” and a “powerful, haunting feature” will screen in competition at the 2006 Cleveland International Film Festival on March 18 – 19.

“ONLY THE BRAVE” stars Jason Scott Lee, Mark Dacascos, Tamilyn Tomita and the late Pat Morita in a searing portrait of war and prejudice that takes viewers on a haunting journey into the hearts and minds of the forgotten heroes of World War II – the all-volunteer, Japanese-American 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team.

Award-winning playwright and performer **Lane Nishikawa**, who wrote, directed and co-stars in the film, will be present at both festival screenings for “ONLY THE BRAVE” – scheduled for **Saturday, March 18, at 2:15 pm** and **Sunday, March 19, at pm**. For locations and ticket information, please go to: www.clevelandfilm.org Information about the film is available at www.OnlyTheBraveMovie.com.

“ONLY THE BRAVE” is the first motion picture about the 100th/442nd as seen through the eyes of the men who lived it. The story was based on the actual experiences of Nishikawa’s

three Nisei uncles who served in the 100th/442nd – as well as other veterans who shared their memories with him over the years.

Nishikawa captures the personal tragedies and sacrifices of the soldiers – portrayed by **Jason Scott Lee, Mark Dacascos, Yuji Okumoto, Greg Watanabe and Ken Narasaki** – during the final days of their rescue of the Texas “Lost Battalion” (represented by **Jeff Fahey and Guy Ecker**). Nishikawa also stars as the platoon leader who is haunted by the death of his father (**Pat Noriyuki Morita**) and the hardships on the wives and girlfriends left behind (**Tamlyn Tomita and Emily Liu**).

In 1941, when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, there were 5,000 Japanese Americans serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. Overnight, these second-generation citizens were stripped of their official duties – simply because they looked like the enemy. On the mainland, 120,000 innocent men, women and children were rounded up and swept into remote internment camps, where they would remain behind barbed wire for the duration of the war.

Determined to prove their loyalty, the discharged Hawaiian Territorial Guardsmen of Japanese descent successfully petitioned the U.S. government to allow them to serve. These 1400 Hawaiian Nisei (second-generation Japanese-Americans) became the 100th Infantry Battalion. In July 1943, after rigorous training, they were sent to North Africa, then Italy. Fiercely courageous, they suffered so many casualties the 100th was soon dubbed the “Purple Heart Battalion.”

In June 1944, they were joined by the 442nd – comprised of Nisei volunteers from the internment camps and Hawaii – and proceeded to liberate five towns in Northern Italy. That September, they were shipped to Southern France and freed three more towns, before being recruited for what would become one of the top ten most important battles of World War II – the impossibly-dangerous rescue of the Texas “Lost Battalion.”

Two hundred and seventy-five men of the Texas' 36th Division had been trapped for more than a week on a high plateau in France's Vosges Mountains, surrounded by 7000 experienced German soldiers. Allied planes tried dropping them food and ammo, but the supplies kept rolling out of reach down the ridge. When attempts by much larger regular-Army units failed to break through, the 100th/442nd was ordered to finish the job. Though their ranks were already decimated and the Nisei were unimaginably exhausted, they spent four days and nights in brutal

uphill hand-to-hand combat – while suffering frostbite and trench foot so severe they could hardly walk.

The Nisei saved 211 out of the 275 Texans, but suffered more than 800 casualties of their own. During two years of combat, their extraordinary valor resulted in an unparalleled 21 Medals of Honor, 9486 Purple Hearts, eight Presidential Citations, 53 Distinguished Service Crosses, 588 Silver Stars and 5200 Bronze Star Medals – making them the most decorated unit of their size and length of service in American military history.

A Mission From Buddha Production, “ONLY THE BRAVE” was produced by Karen Criswell, Eric Hayashi, and Jay Koiwai and funded in part by grants from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program and donations from families of veterans who served in the 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service – spearheaded by the National Japanese American Historical Society.

* * *

MEDIA:

A press kit and

Lyla Foggia

foggia public relations

(661) 259-6561

lyla@foggiapr.com