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NEWS RELEASE

January 2009



**Wolfhound Samurai by Vincent H. Okamoto, Ranger Hall of Fame
Book Review by Susan Uyemura**

Wolfhound Samurai, a novel by Vincent Okamoto, loosely depicts events experienced by the young lieutenant during his tour in the Vietnam War. Christopher Nagata, the story's protagonist, is a Japanese American soldier brought up with very American ideals; however, fighting in a war while looking like the enemy poses unforeseen dangers.

Delusions of becoming a war hero surrender to the first taste of true battle. Nagata must struggle to stay alive while earning the respect of his men, maintaining his sanity and being a good soldier – a dynamic that seems relentlessly unrealistic during a war.

Battlefield morality sometimes summons courage while preying on uncommitted conscience, but at what price? Does Nagata bring his moral dilemmas to the war or does

the war force-feed this dissonance? Follow Nagata from his induction into the Army to his final battle that earns him the Distinguished Service Cross. Laugh during chance moments and cry for war's cruelty – but most of all live the experiences of those soldiers and their unique circumstances during the Vietnam War and yearn for the “Welcome Home” that never came.

Throughout the story, Nagata is constantly faced with conflict. He understands that killing is fundamentally wrong but has been trained to complete each mission as the ultimate goal. He makes and breaks promises made in the heat of battle. Nagata is ultimately rewarded for how well he defeated the enemy; ironically even this “reward” steals from his humanity. The Distinguished Service Cross represents the lives of his men who will never return home, the lives of the enemy who he swore to kill and the nightmares that follow him for the rest of his life. Readers are left to ponder what happens to Nagata after his return home.

This book is about war ... the war in Vietnam and the war that wages within each of the soldiers in search of their own humanity. The good, bad and ugly are all portrayed in a vividly realistic manner. Readers are forced to consider the context in which this story unfolds. As a non-military person, I didn't expect this story to grab me the way that it did. I could not put the book down because my soul was seeking some closure. You will come to know the soldiers, understand their feelings and pray for their survival. War is Hell.

I highly recommend this book to every veteran and anyone interested in the Vietnam War. The story's accuracy disturbs and educates its readers. The use of adult language profusely used throughout the text helps us identify with the reality of war. Parents should use caution when and if this story is shared with children.

Wolfhound Samurai is only the second novel published on the Vietnam War about a Japanese American's experience. This book encapsulates over 450 pages of garish reality. What will happen next? Perhaps we will all learn to fight for peace in our souls.

Nikkei Writers Guild is offering this book for \$35 (paperback) + tax and shipping. Also available at Kunokuniya Bookstore in Little Tokyo. Please visit www.jalivinglegacy.org and click on the Nikkei Writers Guild link for the order form. If you have any questions, contact JA Living Legacy at (714) 278-4483.

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