



MARY MASUDA

An American of Japanese ancestry who stood up to racism in order to protect her family and honor her brother's memory



During World War II, Mary Masuda was 31 years old when Executive Order 9066 forced her and her family behind barbed wire into an American concentration camp in Gila River, Arizona.

In May 1945, she was granted a temporary leave from Gila River to check on the condition of her family home in Talbert, Orange County, CA in preparation for her family's return after the war.

After Mary arrived in her hometown, she received a telephone call from an anonymous person, warning her to go back to camp and telling her that Japanese Americans weren't welcome in Talbert.

Later, four men showed up at her door, using intimidation tactics to scare her into leaving town.

Initially shaken, Mary found strength in the memory of her brother Kazuo Masuda, who was killed in action fighting with the 442nd RCT, a segregated unit of the U.S. Army.





Her determination to move her family back to their home began to grow.

Four months later, Mary was released from Gila River and returned with her parents back to the family home with the belief that she "must fight for what Kazuo and all of the rest of the soldiers fought for."