



# FFNV

January 2024

FRIENDS & FAMILY OF NISEI VETERANS

100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team

Military Intelligence Service

501(c)(3) Corporation - Federal Tax ID: 59-3820916

## Sadao S. Munemori Honored



Sadao S. Munemori Memorial Square in Glendale, Calif.

I had the pleasure of attending the dedication ceremony of the Sadao S. Munemori Memorial Square with Nancy Kurihara-Johnson. Please find her reflections below:

On a beautiful sunny day on Saturday, December 9, 2023, Sadao S. Munemori was honored for his courageous service and ultimate sacrifice of life for his country during WWII. For his heroic actions in battle, the City of Glendale unanimously named the intersection of Broadway and Isabel Streets as the SADAO

### S. MUNEMORI MEMORIAL SQUARE.

The honor and recognition of valor for this soldier of the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion/442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team came about first at the instigation of Glendale City Council member Ardy Kassakhian and the cooperative efforts of the Go For Broke National Education Center, Japanese American National Museum, Office of the Consulate General of Japan and the entire Glendale City Council.

The various speakers at the

dedication ceremony spoke eloquently of the outstanding character of Sadao even while 128,000 Japanese Americans were imprisoned in camps in the United States. After long, difficult fighting in Italy, Sadao was about to reach his foxhole where two fellow soldiers were hunkered down when a grenade bounced off his helmet and rolled towards them. Without hesitation, he threw himself on top of the grenade as it exploded and

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# Annual Membership Meeting

Four long years have passed since our last in-person membership meeting and life for many of us has changed dramatically. Despite all the changes, we hope that you will be able to join us for the 2024 membership meeting scheduled to be held on February 10, 2024 from 11:30 AM at the Morgan Hill Buddhist Community Center, 16450 Murphy Avenue, Morgan Hill, California.

We will NOT be having the usual potluck this year, but we will be offering a bento lunch at the subsidized cost of \$10.00/person. Please reserve your lunch **no later than February 3** by emailing: [ffnvnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ffnvnewsletter@gmail.com). Please indicate how many lunches you would like to

reserve. Please make your payment on the [ffnv.org](http://ffnv.org) website by clicking on the "Donate" button and specifying "lunch." Your lunch will be waiting for you at the sign-in desk. You are not required to purchase a lunch to attend the gathering. If you have any questions, please send them to [ffnvnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ffnvnewsletter@gmail.com).

Our theme will be "keeping the legacy alive," as we see ourselves struggling to spread the story of the Nisei Veterans and their part in American history. We will be featuring Chris Koma as our speaker. We will be showing two short films, "Stamp Our Story" and "Nisei."

Hope to see you in Morgan Hill! Please don't forget to RSVP for your bento lunch!



## FFNV CONTACT INFORMATION

### FFNV

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# Happy New Year!

Greetings to everyone! Hope everyone enjoyed a restful, peaceful and love-filled holiday season. Best wishes for a year of good health and warm friendship.

As 2024 begins we are ever more mindful that we are losing the last of our Nisei veterans. We are forever grateful for their service and wish to extend condolences to all those families who have lost their loved ones. Our mission to continue their legacy is all the more urgent.

2024 is looking to be a promising year for FFNV with our usual scheduled events: Annual membership meeting in Morgan Hill, Memorial Service at Roberts Park and the Las Vegas Reunion in the fall. We hope to see many of you returning to our in-person events.

Please take a moment to renew or start an FFNV membership. It is only \$25 per household, but helps us defray our administrative costs. As you know, our staff is purely volunteer and we try to manage our events at cost, but we still require some income to send out a newsletter (thanks to all of you who have signed up for paperless copies), maintain a post office box, purchase supplies (paper, ink, labels, etc.) and other needed purchases. Please find the membership form at the end of this newsletter

Thanks for your support and encouragement, especially during the pandemic. Having you guide us is truly what makes FFNV happen.



Right photo, L to R: Dr. Mitch Maki (GFBNEC), James Nakakihara (grand-nephew of Munemori), Consul General Kenko Sone, Glendale City Council Members flanking Mrs. Nakakihara (niece of Munemori), Bill Fujioka (JANM).

## CEREMONY

Continued from Page 1

killed him. He was just 22 years old.

Amongst those attending the dedication ceremony were Sadao's niece and grand nephew and

a relative of one of the soldiers save by his actions that day. Also, attending were two fellow veterans, Yoshio Nakamura and Ed Nakamura (not related) each age 98, whose service was applauded by all. Following the unveiling of the Sadao S. Munemori Memorial Square sign, the guests enjoyed

a lovely lunch with special dishes hosted by the office of the Consulate General of Japan.

The fervent wish expressed this day was that the moving story of Sadao Munemori will inspire us to live with hope and courage and strive for equity and justice for all people.

## FFNV

By Gerry Nanbu

Although we have known about FFNV for many years, we have never attended any of the gatherings with the exception of one of the early gatherings at Redwood Park in Oakland. Our interest in learning more about FFNV was peaked during our participation in the 2022 "Italian Campaign" tour conducted by Nora de Bievre of Nisei Legacy Tours. It was on this tour that we met Lawson Sakai's daughters, Janet Ito and Joanne Sakai. Janet encouraged us to attend the upcoming convention in Las Vegas following the Italian tour, but timing didn't work out as we extended our time in Italy.

Our motivation to go on the Italian tour was to find missing pieces of Uncle George's military history. George survived the war, but like most Nisei, did not share details about his time in Italy and France. We were fortunate that another member of the tour

was Juanita Allen from the "Sons and Daughters of The 442nd Regimental Combat Team" based in Hawaii. Juanita is a researcher who has made it her mission to write a biography of every member of the 442nd. When we told her that Uncle George had been transferred from the 442nd to the 100th as a replacement, she spent her evenings on the Internet researching Uncle George and within days uncovered details we were unaware of. Her research continued after her return home to Hawaii, and now Uncle George has his biography published on the Sons and Daughters website (<https://442sd.org/George-Yaki/>).

Naturally, our desire to continue learning about the Nisei veteran legacy found us at the 2023 FFNV convention in Little Tokyo. The most inspiring aspect of the convention is that, even though there are only a handful of veterans left, their legacy lives on through their children and grandchildren.

## SAVE THE DATE

### Annual Membership Meeting

February 10, 2024

@ 11:30 AM

Morgan Hill Buddhist Community Center

RSVP for your bento lunch (\$10/each). Deadline for lunch order:

Feb. 3

Email: [ffnvnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ffnvnewsletter@gmail.com)

### Memorial Service

Armed Services Day, May 18, 2024

@ 12 Noon

Roberts Park, Oakland, California

### Las Vegas Reunion

Sept. 16 (from 7 PM) to 20, 2024

California Hotel & Casino  
Registration Link to go out in June

Hotel bookings:

Group Name: FFNV 2024 Group

Group Code: FFNI24C

## ABC7's David Ono Named News Anchor of the Year

ABC7's David Ono has been named News Anchor of the Year by Broadcasting & Cable.

The publication noted David's work on the production of "Defining Courage" about the Japanese American Nisei soldiers during World War II. The innovative show "has sold out more than a dozen shows, features live music (with lyrics by Ono), historic film footage and eyewitness interviews."

In addition, Broadcasting & Cable also highlighted David's reports on the Lahaina wildfire.

"Ono spent seven hours and covered 14 miles hiking and then recording, navigating downed power lines and other hazards ... he had provided some of the earliest news footage and reporting of the tragedy."

Congratulations to David on the honor!

### Support FFNV

Become a member of Friends and Family of Nisei Veterans and join in on the mission to maintain the legacy of the Nisei Soldier/Veteran. It is a bargain at \$25/household.

Please visit our website at [ffnv.org](http://ffnv.org) to find a pdf form as well as payment information.



# Reflections on 2023 Reunion

By Sandra Tanamachi

My sisters, Diana Parr (and her husband, Chip)Debbie Galvan, and I attended this year's FFNV Reunion in Little Tokyo during Sept. 29 to October 1. It was wonderful seeing friends again, such as Janet Ito, Joanne Sakai, Ellen Sawamura, Peggy Mizumoto, and Robert Horsting. We were also able to meet new friends Amy Matsumoto, her daughter Tracy, Lynn Mori, and June Aochi Berk.

Diana mentions that the hospitality room at the Temple was where we were able to make wonderful new friends, enjoy delicious food, and purchase our FFNV vests, and souvenirs.

Debbie says it was an honor to meet Amy Matsumoto and to learn about her 70 year marriage to her husband Ralph Matsumoto, MIS, and about his older brother, Goro Matsumoto, 442, who was KIA during the Rescue of the Lost Battalion on October 29, 1944, just like our uncle, Saburo Tanamachi.

The highlight for us was being able to visit the JANM to stamp the Ireicho for our mother, Kikuko Nakao Tanamachi's Nakao family, as they had been placed to live in Santa Anita Race Track, and then sent to Rohwer, Arkansas during WWII.

Another highlight at the JANM was being able to interact with Lawson Sakai; it was so refreshing to see his smile and to hear his voice once again.

We wish to thank Janet Ito and Joanne Sakai for organizing such a memorable 2023 FFNV Reunion.



Top photo: Deborah Tanamachi Galvan, Sandra Tanamachi, Diana Tanamachi Parr, Chip Parr, Dr. Ellen Sawamura. Lower photo: Robert Horsting, Wayne Osako, Diana Par, Sandra Tanamachi, Deborah Galvan, Chip Parr.

## Mark your Calendars!

***Our annual memorial service will be held on Armed Services Day, May 18, 2024***

# 2023 FFNV Reunion in Little Tokyo

By Shirley Hibino

Our annual reunion was enjoyed by 130 participants from all over the country – from Hawaii to the East Coast. This cannot have been done without the numerous volunteers who put in countless hours of preparation. Thank you, domo arigato to you all.

Please enjoy the reflections by a few of the attendees.



Nora deBievre, Stu Hirai, David Nishitani, Jolynn Hirai in hospitality room.



Yosh Nakamura, 442nd RCT veteran with daughter Linda Oberholtzer.

GFBNEC monument  
- part of Walking Tour  
of Little Tokyo's scul-  
ptures and monuments



David Ono, keynote speaker at Farewell Banquet.





# Reflections by Shirley Hibino

**By Shirley Hibino**

The first ever FFNV reunion in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, took place from September 29-October 1, 2023, and it highlighted the significance of Little Tokyo to the Japanese American community and to the Nisei veterans.

As home to the Japanese American National Museum, the Go for Broke National Education Center and Go For Broke Monument, as well as to popular Japanese-owned shops and restaurants, it was the perfect place for the LA reunion.

The history and accomplishments of the 442nd/100th veterans are featured prominently in Little Tokyo and people seemed excited to be here, especially if it was their first time.

The Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple was the center of the reunion and in the Hospitality Center, attendees could socialize, eat some delicious food and get information about reunion events. I had not seen many FFNV members since last year's reunion in Las Vegas and I was glad for the opportunity to catch up.

There were so many interesting programs and activities that it was difficult to choose which

ones to attend. There were movie screenings, a panel on reparations: then and now, with a discussion on Black reparations, walking tours of Little Tokyo, featuring its unique monuments and sculptures and other interesting and informative presentations. There was also a cocktail reception at the Far Bar hosted by FFNV and the Go For Broke Torchbearers, which many of us enjoyed.

My father was in the 522nd Field Artillery, so I am always interested in stories involving the 522nd. At the reunion, I heard about Larry Lubetzky, who had been incarcerated at a Dachau sub camp, along with his brother and grandfather.

They had managed to escape from German soldiers when soldiers from the 522nd came upon them. These soldiers showed them kindness and compassion, which greatly affected them. Larry would become an interpreter for the 522nd and form a friendship with Sus Ito, an artillery officer. The kindness they received from the 522nd soldiers and others, inspired future generations of the Lubetzky family, including Larry's nephew, Daniel Lubetzky, founder of KIND Snacks, to pay it forward and help others.



Ed Nakamura (MIS) and Yosh Nakamura (442nd RCT).



Nikkei Progressive presenters of "Reparations-Then and Now".

I volunteer in memory of my parents who were Go For Broke volunteers and attended the FFNV reunions every year. I have enjoyed getting to know the other volunteers and learning about the veterans in their families. We all work towards the common goal of putting on a successful reunion to honor the legacy of the Nisei veterans.



Farewell banquet table setting

# FFNV 2023 Reunion Reflections

By Janis Hirohama

I'm glad to add a couple of my personal thoughts to Shirley's eloquent and deeply-felt reflections on the reunion:

Two presentations brought the experiences of the Nisei soldiers vividly to life for me. In his lecture on the Gothic Line "Battle of Miracles," Stu Hirai gave a detailed and dramatic narrative, with many photos and maps, that painted a compelling picture of the strategic importance – and the human cost – of this pivotal Italian battle. Later, director Darren Haruo Rae's screening of his live-action short film "Nisei" added emotional depth to the military history. The realistic battle scenes gave a visceral sense of the dangers the Nisei soldiers faced, while its dramatized depiction of the dilemmas faced by those who volunteered from the camps showed the heavy psychic burdens they carried with them.

I was very grateful that reunion attendees were offered special access at the Japanese American National Museum to view the Ireicho "Book of Names," which lists each of the 125,000+ persons of Japanese ancestry incarcerated in the U.S. during World War II. Visitors can acknowledge them by marking their names with a special hanko (Japanese stamp). It was a deeply emotional and meaningful experience for me to finally be able to stamp the names of my mother, grandparents, aunts, and uncle, who were imprisoned at Poston, Arizona.

The Farewell Banquet at



Darren Rae, presenter of "Nisei" with Carrie Morita, Shirly Hibino, Janis Hirohama.

JANM was a fitting end to the reunion, bringing everyone together to share history, food, and friendship. A highlight was David Ono's keynote speech, in which he shared recent interviews with people in Europe about their encounters with the Nisei soldiers during WW II. Remarkably, he continues to find people whose stories from that time had not yet been told!

Each FFNV Reunion is an opportunity to gather in community to preserve the history and honor the memory of our Nisei soldiers. I was especially happy to see families with multiple generations there – showing that the history is being shared and will be carried forward through future generations. Thank you to all who made this reunion possible!



Banquet sign





David Nishitani, Barbara Sato, Moose Sato, Stuart Hirai, Jolynn Hirai, Nora deBievre, Milo Yoshino.



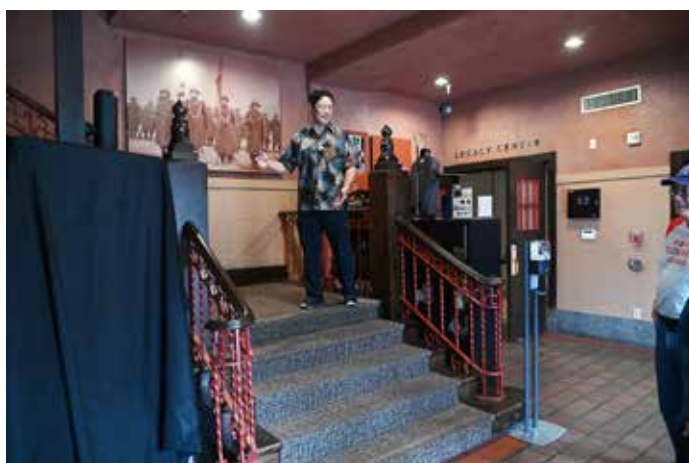
Milo Yoshino exhibit.



Stu Hirai presenting on the Gothic Line.



Chibi shirt gang - L to R:  
Amanda Newman, Fred  
Fujioka, Norm Ogawa,  
Steve Newman, David  
Nishitani, Stuart Hirai.



Dr. Mitch Maki presenting at GFBNEC for FFNV reunion visitors.



Joanne Sakai presenting special recognition to Brian Shiroyama, daughter Hilary Shiroyama and granddaughter Junko Allen accepting on his behalf.

Friends and Family of Nisei Veterans  
Membership Form

Name:		Today's date:	
Address:		Is this new contact info? Yes or No	
Home phone:		Mobile Phone:	
Email address:			

Are you a veteran?	Yes	No	Which war/campaign?
Dates of service:	Highest Rank:		

How did you find out about FFNV? What is your relationship to FFNV?
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Membership dues: \$25.00/year for individual or family      New \_\_\_\_\_      Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please find my check enclosed      Check # \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please charge my credit card  
# \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I will submit a Zelle payment directly from my bank  
Please submit to Email address: [ffnvchase@gmail.com](mailto:ffnvchase@gmail.com)  
and indicate membership or other

☐ I would like to make an additional donation in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I would like to make a donation for the U.S.S. Hornet exhibit \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership form and payment can be mailed to:**

**Joanne Sakai, FFNV Treasurer  
P. O. Box 914  
Mill Valley, CA. 94942-914**

Or email to: [jsakai@comcast.net](mailto:jsakai@comcast.net)

(For CC or electronic payments/donations, please go to [ffnv.org](http://ffnv.org), click on donate)

Note: For those of you wishing to make a donation to the Lawson Sakai Memorial Scholarship Fund, please visit the Go For Broke National Education Center website and click on the donate link. Please specify that your donation is to be restricted to the scholarship fund