



# FFNV

June 2025

FRIENDS & FAMILY OF NISEI VETERANS

100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team

Military Intelligence Service

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

## Annual Memorial Service in Redwood Grove

FFNV held its annual Armed Forces Day memorial service in Roberts Recreational Area on a rare sunny May day. The US Naval Sea Cadet Corps Band of the West played an array of lively military songs, helping guests find their way to the redwood grove.

After Berkeley Boy Scout Troop 24 raised the colors, the crowd sang the National Anthem accompanied by the band. Reverend Ryoko Osa of the Berkeley Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple gave the invocation, followed by East Bay Regional

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## Monument to the 522nd FAB in Germany and Liberation of Dachau 80th anniversary

On the 2nd of May 80 years ago, the men from the 522nd FAB encountered the Death March which originated from Dachau and its sub-camps near the town of Waakirchen. For the next 2 days, they remained in the area to tend to the survivors.

The location of the encounter was marked with a touching monument and now the site has been expanded with a commemorative plaque honouring the men of the 522nd FAB and an information panel telling the story.

FFNV was represented at the inauguration by Milo Yoshino and Nora De Bievre. Our thanks goes to all the people who shared this moving day with us, to the Mayors of Waakirchen and Reichersbeuern for their support, but above all to Florian Voller - District Representative of the German War Graves Commission - whose determination made this monument a reality.

Both German and American speakers at the reception after the ceremony highlighted the need to

remember and share the stories, while Death March survivor Abba Noar related his experience with the audience.

The event proved particularly moving for Tom Oyie, representing his father S/Sgt George Oiye, one of the 522nd men present at the time and shown in one of the pictures on the new information panel added to the memorial site.

The following day we returned to the monument for a few more

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# JAVA Anniversary Message

Eighty years is a long life, eighty years is a long time to remember the past, but few can forget the events of eighty years, especially if one is of Japanese American descent.

I had the good fortune of being able to visit Bruyeres, France with my father, Lawson Sakai in 2009 and again in 2019. In 2009 he was one of 5 veterans who was on the tour to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Bruyeres. I was overwhelmed with pride as we walked through the streets of this small town, the residents showering us with cheers and waving American flags. The level of gratitude these citizens had toward our Nisei soldiers was so heartfelt, it was the beginning of my understanding of what our Nisei soldiers had accomplished so far away from home. Though I had attended a few veterans' events at home, I was not prepared for the show of appreciation from the locals of the Vosges region.

In 2019 Dad was the lone veteran on our tour group, sadly reflecting the aging issues of our Niseis, many of whom had either passed on or were living in fragile health conditions preventing them from traveling far from home. Dad was determined to make one final trip to France to visit a place that changed his life in so many ways. It was not an easy trip, but was truly rewarding for our family members who were able to join as well as many of the other tour participants. To be able to witness the gratitude the French have for our Nisei heroes is memorable. We do not see that level of appreciation here in the United States for the Japanese American soldiers who still hold the honor of being the most highly decorated military



unit for its size and length of service. It is gratifying to see that the French continue to teach their offspring generation after generation of the great sacrifices the 100th BN/442nd RCT made in their determination to liberate the Vosges region.

I only wish my dad was able to know that I finally made the trip to Italy where he also fought alongside his comrades. And, again, where the local residents hold our Nisei soldiers in high esteem. Monuments and plaques along the Gothic line battlefields are evidence of the Nisei soldiers' much appreciated accomplishments. Dad also would have been beaming with pride knowing that citizens of Waakirchen, Germany just also recognized the 552nd for their part in liberating victims of the Death March as well as taking part in the liberation of the Dachau death camp.

Dad has been gone for nearly five years now, as we are encroaching on the 80th anniversaries of many WWII moments. His family was fortunate enough

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## FFNV CONTACT INFORMATION

### FFNV

#### MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 914  
Mill Valley, CA 94942-0914

#### PRESIDENT

Janet Sakai Ito  
jagaito@gmail.com

#### SECRETARY

Shelby Kariya  
taharial515@yahoo.com

#### TREASURER

Joanne Sakai  
ffnvchase@gmail.com

#### PAPERLESS & EMAIL SUBSCRIPTION REQUESTS

FFNVnewsletter@gmail.com

# Permanent Site for the Heroes of the Vosges Museum Moves Forward!

**G**ood news from Bruyères France on our efforts to secure a permanent site for the Heroes of the Vosges Museum that honors the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team and the French Resistance!

The Treasury Building, adjoining City Hall, has been designated as the permanent site for the museum. The entire first floor of the building will be modified to museum standards including security, lighting, fire safety, wall configuration, etc. A sign, in both French and English, will be installed identifying the building as the “Heroes of the Vosges Museum.”

When ready, the artifacts and related materials from the temporary exhibit housed in the Henri Mattieu Musee, will be transferred to the permanent site. Each section of the exhibit will be expanded and we will add, from private collections, artifacts used by the German army.

Anne Bonjean, daughter of a former mayor, will serve as the “President” of a museum management organization. The members



of the small oversight group will include local officials and private sector representatives.

An architect will soon begin the process of laying out the museum based on requirements and specifications that we have provided.

The cost of all interior changes to the building will be paid for entirely by donations to our 501 (c) (3) “Heroes of the Vosges Museum Fund. We are again seeking donations and book sales to complete the estimated \$125,000 needed to prepare the building. We are about half way there! Anne Bonjean believes that perhaps

some additional funding might be available from the “French Administration.”

The ongoing operation of the museum and the associated cost will be negotiated with the Mayor of Bruyères, the Peace and Freedom Trail Association, and the Tourist Bureau for staffing commitments that will guarantee the opening and ongoing operations.

Those interested in making tax deductible donations may go to the Heroes of the Vosges Museum Fund at [vosgesheroes.org](http://vosgesheroes.org) or scan the following

QR Code:

Please help us complete this important project and permanently preserves the memory

and artifacts of the Nisei who sacrificed so much, not only for France, but for all of us. If there are any questions, including about artifacts, I can be reached at [cwilliams@intl-aero.net](mailto:cwilliams@intl-aero.net) and 916-233-8069. Thank you.



## ANNIVERSARY

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not to be imprisoned in a camp (his parents’ church arranged for the family to be sponsored by church members in Colorado), but he would never forget he was not allowed to enlist when the war first broke out because he was considered an “enemy

alien.” Those scars remained deeper than the ones he collected in battle. Dad knew his story was not widely known and not being taught openly in schools. He would still be telling us, please keep passing on the stories, don’t give up. Don’t let the Nisei soldier story die in vain. Remember what we fought for - peace and freedom for all. Thanks, Dad, for doing your part.

## SAVE THE DATE

### Annual FFNV Reunion

October 10 – October 12, 2025

**Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, California**

Programs to be held at Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple  
Hotel Information to be announced later



## ROBERT'S PARK

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Park District Board President John Mercurio's address. Board President Mercurio spoke about how the history of the memorial was intertwined with the Park District, as its leaders, in particular William Penn Mott, Jr. had worked with veterans of the 442nd to find an appropriate spot for the plaque and provided the redwood sapling that the veterans planted in August of 1992.

Martin Snapp, whose articles East Bay media draw the public to the memorial every year also spoke warmly about his experience with the veterans as they planned the tribute. The Scouts then retired the colors and all present were invited to participate in offering incense to honor and show gratitude to the veterans.

Caption from Page 1 photo: John Mercurio, Board President of East Bay Regional Park District; Joanne Sakai, MC, FFNV Treasurer; Dee Rosario, Former Director of the East Bay Regional Park District. Bottom right photo: Incense table in memoriam.



## MONUMENT

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pictures and had a chance encounter with a local family. To satisfy our curiosity, we asked them if WW2 is still talked about to German children and the answer is yes. It turned out that mom is a history teacher in the village nearby and that 9th grade students go on a field trip to Dachau every year. She will now add the story of the 522nd FAB to the prepara-

tory lessons for their visit. The new monument is clearly already doing its job by helping to spread the story!

The weather on Sunday 4 May was suitably dreary for the sombre occasion at Dachau. Our small delegation of representatives for the 522nd FAB, FFNV and JAVA gathered inside the concentration camp at Dachau for the official commemoration of its liberation 80 years ago.



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## MONUMENT

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## MONUMENT

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State and local government representatives were quite candid in their call for us to remember how things had come to pass 8 decades ago and the need to recognise current threats in order to

avoid history repeating itself.

Among the many speakers, those receiving the biggest recognition from the audience are Bud Gahs, US Army veteran and surviving liberator, Jean Lafaune and Abba Naor, camp survivors, and Leslie Rosenthal, one of 7 surviving babies born inside the concentration camp.



## **FRIENDS & FAMILY OF NISEI VETERANS**

**100th Infantry Battalion  
442nd Regimental Combat Team  
Military Intelligence Service**  
501(c)(3) Corporation - Federal Tax ID: 59-3820916

### **Annual Nisei Veterans' Reunion**

**Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, California**

**October 10 - October 12, 2025**

**REGISTER ONLINE AT [tinyurl.com/ffnv2025](https://tinyurl.com/ffnv2025)**

Hard copy registration forms available upon request via email to [ffnvnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ffnvnewsletter@gmail.com).

## **Reunion Schedule**

### **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10**

**HOSPITALITY CENTER HOURS: 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM**

**PARKING:** Please approach the parking lot gate at Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple, 505 E. Third St., (L.A., CA 90013), and let the security guard know that you are here for the FFNV event.

We will offer early registration and a meet and greet cocktail evening in the social hall. Please check-in, pick up your registration packet, get acquainted with old friends and spend some time noshing on treats inspired by our French and Italian tours.

### **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11**

**HOSPITALITY CENTER HOURS: 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM.** If you haven't already, please check-in and pick up your registration packet. Stop by to check out the raffle prizes, purchase tickets, grab a snack and/or drink.

You will have the opportunity to view screenings and/or participate in relevant discussions highlighting the heroics of the 522nd, 232 Engineers and the MIS. You do not need to sign up for these activities. Your badge will allow admission to the Go For Broke NEC exhibition hall. A walking tour highlighting Little Tokyo's 141 year history led by our local historical society will be offered, starting at the JANM Plaza and ending with the GFBNEC Monument. We will also provide a list of Little Tokyo's "Best of" Treats and Eats for you to explore and indulge on your own. Of course, you can also just explore Little Tokyo or just hang out and talk story in the hospitality center with friends.

Limited free parking will be available upon request (sign up on registration form) in the Higashi parking lot.

For those who would like to continue the conversations later in the evening on Saturday, we will be hosting a cocktail reception from 8:00 to 10:00 PM. Location to be determined, but will be in Little Tokyo.

### **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12**

**HOSPITALITY CENTER HOURS: 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM**

A casual buffet brunch will be offered on Sunday morning in the hospitality center. It will be followed by a closing presentation upstairs from 1:00 - 3:00 PM.

A film version of "Defining Courage" will be screened. A short panel discussion, and the raffle drawing featuring a handmade patriotic-themed quilt will follow.

**NOTE:** The temple will be having its usual Sunday service from 10:00 AM, so please try not to arrive too early on Sunday.



# Reunion Registration & Hotel Information

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100th Infantry Battalion  
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## REUNION REGISTRATION: **Register online at [tinyurl.com/ffnv2025](https://tinyurl.com/ffnv2025)**

A \$100.00 registration fee will cover your participation in all events, admission to the Go For Broke National Education Center, and other badge-holder privileges. Children 10 & under will be charged \$10.00.

The registration form is digital and once "submit" is selected at the end of the form, your registration will automatically be sent. Hard copies of the registration form are available upon request. For assistance, please email: [ffnvnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ffnvnewsletter@gmail.com)

***Please submit the online registration form by September 21, 2025. For online payment instructions, please see the bottom of the registration form. You may also send a check to: FFNV Reunion, 3015 Cloudcrest Rd., La Crescenta, CA. 91214 once you have submitted your form.***

## HOTEL ROOMS:

We have reserved a block of rooms for the reunion at the Miyako Hotel. **You must reserve your room(s) by contacting [ffnvnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ffnvnewsletter@gmail.com).** Please specify if you have any special needs or if you wish to upgrade your room for an additional \$30 or \$60 per day. You can book any time from now until September 8th. If there are vacancies, it may be possible to reserve a room after that date, but the group rate may not apply.

**Miyako Hotel Los Angeles, 328 E. First Street, Los Angeles, CA. 90012  
(213) 617-2000, [www.miyakola.com](http://www.miyakola.com)**

DEADLINE TO RESERVE: **September 8, 2025**

DATES: October 10 - October 12, 2025 (2 nights)

1 night - Single or Double: \$159.00 + tax

2 nights - Single or Double \$159.00 X 2 + tax

**\*\*Your credit card must be provided for payment at time of check-in.**

SPECIAL REQUESTS: You may make requests for a handicap room, special location, non-smoking, adjoining rooms, etc.

NOTE: Rooms may also be found at the DoubleTree a couple of blocks away. Accommodations may also be booked at the Kawada Hotel, which is 6 city blocks away from the activities. While not a long walk, it is **highly discouraged** to walk to and from the Kawada, especially in the evening when the city is not friendly to visitors or the vulnerable. **Please be aware of the risks.**

Please keep in mind that no activities will be hosted at the hotel and will be at various locations in Little Tokyo.

**VOLUNTEERS:** The reunion is operated solely by volunteers. We welcome anyone who is willing to help for a few hours to make the reunion a success for our veterans. Please sign up on the registration sheet.

**COVID-19 PROTOCOL:** Masks are optional and will be available for your convenience.

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 due \$50/year per household New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_  
Nisei Veterans or spouses: \$25/year

☐ 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