

FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF NISEI VETERANS (FFNV)
100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team
Military Intelligence Service
501(c)(3) Corporation – Federal Tax ID: 59-3820916

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We began the year 2015 with a membership meeting on February 14 in Morgan Hill, CA. Guest was a WW II Navy veteran who was prominently featured in regional major newspapers as the original Navy frogman, predecessor to the Navy Seal. A check with the Library of Congress confirmed the background of this veteran. Unfortunately, he turned out to be a fraud revealed later at another event by a local TV station investigator using the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 to obtain records otherwise not accessible. The veteran did in fact serve in the Navy during World War II. However, he never performed any duties with the famed underwater demolition team. We have learned an important lesson from this incident. As a matter of policy for future speakers/presenters at FFNV events, we will select them only by personal knowledge and by recommendation of our members.

The Nisei Veterans Memorial Service was held on May 16 at Roberts Park, Oakland Hills, CA. As in the past, the Band of the West welcomed all attendees with music echoing through the redwood forest. We saw more “outside attendees” who were attracted by the newspaper article about this memorial service. Lawson Sakai delivered an informative speech about his experiences with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (442nd RCT). We also noted that the redwood tree planted by E Company veterans in 1992 for all veterans was growing majestically. The potluck lunch/picnic following the service was enjoyed by all.

Our next event on August 15, aboard the USS Hornet retired WW II Aircraft Carrier Museum in Alameda, CA, was a huge success. As previously announced, FFNV no longer sponsors a gathering aboard the Hornet. Coincidentally, the Hornet staff had asked us if we would agree to highlighting the 442nd RCT during one of the Hornet’s popular monthly Living Ship Day. We jumped on it because it would give us another great opportunity to tell the legendary exploits of the 442nd RCT. The theme of the event was the “Rescue of the Lost Battalion.” Tom Graves introduced the speakers and skillfully moderated the event. Franz Steidl, author of “Lost Battalions,” presented the background and profoundly highlighted the significance of the rescue. Al Tortolano, a soldier in the Lost Battalion (1st Battalion, 141 Infantry) gave a heartwarming account of being rescued when all hopes for survival were diminished on October 30, 1944, Vosges Forest, France. Then, Lawson Sakai made an inspirational and eloquent presentation of the successful rescue from the 442nd RCT perspective - never giving up despite taking heavy casualties. The Hornet staff had prepared for 100 attendees – there were more than 300 who truly enjoyed the event which was covered by local television broadcasts in evening/late night news.

The grand finale of 2015 was the reunion in Las Vegas, October 18–22 with almost 300 attendees. We were encouraged to see over 40 World War II veterans there. The welcome banquet featured presentations by Cathy Uchida (“What Will Become of the Monuments’ Men of Little Tokyo”), Stuart Hirai (70th Anniversary Study Tour of Italy), Brian Yamamoto (Military Intelligence Service Historic Sites) and Jules Bonjour (author of “War and Betrayal”). The farewell luncheon began with an accomplished taiko performance by Christine Bowes. The familiar soothing voice singing the national anthem again belonged to Chris Yahng. The keynote speaker was Anais Casin of Bruyeres Tourism Office. She made an excellent presentation on Bruyeres’ effort to build an Interpretive Museum for the Liberation of Vosges to specifically recognize and honor the 442nd RCT. Tom Graves also gave an informative account of the presentation ceremony in San Francisco of the French Legion of Honor to 442nd RCT and other WW II vets who served in France. Many raffle prizes were given out. As always, entertainment by Sons, Daughters, and Friends of the 100th was appreciated by all. Steve Sato of the 100th made a classy end to the luncheon by leading farewell/Aloha Oe.

ACTIVITIES FOR 2016 – MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

(Saturday, February 13 at 11:30 AM, Morgan Hill Buddhist Community Center,
16450 Murphy Avenue, Morgan Hill, CA)

We will repeat our presentation (Rescue of the Lost Battalion) made at the USS Hornet on August 15, 2015. By popular request by FFNV members and local citizens who could not attend the August gathering, we have decided to invite the same speakers and showcase the event. Potluck lunch will be served at noon. **Please bring your favorite dish to share.**

MEMORIAL SERVICE

(Saturday, May 21 at 12:00 noon, Roberts Park, Oakland Hills, CA)
Potluck lunch/ picnic after the service

LAS VEGAS REUNION

(October 16–20 at the California Hotel)

This is always a rewarding and fun-filled event which includes the opportunity to honor the veterans of the 100th Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team and Military Intelligence Service and visit with friends and family at several Hospitality Rooms and two banquets, as well as enjoy the sights and activities of Las Vegas. We will again offer a Hawaiian Hotel Package. More information will be sent later in the year.

HELP NEEDED!

Volunteer Docents for the Nisei Veterans' Exhibit aboard the USS Hornet Aircraft Carrier, Alameda, CA. FFNV created this unique exhibit in 2006. It has become one of the most popular exhibits aboard the USS Hornet. It features Japanese-American, 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service history. The primary objective is to recognize our Nisei veterans and preserve their proud legacy. In order to achieve this goal, we need dedicated docents to show and tell our Nisei veterans' stories. Duties are unpaid but rewards are immense. Work hours are strictly according to volunteers' availability. Volunteers will receive training. If you can help, please contact Brian, preferably by e-mail (info below).

Membership Meeting on February 13 in Morgan Hill, CA. After the program is finished, help is needed to store tables/chairs and generally clean/restore the facility. Please contact Brian.

Memorial Service on May 21 in Oakland Hills, CA. Help is urgently needed at about 9:30 AM to set up the picnic area and the service site. It requires manpower-intensive tasks that include hauling picnic and service supplies from the parking area. As our veterans and guests begin to arrive, help is needed to guide and help them to the service site and later to the picnic ground. Please contact Brian.

Reunion in Las Vegas, October 16–20. Help is needed in the hospitality suites for various duties. Please contact Stu Hirai at stuhirai@q.com.

FFNV CONTACT INFORMATION

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Treasurer – Jean Hirasaki, jthirasaki@gmail.com, 408-842-6973

Reunion Coordinator – Janet Ito, jagaito@gmail.com, 818-468-7456

2016 MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME (please print)

ADDRESS

PHONE

E-MAIL

Dues: \$25 for individual or couple. You can pay at the February 13 meeting in Morgan Hill or mail a completed Membership Form and check made out to FFNV to Carol Akiyama, FFNV Membership Liaison, P.O. Box 6552, Woodland Hills, CA 91365.

THANKS!