

Heroes of the Vosges Museum

Grand Opening

Bruyères France – 18 October 2024

On October 18, 2024, just prior to the 80th Anniversary celebration of the Liberation of Bruyères, Mayor Denis Masy and Carl Williams cut the ribbon on the temporary museum in honor of the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team and the French Resistance who aided them.



The Nisei Museum has borrowed limited space in the Henri Mathieu Musee, an historic building that once was a Jewish synagogue. We thank the town of Bruyères and all those who have contributed to this first step and look forward to moving to the final phase, the permanent site which is now being considered by the Mayor and City Council. A special thanks to all those who contributed artifacts which were shipped as part of 54 cartons by air to France.

Our daughter, Mariko Williams, is largely responsible for the artistic work that resulted in the museum's layout – a layout that follows the Nisei story from Pearl Harbor to ultimate victory and the incredible number of medals and honors -- including the 21 Medals of Honor - earned by Americans of Japanese descent. Former Mayor Yves Bonjean, using his personal tools and skills, worked with us throughout the preparation and did a great deal to make the opening a success.



The image depicts the work in progress and in the left side of the photo shows the portion of the exhibition in honor of the French Resistance. Note the relief map at the lower right of the image and the campaign map behind the mannequin in 442nd RCT uniform. French reenactors help accurately dress the mannequin with both original and replica 442nd RCT combat uniform. All displays were in both

French and English.



A second room includes exhibits depicting the story of the Texas Lost Battalion and displays the many honors earned by the Nisei. A small third room was used as a mini theater in which several videos were shown on a continuous basis. With most videos in French and English, this was a popular attraction.

The grand opening attracted around sixty people and subsequent visitors, including a Nisei tour group, visited the museum. Several school groups are scheduled to visit as well. The museum will be open most afternoons between 2 and 6 and all are encouraged to stop by. Special access can be arranged for visitors who would like to view the museum. The museum contains many unique artifacts including, during the grand opening weekend, the canteen carried by James Okubo, one of the 21 Medal of Honor recipients.

While the temporary museum was successfully opened, we are still seeking artifacts and donations for the permanent site. Our expectation is that once a site is identified, an architectural plan will be prepared, a budget for implementation of the plan, and a contractor engaged. Former Mayor Yves Bonjean will manage the contract.

It became clear that most of the French visitors and perhaps many of the American visitors as well were well informed about the liberation, the sacrifice and the honors earned by the Nisei. However, the back story, the history behind the formation of the 100th and the 442nd in Hawaii and on the mainland were not well known and we believe that the museum provides an important source of information about what lead up to the formation of an all-Japanese-American fighting unit. It is our expectation that we will expand this story in the permanent location. In that regard, all donations received to date are being held for development of the permanent site.



This simple sign was placed on the sidewalk outside the Henri Mathieu Musée located at 3 Rue Jean et Simone Lurçat, 88600 Bruyères, France. Please plan to visit the museum when next in Bruyères. It is easy to find and there is a large public parking lot less than half a block from the museum. For special tours, please contact the Office of Tourism, 50 avenue du Cameroun 88600 Bruyères – Telephone 03 29 50 51 33 We thank you and all our donors and contributors for their support. For additional information please see vosgesheroes.org