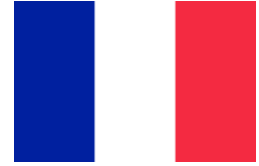




USA



USAREUR 7th US Army



FRANCE



3rd Inf. Div.



36th Inf.Div.



45th Inf. Div.



442nd RCT



USAAF

French-American Commemorations **From Besançon to St-Dié**

On the trail of the Soldiers of the 7th US Army and the USAAF

September 2011

Part VI : Vosges Mountains 2/4

- Bruyères :
 - The 442nd RCT and the Lost Battalion
 - Medal of Honor Staff Sergeant Robert T. Kuroda
- Biffontaine and Borne 6
 - Medal of Honor Private Barney F. Hajiro
 - Medal of Honor Technician Fifth Grade James K. Okubo
 - Medal of Honor Private George T. Sakato
- La Houssière, Medal of Honor Pfc Joe M. Nishimoto

Eric Vandroux



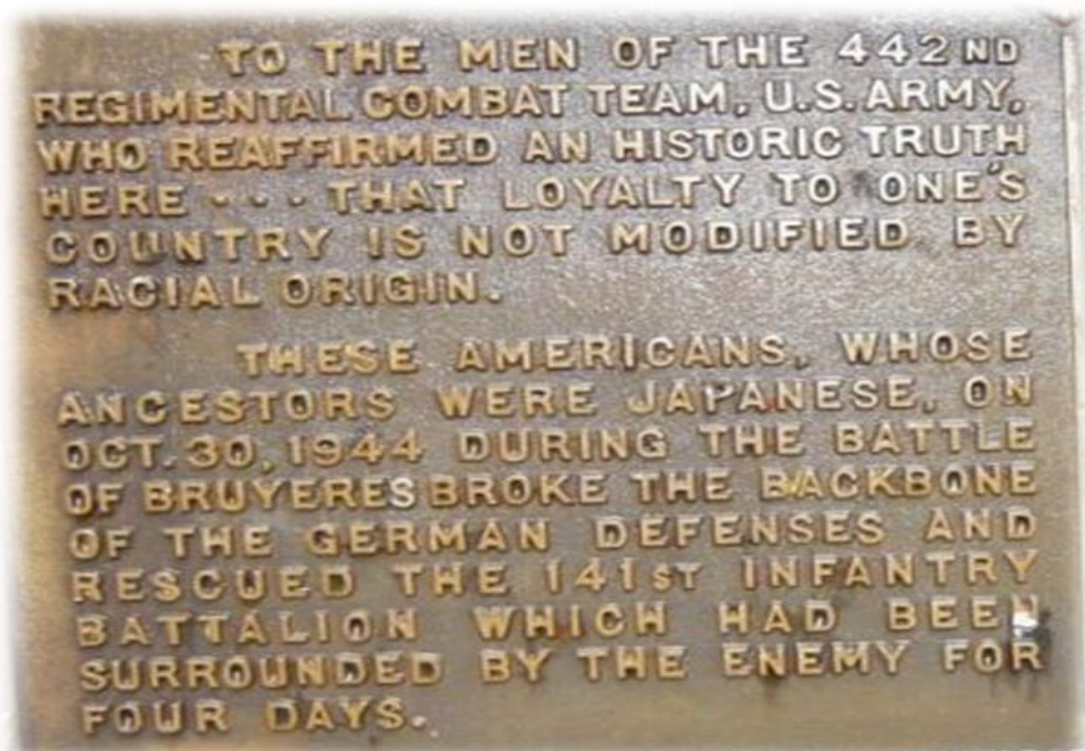
36th Inf. Div.



442nd RCT

“In the Second World War, Bruyères was liberated from German occupation by Japanese-American soldiers of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The Battle of Bruyères and the rescue of the "Lost Texas Battalion" is now considered to be one of the ten major military battles fought by the United States Armed Forces. The 100th/442nd Regiment became the most decorated Unit in the History of the US Army (8 Presidential Unit Citation, 21 Medal of Honor and 18,143 individual decorations. On July 8 & 9, 1989, the bicentennial of the presentation of the "Bill of Human Rights" by Mounier, Pierre Moulin created and inaugurated the "Peace and Freedom Trail." Encompassing 89 points of interest, the "Peace and Freedom Trail" highlights the actions of the 442nd RCT and their campaign to free Bruyères from German occupation during WWII.”
From « [Wikipedia](#) »

[Detail of the commemorative tablet at Bruyeres](#)



[Heledraye Monument](#)



36th Inf. Div.



20 October 1944



442nd RCT

Robert T. Kuroda

Staff Sergeant

442nd Regimental Combat Team



Medal of Honor

“Rank and organization: Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army, Company H. Place and date: Bruyeres, France, 20 October 1944. Birth: 8 November 1922, Aiea, Oahu, Hawaii. Entered service at : Honolulu, Hawaii.

Citation :

Staff Sergeant Robert T. Kuroda distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action, on 20 October 1944, near Bruyeres, France. Leading his men in an advance to destroy snipers and machine gun nests, Staff Sergeant Kuroda encountered heavy fire from enemy soldiers occupying a heavily wooded slope. Unable to pinpoint the hostile machine gun, he boldly made his way through heavy fire to the crest of the ridge. Once he located the machine gun, Staff Sergeant Kuroda advanced to a point within ten yards of the nest and killed three enemy gunners with grenades. He then fired clip after clip of rifle ammunition, killing or wounding at least three of the enemy. As he expended the last of his ammunition, he observed that an American officer had been struck by a burst of fire from a hostile machine gun located on an adjacent hill. Rushing to the officer's assistance, he found that the officer had been killed. Picking up the officer's submachine gun, Staff Sergeant Kuroda advanced through continuous fire toward a second machine gun emplacement and destroyed the position. As he turned to fire upon additional enemy soldiers, he was killed by a sniper. Staff Sergeant Kuroda's courageous actions and indomitable fighting spirit ensured the destruction of enemy resistance in the sector.

Staff Sergeant Kuroda's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the United States Army.”

From “U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY”



36th Inf. Div.



and BORNE 6



442nd RCT



After having secured the liberation of Bruyères and Belmont-sur-Buttant, the 36th Infantry Division, with the help of the 100th/442d RCT, on or about 21 October, continued its progression forward, along the Neuné valley, taking positions on the heights to the north. The first serious enemy resistance encountered by the advance units took place in the vicinity of Biffontaine.

The soldiers of the 100th/442d Regimental Combat Team, of Japanese ancestry, engaged the enemy and took the village and surrounding territories, after a rough engagement, fought on 22 and 23 October.

Units of the RCT were then pulled back for a well deserved rest period. It turned out to be a short resting period. On 26 October they were back on the front line, to rescue a battalion of the 141st Infantry Regiment which had been surrounded by an important concentration of enemy forces, since

24 October, at a site called “Borne 6”. All attacks engaged to liberate this lost battalion during 2 previous days had ended in failures. That’s when General Dahlquist, commander of the division, gave orders for the 100th/442d RCT to rescue the “lost” battalion, regardless of the difficulties.

Well disciplined and extremely brave, the “Nisei” soldiers, as they were called, furiously attacked an enemy well entrenched in favourable positions, under disastrous weather conditions. At a high cost of lives, it took them 4 days of intense fighting to accomplish their mission and, on the eve of 30 October, finally rescue the lost battalion, which had been encircled by enemy forces for 6 days, without food or other supplies, in freezing temperatures. The men were found extremely shaken and weak.

If the casualties, incurred during the battle of Biffontaine, haven’t been established with precision, it is known that, altogether, the 3 regiments of the division and the 100th/442d RCT, during the month of October 1944, lost 359 dead, 2033 wounded and 194 MIA.

From : Jean LAURAIN : « Libération des Vosges », Editions Gérard Louis

Pierre MOULIN : « US Samourais en Lorraine », Editions Gérard Louis

Monthly reports : 100/442d Regimental Combat Team



Barney F. HAJIRO



36th Inf. Div.

BRUYÈRES

BIFFONTAINE



442nd RCT

Barney F. HAJIRO

Private

442nd Regimental Combat Team

Medal of Honor

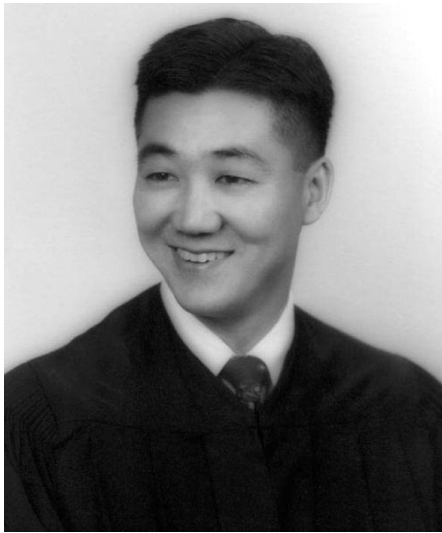
“Rank and organization: Private, U.S. Army, Company I, 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Place and date: Bruyeres and Biffontaine, France, 19, 22 & 29 October, 1944. Born: 16 September 1916, Punene, Maui, Hawaii. Entered service at: Honolulu, Hawaii.

Citation:

Private Barney F. Hajiro distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action on 19, 22, and 29 October 1944, in the vicinity of Bruyeres and Biffontaine, eastern France. Private Hajiro, while acting as a sentry on top of an embankment on 19 October 1944, in the vicinity of Bruyeres, France, rendered assistance to allied troops attacking a house 200 yards away by exposing himself to enemy fire and directing fire at an enemy strong point. He assisted the unit on his right by firing his automatic rifle and killing or wounding two enemy snipers. On 22 October 1944, he and one comrade took up an outpost security position about 50 yards to the right front of their platoon, concealed themselves, and ambushed an 18-man, heavily armed, enemy patrol, killing two, wounding one, and taking the remainder as prisoners. On 29 October 1944, in a wooded area in the vicinity of Biffontaine, France, Private Hajiro initiated an attack up the slope of a hill referred to as "Suicide Hill" by running forward approximately 100 yards under fire. He then advanced ahead of his comrades about 10 yards, drawing fire and spotting camouflaged machine gun nests. He fearlessly met fire with fire and single-handedly destroyed two machine gun nests and killed two enemy snipers. As a result of Private Hajiro's heroic actions, the attack was successful.

Private Hajiro's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon him, his unit, and the United States Army.”

From “U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY”



James K. Okubo



36th Inf. Div.



28 and 29 Oct. and 4 Nov. 1944



442nd RCT

James K. Okubo

Technician Fifth Grade

442nd Regimental Combat Team



Medal of Honor

“Rank and organization: Technician Fifth Grade, U.S. Army, 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Place and date: near Biffontaine, France, 28-29 October and 4 November, 1944. Entered service at: Bellingham, Wash.

Citation:

Technician Fifth Grade James K. Okubo distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action on 28 and 29 October and 4 November 1944, in the Forêt Domaniale de Champ, near Biffontaine, eastern France. On 28 October, under strong enemy fire coming from behind mine fields and roadblocks, Technician Fifth Grade Okubo, a medic, crawled 150 yards to within 40 yards of the enemy lines. Two grenades were thrown at him while he left his last covered position to carry back wounded comrades. Under constant barrages of enemy small arms and machine gun fire, he treated 17 men on 28 October and 8 more men on 29 October. On 4 November, Technician Fifth Grade Okubo ran 75 yards under grazing machine gun fire and, while exposed to hostile fire directed at him, evacuated and treated a seriously wounded crewman from a burning tank, who otherwise would have died.

Technician Fifth Grade James K. Okubo’s extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the United States Army.”

From “U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY”



George T. Sakato



36th Inf. Div.



29 October, 1944



442nd RCT

George T. Sakato

Private

442nd Regimental Combat Team



Medal of Honor

“Rank and organization: Private, U.S. Army, Company E, 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Place and date: Biffontaine, France, 29 October, 1944. Born: 19 February 1921, Colcon, CA Entered service at: Glendale, Ariz.

Private George T. Sakato distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action on 29 October 1944, on hill 617 in the vicinity of Biffontaine, France. After his platoon had virtually destroyed two enemy defense lines, during which he personally killed five enemy soldiers and captured four, his unit was pinned down by heavy enemy fire. Disregarding the enemy fire, Private Sakato made a one-man rush that encouraged his platoon to charge and destroy the enemy strongpoint. While his platoon was reorganizing, he proved to be the inspiration of his squad in halting a counter-attack on the left flank during which his squad leader was killed. Taking charge of the squad, he continued his relentless tactics, using an enemy rifle and P-38 pistol to stop an organized enemy attack. During this entire action, he killed 12 and wounded two, personally captured four and assisted his platoon in taking 34 prisoners. By continuously ignoring enemy fire, and by his gallant courage and fighting spirit, he turned impending defeat into victory and helped his platoon complete its mission.

Private Sakato’s extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the United States Army.”

From “U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY”



Joe M. Nishimoto



36th Inf. Div.



7 November 1944



442nd RCT

Joe M. Nishimoto

Private First Class

442nd Regimental Combat Team



MEDAL OF HONOR

“Private First Class Joe M. Nishimoto distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action on 7 November 1944, near La Houssiere, France. After three days of unsuccessful attempts by his company to dislodge the enemy from a strongly defended ridge, Private First



442nd RCT in the Vosges Mountains

Class Nishimoto, as acting squad leader, boldly crawled forward through a heavily mined and booby-trapped area. Spotting a machine gun nest, he hurled a grenade and destroyed the emplacement. Then, circling to the rear of another machine gun position, he fired his submachine gun at point-blank range, killing one gunner and wounding another. Pursuing two enemies riflemen, Private First Class Nishimoto killed one, while the other hastily retreated. Continuing his determined assault, he drove another machine gun crew

from its position. The enemy, with their key strong points taken, were forced to withdraw from this sector.



442nd RCT in the Vosges Mountains

Private First Class Nishimoto's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the United States Army.”

From “U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY”