

## Presentation on Albany's War Memorials to Parks & Rec Commission

By Rochelle Nason – prepared for meeting of May 8, 2014

### 1. The Memorials and their Condition

Albany has a large stone memorial to local World War I fallen soldiers, which also honors all the local men who served in that war, in front of the Veterans Memorial building (Photos #1-4, p. 2).

Albany has two plaques honoring local World War II fallen soldiers, as part of the 'Shrine of Liberty' installation located at the intersection of Solano Avenue and Key Route Boulevard (Photos #6-12, p. 3).

Albany has no memorial to the local Vietnam War dead, nor to the one local man who fell in Afghanistan.

### 2. Challenges and Opportunities at the Memorials

#### a. Simple items – could be addressed by Memorial Day 2014:

- i. The disused fountain in, and the plaza around, the World War I memorial need cleaning and weed removal (Photos #1-2, p. 2).
- ii. The pavement at the World War II memorial needs weed removal and repair, and the plastic covers need replacement (Photos #7, 9 & 12, p. 3).

#### b. Larger issues and ideas for improvement that would require discussion with surviving family members of fallen servicemen, veterans' groups, service clubs (Lions, Rotary, Exchange, Albany Community Foundation, Firefighters Association), and the general public.

#### Issues

- i. The World War I memorial is poorly placed within its plaza, creating uninviting dead space behind the memorial (Photo #2, page 2).
- ii. The World War II memorial is part of a larger installation that is confusing and opaque, and not handicapped accessible (Photos #6-12, p.3).
- iii. Those who fell in Vietnam and Afghanistan should be acknowledged.

#### Ideas for Improvements

Re-dedicate and revitalize the plaza in front of the Veterans Memorial Building as a site honoring the local men lost in all four wars, all who have served, and all who work for peace. Perhaps if the Nishi/Okawachi family supports the idea, it could be named Taka Nishi Plaza (Photo # 13, p. 4).

Relocate the World War I memorial within the revitalized plaza, and relocate/create/re-create other memorials within the plaza (see Photo # 5, p. 2, for an example of a simple but attractive memorial)

Initiate a public process to discuss potential improvements that could revitalize the Shrine of Freedom installation site – perhaps Albany's most visible & accessible yet under-utilized public park.



1. World War I memorial and (nonfunctional) drinking fountain in plaza in front of Veterans Memorial Hall



2. Space behind World War I memorial, with bench



3 & 4 Close ups of deteriorating tilework of bench seat behind WW I memorial



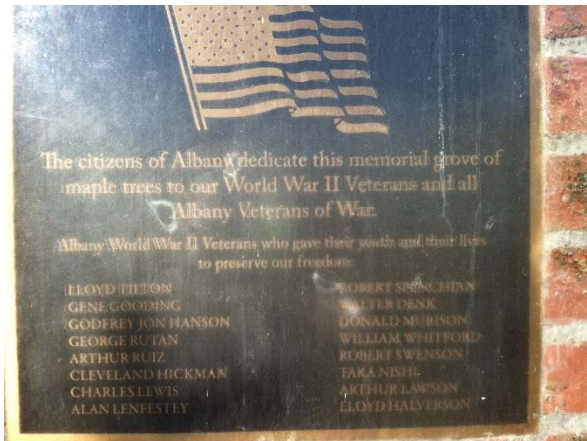
5. Example of a multi-plaque public memorial (Pine Grove, Pennsylvania)



6. Shrine of Freedom, from northeast corner



7. Interior of Shrine of Freedom, from Exchange Club torch towards flagpole & plaques attached to brickwork



8. Right hand plaque listing WWII fallen; refers to 'this memorial grove of maple trees'



9. Left hand plaque placed by Albany Firefighters Ass'n; Refers to 'this memorial grove of flowering cherry trees.'

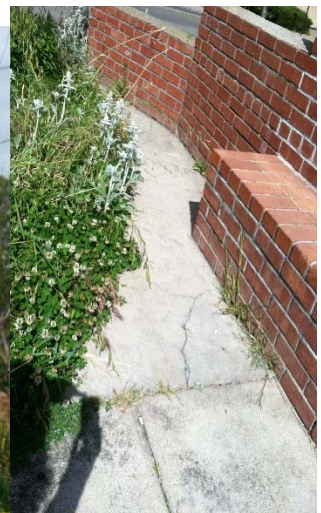
Neither maples nor flowering cherry trees are visible from the spot where one reads the plaques, as the trees that remain from these plantings are now screened from view by other vegetation.



10. Shrine of Freedom inscription – foot of torch (1953)



11. Memorial Plaque affixed to torch (1992?)



12. Cracking pavement & weeds abound @ Shrine

# Taka-Nori A Nishi

Memorial

Photos

Flowers

Share

Edit

[Learn about sponsoring this memorial...](#)

Birth: Sep. 25, 1920  
San Francisco  
San Francisco County  
California, USA  
Death: Jul. 12, 1944, Italy

PFC, 442 INF, 34 INF DIV WORLD WAR II

Citation: The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Silver Star Medal (Posthumously) to Takanori A. Nishi (39915180), Private First Class, U.S. Army, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving with Company C, 100th Infantry Battalion, 442d Regimental Combat Team, attached to the 34th Infantry Division, on 12 July 1944, in the vicinity of Pastina, Italy. As a member of a reconnaissance patrol, Private First Class Nishi advanced to within ten feet of the enemy's outposts in order to gain information. Disregarding the platoon leader's orders to withdraw when almost surrounded by the enemy, Private First Class Nishi continued observing the enemy movements. Finally in withdrawing, he was forced to fight his way back against a numerically superior force and was killed in the attempt. His comrade, however, returned safely and gave valuable information to the rest of the patrol which proved instrumental in the Battalion's successful attack on the town of Pastina. The courage and devotion to duty displayed by Private First Class Nishi gained for him the respect and admiration of his entire organization. Headquarters, 34th Infantry Division, General Orders No. 123 (November 4, 1944)

Burial: [Golden Gate National Cemetery](#)  
San Bruno  
San Mateo County  
California, USA  
Plot: Section O Site 881

Maintained by: [TD Miller](#)  
Originally Created by: [US Veterans Affairs Offi...](#)  
Record added: Mar 04, 2000  
Find A Grave Memorial# 3639641



Added by: [Kevin Quattrin](#)



Cemetery Photo

Added by: [James Seidelman](#)

Add a photo  
for this person



Request  
A Photo



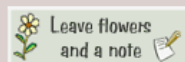
Photos may be scaled.  
Click on image for full size.



Citation: The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Silver Star Medal (Posthumously) to Takanori A. Nishi (39915180), Private First Class, U.S. Army, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving...[\(Read more\)](#)

- [ShaneQ](#)

Added: Feb. 12, 2011



13. Grave and citation information for Albany man Taka Nishi (brother of Jewel Nishi Okawachi).