



# IL GAZZETTINO

## Upcoming Events

Check our [website](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#) for updated information on events as we adapt to comply with guidelines for group gatherings.

### Food Drive: Hoa Aina O Makaha

Non-perishable foods, gift cards, money donations  
Through December 31, Anytime 24/7  
1189 Waimanu Street (#3002)

### Adult Language Classes

Tuesdays, January 5 through February 23  
4:30pm, 6:00pm, 7:30pm  
Online, Zoom

### Book club: A Girl Returned

January 18, 5:30pm  
Online, Zoom

### Wine tasting: A night in Amalfi

January 23, 5pm  
Brick Fire Tavern

RSVP: [friendsofitalyhawaii.org/events](https://friendsofitalyhawaii.org/events)



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## In the Spotlight



Our friend Dr. Daniela Rocco Minerbi pursued classic studies (Liceo Classico Berchet), earned a Fifth Year Piano Diploma (Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi), and obtained a Doctoral Degree in Architecture

(Polytechnical University) in Milano, Italy, magna cum laude, and obtained her professional license. She taught Italian language and culture, painting in Italian, psychology, architecture, and peace studies at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa and Kapiolani Community College. Dr. Minerbi is the co-author of the book *Macrohistory and Macrohistorians: Perspectives on Individual, Social, and Civilizational Change* (Galtung et al., 1997). As an artist, she has won prizes and awards, and had art exhibitions in both Italy and Hawaii.

In the year 2000, the year of Jubilee, Daniela co-coordinated a delegation of indigenous people to the Vatican for the revocation of the 1493 Papal Bull *Inter Caetera*, with which Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain were exhorted to convert all North American indigenous people. The consequences of non-conversion included dispossession and execution.

(<https://www.papalencyclicals.net/Alex06/alex06inter.htm>)

Daniela has also taught Painting in Italian and Italian language classes for the Friends of Italy.

Daniela is a founding member of the Friends of Italy Society of Hawaii which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.



**O Me! O Life!** by Walt Whitman

Oh me! Oh life! of the questions of these recurring,

Of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill'd with the foolish,

Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I, and who more faithless?)

Of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects mean, of the struggle ever renew'd,

Of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid crowds I see around me,

Of the empty and useless years of the rest, with the rest me intertwined,

The question, O me! so sad, recurring—What good amid these, O me, O life?

*Answer.*

That you are here—that life exists and identity,

That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.



## Conessioni contributed by Heather Paulino

Ciao and Aloha Kākou! My name is Heather and I'm a high school Spanish teacher in Honolulu. I am originally from the Windward side of Oahu. I grew up in Ka'a'awa and Kahalu'u and graduated from Castle High School.

I have always been a fan of art and the classics and antiquities, and it was a forever dream of mine to go to Europe. That dream came true in 1996, when my best friend, Jessica, and I decided to quit our jobs, ditch college, and take off on a European backpacking adventure. Italy ended up being the 7th country on our trip, and that is where I fell in love. No, not with a boy. I fell in love with Rome. I was enamored of the juxtaposition of ancient and modern, and the beauty of being able to wander aimlessly and find a surprise ruin around almost any random corner. All of Italy captivated me. The cities, the history, the hill towns, the seaside, the people, the food, the wine. Was it all real? We started in Venice and ended up in Brindisi. My Spanish came in handy, and got even handier the further south we traveled. I found the Italians to be friendly and helpful and curious about two girls from Hawai'i. We spent a lot of time in Italy and after visiting other places, planned to go back and stay for 6 months or until our money ran out. Well, it ran out after 2 months and it was time to say arrivederci.

I became fascinated by all things Italy after that and tried to practice and learn Italian on my own back home. Fast forward a few years later. My best friend and I had finished school, started careers and had traveled to many other countries, but our Italian memories were always top on our list. We decided to do a repeat Italy trip. My boyfriend and his brother would meet up with us. This time we were able to enjoy hotels instead of hostels and restaurants instead of markets and street food, and we still loved Italy! My Italian had improved to the envy of my best friend who had the hardest time with languages. My boyfriend, Randy, fell in love with Italy too! In Venice, in a perfect little restaurant off Piazza San Marco, on a perfect summer evening, he proposed to me with the ring he had been carrying around for 3 weeks. Now Italy was even more special for me (and now my husband thinks he's the coolest for being just a humble, local Hawai'i boy asking to marry me in Italy. He even won Valentine concert tickets on a local radio station once because nobody could beat his story)!

We've been back to Italy several times since then. I've taken students and my siblings, and Rome is still my favorite city in the world. To his chagrin, Randy's proposal-in-Italy story has been dimmed by my best friend's Italian love story. Jessica is now married and living with her olive farmer husband in Puglia, and speaks Italian a lot better than I do!



## Feature Story

# FROM HONOLULU TO MONTE CASSINO: THE 100th INFANTRY BATTALION IN ITALY

by Mark Ethridge and Alessandra Di Vetta



*Soldiers from the 100th Infantry Regiment on the slopes of Monte Cassino*  
100th Infantry Battalion Veterans, Education Center

Alessandra Di Vetta, born in Cassino, Italy, has always been profoundly moved by the stories of those who gave their lives during the brutal battles to free her hometown from Nazi occupation during World War II. From January through May 1944, approximately 55,000 Allied troops perished in these fierce battles, and many more were wounded. In her travels throughout the world, she has searched local military cemeteries for Allied soldiers who died in her part of Italy. The soldiers' sacrifices remind Alessandra of the poem "Soldati" (Soldiers) by Giuseppe Ungaretti describing how soldiers are sitting in the trenches, facing the reality that at any moment, they may die and fall to ground like the leaves that cling precariously on the trees in autumn.



## Feature Story, cont.

### *Soldati*

*Si sta come  
d'autunno  
sugli alberi  
le foglie*



It's like  
being leaves  
on the trees  
in autumn

—Giuseppe Ungaretti, Bois de Courton, France. July 1918

For two years, Alessandra lived in Hawaii with her American Navy paramedic husband, Jeremy. Several times they went to the Military Cemetery of the Pacific, in the ancient volcanic crater called the Punchbowl, to attend military ceremonies. This prompted Alessandra to search for any of the dead buried there who might have been killed in action in Italy. After many hours of searching on multiple visits, Alessandra located one such soldier, a member of the 100th Infantry Battalion, composed of Japanese American (Nisei) soldiers who were residents of Hawaii. In the cemetery, she was finally able to locate the gravesite of this soldier, Mikio Hasemoto.

It so happens that Mikio was killed on December 1, 1943, during the first probing actions of the German Gustav Defensive Line that ran through the Cassino area and over the Apennine Mountains to the Adriatic Sea. He died in Cerasuolo which is about 15 miles northeast of Cassino. The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs describes his story:

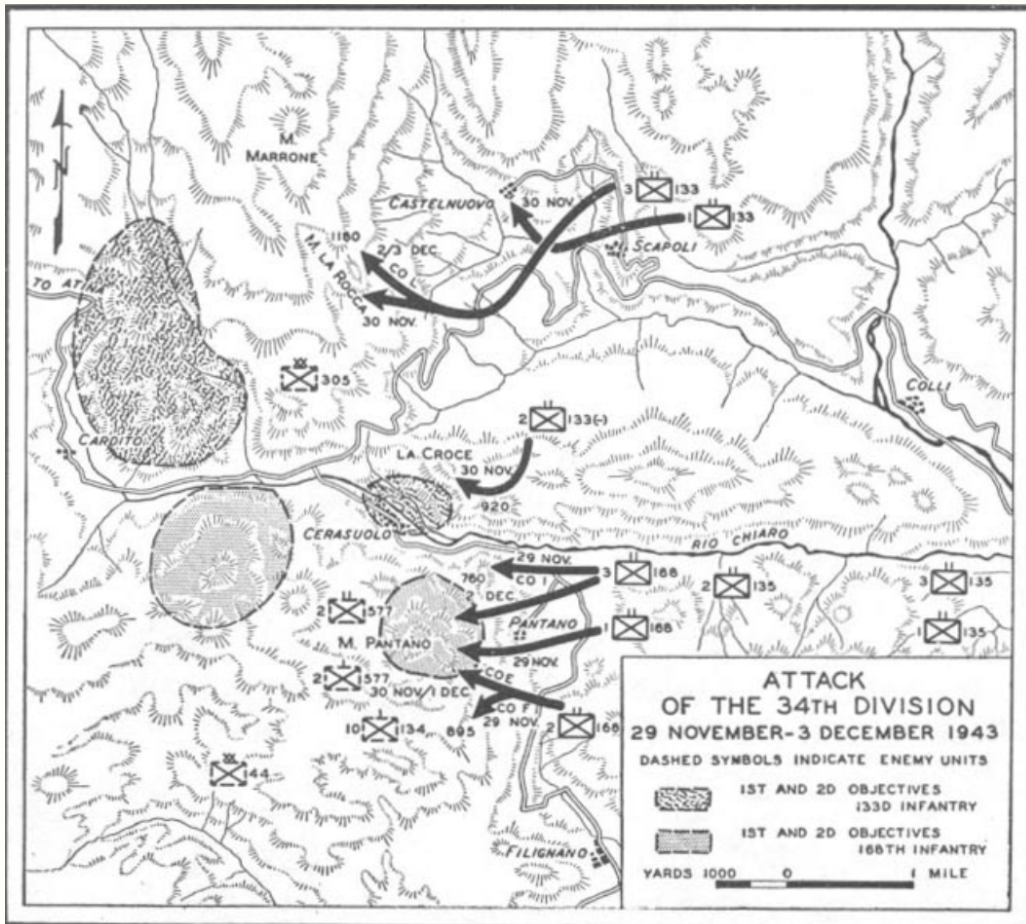
“Hasemoto received the Distinguished Service Cross in recognition of extraordinary heroism near Cerasuolo, Italy, on Nov. 29, 1943. Forty enemy soldiers, including two firing machine guns, attacked his platoon. Hasemoto challenged the machine gunners and emptied four magazines from his Browning Automatic Rifle at the approaching enemy before gunfire damaged his weapon. He found a new rifle and killed twenty enemy soldiers. He kept fighting until his weapon jammed again. Private Hasemoto survived this battle, but died in combat two days later on Dec. 1, 1943.” Many years later, he received the Congressional Medal of Honor on June 21, 2000.

## Feature Story, cont.



The gravesite of Private Mikio Hasemoto at the National Military Cemetery of the Pacific

Photo courtesy of Alessandra Di Vetta



The village of Cerasuolo, where Hasemoto died, is located near the center of the map. From *Nisei in guerra. I soldati nippoamericani in Italia (1944-1945)*

By Andrea Giannasi, 2018.



## Feature Story, cont.

President Franklin Roosevelt activated the 100th Infantry Battalion on June 12, 1942. The Battalion was a racially segregated unit, comprised of more than 1,400 second generation Japanese Americans, known as Nisei.

They represented all walks of life in Hawaii: schoolteachers, factory workers, manufacturing officials, mechanics, agriculturists, salesmen, civil engineers, workers from sugar and pineapple plantations, and from dozens of other island occupations. Perhaps what is most amazing is that 95 percent of them were children of immigrants. They faced substantial prejudice and were eager to prove themselves in battle.

The 100th Infantry Battalion was attached to the 34th “Red Bull” Division’s 133rd Regiment, and first saw action when it landed on the beachhead at Salerno in southern Italy on September 22. The unit then moved north, capturing the city of Benevento, northwest of Naples.

The battle for Monte Cassino commenced in January. The Germans occupied the upper slopes but not the abbey itself which stood on the hilltop. The 100th would suffer horrendous casualties in near suicidal attacks on the German lines. At night, A and C companies of the 100th slogged through the river reaching the wall where the enemy was located, and the units managed to hold their ground under intense fire into the next day. B Company was met with heavy machine gun fire and was nearly wiped out, leaving only 14 of the original 187 men in B Company to reach the wall.

The 100th then was ordered to take Castle Hill, which they did on February 8. This second assault was preceded by three days of intense bombing. In one platoon of the 100th, only five of forty soldiers survived. The 100th was again pulled back into reserve and replaced by British and Indian soldiers after nearly taking Cassino.

The devastating battle for Monte Cassino marked the end of the original 100th Infantry Battalion. The battalion had landed in Italy with 1,300 men, and five months later, only 521 were in fighting condition. An example was C Company. It had started with 170 men and after Cassino, only 23 remained. By this time, war correspondents were referring to the 100th as the “Purple Heart Battalion.”

## Feature Story, cont.



With so many losses, the 100th desperately needed reinforcement. Help came in the form of two waves of replacements from the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, an all-volunteer unit made up of Nisei from Hawaii and the United States mainland that had been formed a year earlier. The combined unit became the 100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team. The first two groups of replacements joined the 100th in the spring of 1944, bringing the battalion strength up to 1,095.

The newly formed 100/442 saw its greatest moment in late 1944 in France in its successful but costly effort to rescue the Lost Battalion of the Texas 36th Division. In early 1945, it found itself again in Italy helping to launch the Allied assault through the Apennine Mountains, which ended the war on the Italian front.

It was in the Apennine Mountains, along German Field Marshal Kesselring's Gothic Line, that a young Lieutenant Daniel Inouye, an Infantry Platoon Leader in the 100th/442nd RCT almost died in a horrific battle. On April 21, 1945 Lieutenant Inouye was leading a flanking attack on a heavily defended ridge near San Terenzo in Tuscany, Italy when he was himself ambushed by three German MG-43 machine guns. Inouye's 30-man platoon was facing complete annihilation when he launched a series of successful attacks that eliminated the German positions, but resulted in him being gravely wounded and eventually losing his right arm, which was sawn off without anesthesia.



## Feature Story, cont.

Lieutenant Daniel Inouye



He awoke to see the worried men of his platoon hovering over him. His only comment before being carried away was to order them back to their positions, saying "nobody called off the war!" On June 21, 2000, Inouye, at that time a U.S. Senator from Hawaii, received the Medal of Honor from President Bill Clinton.

On July 15, 1946, in Washington, D.C., President Harry S. Truman pinned the seventh regimental citation on the 100th/442nd's banners and addressed the Nisei troops: "You are now on your way home. You fought not only the enemy,

but you fought prejudice—and you have won. Keep up that fight, and we will continue to win—to make this great Republic stand for just what the Constitution says it stands for: the welfare of all people all the time."

And today a reconstructed Abbey of Montecassino (the current spelling) looks serenely over the valley below where so many gave their lives...



Special thanks to:

*Daniel Inouye: A Japanese American Soldier's Valor in World II*

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/inouyeww2.htm>

Andrea Giannasi, *Nisei in guerra. I soldati nipponoamericani in Italia (1944-1945)*. Argot Edizioni, 2018.

100th Infantry Battalion Veterans, Education Center. <https://www.100thbattalion.org/>

# A NEW CHRISTMAS

In recent months due to the virus, schools have remained closed so we have not had the hundreds of boys and girls who came every day to enjoy walking on this land. I am sure that the land also misses hearing the laughter of the children as they gently planted seeds in the soil of their garden, always planting with love, removing weeds with determination to help their seeds grow into healthy seedlings, and harvesting with pride from their garden knowing that they will share this produce with their families. Coming to the farm is like going to another world where they will discover new secrets that the aina will unveil to them. The farm has been a family to many of these children. It is a place of comfort, a welcoming place of safety and where peace of mind and spirit can be found. With smiles on their faces, they are happy to be out of the classroom and as they often tell us: "Here we feel at peace and loved." There is a great silence, broken only sometimes by the plowing tractor, the numerous, happy, chirping birds and the sound of the trees caressed by the wind.

In the silence of recent months, we have planted thousands of seeds of different kinds of vegetables. In this silence, every week for months we have harvested tons of vegetables and fruit to share with hundreds of people who come every Tuesday. The silence of these months makes me think of the First Christmas. Two poor people who were denied a place to take refuge ended up in a cave where a miracle happened. In the silence of the night, the cry of a newborn Child was heard. Two parents held Him close to their joyful hearts with grateful tears and smiles of amazement. The shepherds, who could not understand what was happening, were in awe in the great silence of this night. The silence of the hut, the loving silence of Mary and Joseph, the astonished silence of the shepherds: "Maria, for her part, kept all these things, pondering them in her heart," in silence.

Maybe this year will be like the First Christmas. Many people have lost their jobs and even their homes. They are in despair. In times like these, silence speaks louder than words. And in the silence the miracle of hope is a gift that people give to each other. A smile or a nod of thanks is more than words can express; it is an acknowledgement that we are all in the same situation. We're not alone and there is Hope for all of us. Although there are tears of many who have lost loved ones, there are friends who share words of comfort and hugs that warm the soul, and all in a great silence that envelops the heart with great tenderness. These are precious gifts that all the money in the world cannot buy. Love is a gift that will be eternal like the Gift that God the Father gave to us all: a Child of Hope born in the silence of the night of the First Christmas.

BUON NATALE

Un abbraccio,  
Gigi and Judy



## Aloha from the Editor

### OLIVES

I love history, but sadly so much of our history has been dominated by war. The value of remembering the history of our wars is not only to remember the brave sacrifices of those who fought for our freedom, but also to seek peace—work for peace—in the present moment.

I hate war. I don't know many people who like it. I have always dreaded the idea of occupying enemy soldiers marching down the streets of my town.

I'm in my hometown now, Sacramento. I've spent more time here this fall than I have in decades. It has been nice to get to know it again. I like the foliage, how the earth smells here. There are lots of fruit and nut trees—orange, persimmon, lemon, walnut, almond. There are many, many olive trees.

When I was two, I walked down to the park alone (three houses away) and wandered through the olive grove to the play equipment. I got married in that same park in 1995.

When I was about six years old, my Shetland pony used to try to scare me off her by backing into this large, bushy olive tree that grew in the middle of the pasture I rode her in. It nearly worked! I can still feel the silky, silver leaves engulfing me.

I rememeber the first time I tasted Castelvetro olives. It wasn't that long ago, 2016. My cousin Bobbie took me to the olive bar in Murray's Cheese Shop in Greenwich Village. We snuck samples and bought pounds of olives. The first time I tasted one of those mellow, green beauties something sang in my Sicilian blood I suppose. Because now I order jars by the case.

Olives are a symbol of peace.

In my mind, the word itself reminds me of Walt Whitman's poem printed above. O-live, o life! We must preserve life, and peace, and live. Peace on earth, goodwill toward all.

If you are reading these words, I implore you to sow peace in your sphere so that we all may enjoy the harvest of a fruitful life.

Best wishes for a joyous holiday season and peaceful, prosperous new year.

Alla prossima volta, amici miei.

