



*"Where No Veteran
Will Ever Be Forgotten."*

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Merci Boxcar Celebration to Unveil Legacy Bricks and a Tribute Bench by 40 & 8 Locale Voiture 37 and Grande du Indiana at Veterans Memorial on O'Day Road June 20th

Fort Wayne, In June 20, 2026 The Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum 2122 O'Day Road Fort Wayne will host the Grande Chef de Gare, Jeff Carroll of New Albany, Indiana State Commander for the 40 & 8. Other State and National Officers will also attend the ceremony which will begin at 11 am. A black granite tribute bench will be presented on their behalf, as well as many legacy bricks purchased by 40 & 8 members from around the State.

The 40 & 8 Merci Box Cars were presented to all 48 states in 1949 as a gift from the French people as a gift of gratitude for the United States assistance during World War II and the post war recovery effort. Known as the Merci Train or "Gratitude Train", it consisted of 49 French boxcars filled with thousands of gifts from French citizens. The Fort Wayne railcar has been completely restored to its original condition and stands as a historic artifact at the local museum.

The boxcars were the historic French military railcars known as the "40 and 8 cars named because they carried either 40 men or 8 horses. These railcars became famous during both World Wars as they transported troops and supplies across France. One boxcar was presented to each of the 48 states, with the remaining car shared by the District of Columbia and the Territory of Hawaii. The gifts inside reflected the heartfelt appreciation of the French people and included artwork, handcrafted items, family heirlooms and other tokens of friendship.

Today many of these restored Merci Boxcars remain on display throughout the United States as enduring symbols of the strong bond between France and America, as reminders of the sacrifices made by Allied forces to secure freedom during World War II.

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 Veterans National Memorial Shrine