

Japanese American Veterans Association DENIES Our Fallen Heroes

“I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.”
John 13:31–38

JAPANESE AMERICAN VETERANS ASSOCIATION

The Japanese American Veterans' Association, Inc. (JAVA), is a fraternal and educational organization with many purposes:

- (1) Preserving and strengthening comradeship among its members;
- (2) Perpetuating the memory and history of our departed comrades;
- (3) Educating the American public on the Japanese American experience during WWII; and
- (4) Striving to obtain for veterans the full benefit of their entitlements as veterans.

Perpetuate the memory and history of our departed comrades

JAVA fails their organization mission. They allow a foreign Buddhist Order to trample on the memory of our fallen and departed comrades — for their organization’s profit.

President’s Message

10 February 2024 — I am deeply honored to accept the presidency of the Japanese American Veterans Association. Your trust in me is a privilege, and I am committed to leading with the dedication and respect that this role demands ...

Thank you for this opportunity to serve. With integrity, openness, and tireless dedication, I pledge to uphold the values and mission of our association.

Thank you.

Howard High
JAVA President

Vice President: COL Danielle Ngo, USA (Ret)
Treasurer: CAPT Michael Katahara, USN (Ret)
Secretary: MAJ Kay Izumihara, USA
Website: <https://java.wildapricot.org>



Is Memorial Day only for fallen soldiers?

Memorial Day, which is observed on the last Monday in May, was originally set aside as a day for remembering and honoring military personnel who died in the service of their country, particularly those who died in battle or as a result of wounds sustained in battle.

The VFW stated in 2002, “Changing the date merely to create three-day weekends has undermined the very meaning of the day. No doubt, this has contributed a lot to the general public’s nonchalant observance of Memorial Day.”

UNDERSTANDING Why JAVA Fails our Fallen Heroes

ATTN: Howard High, JAVA President
Ms. Dawn R. Eilenberger, General Counsel

Your website speaks extensively about the:

“100th Infantry Battalion, initially comprised of 1,400 Nisei draftees from Hawai'i, and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, comprised of 4,000 volunteers from Hawai'i and the Mainland. Speakers, writers, officials, press and the public have referred to them as the most highly or one of the most highly decorated units in the United States Army.”

The attack on Pearl Harbor by Imperial Japan on December 7, 1941, was truly a day that lives in infamy. Conditions were rudimentary in modern terms. Radio, newspapers were the only sources of information. A highly White European population dominated the nation and did not have much cultural awareness or knowledge of Japanese Americans, Japan or the Japanese people. It was easy for an isolated and uneducated nation to be overcome with fear.

None of us were likely alive at this time. Most of us likely would have been overwhelmed with suspicion and fear as well.

On 9.11, Americans were directly attacked again. Most of us were alive on that tragic day; most of us were horrified by what we watched over and over and over on TV and 24/7 news channels. The initial reaction of most Americans was to fear Muslims. 1941 was re-enacting before our eyes in real time.

What did you do? Did you lead? There were calls from social and political groups to remember the internment of Japanese Americans. Didn't end the fear. Fear blinds reason. Muslim Americans, like Japanese Americans 60 years earlier, were under attack, threatened, mosques vandalized and Arab American families forced to shelter and hide.

My colleague, Lt Col Pete Tingstrom, Special Forces Airborne Ranger, is a honorable man who goes first. That's why I follow him. My grandfather volunteered at 18 to form the Tip of the Sphere as a Union soldier at the Siege of Vicksburg. He went first. Of the 150 men, he was one of only 19 to survive — 87% fell. He and the others were awarded the Medal of Honor. That's why I go first today.

After 9.11, I asked Palestinian friends to take me to mosque. Wasn't Muslim, but had been to mosque previously for interfaith workshops and cultural exchange. Now I needed to return. Took Shahada and joined Islam with Muslims. After a few weeks of earning their trust, volunteered to serve as their Public Information Officer.

I went first after that. I put a White European face on their public actions. Many were English Second Language speakers; I added a college-educated American voice to their written commentary and public discussions with other groups. Fear was high. Suspicion intense. Few Americans knew much about Islam in 2001, similarly as few Americans knew anything about Japanese Americans in 1941.

Someone had to go first to ensure America did not repeat the failure of 1941 with our honorable Muslims Americans. Working together, we successfully navigated anxieties, concerns and cultural

differences. Due to USA failure with Japanese Americans, Americans of the 21 century were seeking to Be Better. They did not want to be remembered as we remember Americans of 1940s. Someone needed to go first. Americans wanted to follow.

And, we learned, evolved and became a greater nation and people due to our increased empathy in a challenging time. This is the aloha that blossoms when we join harmoniously to conquer fear and increase love and enlightenment.

At this time, a naive Buddhist Order tramples on our fallen heroes. JAVA failed to go first. As a Japanese American Veteran organization, you should have been the leader in this matter. You understand Japanese culture better than most Americans. You understand American traditions and values better than most Japanese. JAVA should have gone first to correct this offense and insult to our fallen.

JAVA did not go first. FEAR. You responded to our polite request, "However, taking any action at this time will leave 40K+ people with a negative view of Veterans." FEAR.

You do not KNOW your assumption to be true. FEAR. Participants have told us moving Floating Lantern to Saturday or Sunday would actually be preferred. FEAR. You believe standing up for our fallen would lead the public to have a negative view of Veterans. FEAR. We believe failing to stand for our fallen leaves the public with a negative view of Veterans. FEAR.

If we were transported back to 1941, your organization likely would cower in fear and shame for being Japanese American, right? Think back to 2001, did this organization stand up for Muslim Americans? Hope you can tell me you did.

But today is today. History is behind us. You are confronted with another chapter in American history. You punt the football ... "perhaps we can work on this matter next year."

PERHAPS? Perhaps the Americans of 1941 can work on the issue of Japanese internment next year, right? Is that the COURAGE of JAVA? Push off to next year what can be done today? Maybe? Perhaps?

JAVA has had 25 years to correct this injustice to our fallen heroes — Japanese Americans and others. You said nothing. Now, when asked, you shirk from your Duty to "perpetuate the memory and history of our departed comrades." You are too FEARFUL to stand for these silent 53,000+.

Perhaps you will overcome your FEAR now. Stand for Japanese Americans, as you claim Americans should have stood for them in 1941. You criticize Americans of the past. You do however the same today. FEAR overwhelms your compassion, honor and reason.

We now are now reliving 1941. Japanese American heroes are being mistreated. Do you STAND UP and SPEAK for Japanese Americans who cannot speak? Or do you enjoy your privilege and wait for others to lead — to go first. I'm seeking Special Forces Airborne Rangers at this time. I am seeking the courage of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

Are you going to FAIL as did Americans in 1941? Or are you going to be remembered as one of the "most highly decorated units in the United States Army." History will record your actions.

From: JAVApotomac <javapotomac@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 30, 2024, 5:09PM
Subject: Re: Shinnyo En 2024 Floating Lantern Festival
To: Pete Aloha <pete.tingstrom@gmail.com>

Dear LtCol (Ret) Pete Tingstrom,

JAVA understands your sentiments and supports the principle behind your efforts. However, taking any action at this time will leave 40K+ people with a negative view of Veterans.

However, we do understand your frustration. Our president suggested that perhaps we can work on this matter next year to the benefit of both parties and combine the Memorial Day and the Shinnyo Lantern Floating event by lighting the lanterns for our fallen service members.

At this moment, this is our stance on the matter, and hope we can work together to honor both traditions next year.

V/r,
Antoinette Phelps
Executive Director
Japanese American Veterans Association

RESPONSE

BOYCOTT Shinnyo-en :: SAVE Memorial Day in Hawai'i
www.BoycottShinnyo.com

ATTN: JAVA President: Howard High, USA Veteran

May 1, 2024

Aloha e Antoinette ~

Want to thank you for taking the time to respond to Pete and address our concerns. Please understand how disappointed I am that your president and group refuses assist our brave fallen heroes in their time of need. They did not deny us. Your concern is that 40K+ people will have “a negative view of Veterans.”

We did not ask Shinnyo-en to stop their event. We asked this generally kind, compassionate Buddhist Order to think of our fallen Veterans and host their wonderful event on Saturday or Sunday. As you so eloquently state, such a compromise would be to the “benefit of both parties.” Rather than a Memorial Day, we would evolve into a Memorial Weekend. More love and respect for those we have lost. Name me one compassionate person who would deny such an observation?

Let me be honest, I do not believe 40K+ people will have a negative view of Veterans for making this request. Sadly, the 40K+ people simply do not think of our fallen service members at all. Americans, particularly in Hawai'i, enjoy the freedoms and sacrifice from our active and retired service members, but do not sacrifice or honor them in return. We have become an increasingly selfish, entitled and privileged society.

As I wrote to Governor Green and Mayor Blangiardi last night, our military members are trained to SUFFER in SILENCE. I compared to the DRs, nurses and staff who went to “war” against a virus during the pandemic. They were on the front lines in this deadly battle. They heroically shouldered

the burden of the horror and sacrifice for the nation. We also watched as they complained, cried, expressed their frustration on national and local TV. They are civilians. They have the right to express their feelings.

Our heroic men and women in uniform cannot make such public calls for help. Complaining, crying, expressing frustration would benefit and embolden the enemy. They must SUFFER in SILENCE.

So, yes, now you are concerned about the opinions of 40K+ people who do not think about our fallen heroes, while ignoring the 250,000+ service members, over 53,000+ lying in love at Punchbowl and families in Hawai'i. They ALL Suffer in Silence.

Your president suggests an alternative NEXT YEAR. Shinnyo-en held their first Floating Lantern event in 1999. I did not know. I'm from Kaua'i. We do not trample on our fallen heroes on our tiny island. My first Floating Lantern event was 2019. I was horrified that your group and others had allowed this desecration of Decoration Day, which officially became Memorial Day. The intent of the observation is for those who fell defending the nation. Civilians honor the dead troops for sacrificing for them. Civilians can honor their family members and friends the remaining 364 days of the year.

NOBODY on O'ahu truly cares about our fallen service members. I spent many hours at Punchbowl crying with the forgotten men and women, and apologizing for this selfish local culture.

Your organization cares more about the opinions of 40K+ people than 53,000+ brave, heroic men and women who sacrificed their ENTIRE LIVES for the rest of us ... they gave ALL so we can live freely. We pay them back for their sacrifice by forgetting them — placing our family and friends above their sacrifice.

ALL I DO IS CRY for them when I hear the living care so little about our dead heroes. With all due respect, I find this attitude shameful. There is no honor in the living on O'ahu. Frankly, I find O'ahu to be an incredibly selfish place. Not cool to think of others on our tiny island. We need a Come to Jesus or Buddha moment. This behavior is not enlightened.

As a Veteran, and my father, grandfathers who are veterans, I am deeply disappointed in the Japanese American Veterans Association. Many brave, heroic Japanese American fallen men and women rest at Punchbowl. I urge your president to spend some time in contemplation at Punchbowl reflecting on the Duty and Obligation we owe our brothers and sisters.

We ONLY asked to SHARE the LOVE over the weekend. Sharing is not common on O'ahu unfortunately.

With love and aloha ~
Scott Goold

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www.BoycottShinnyo.com