

ATTN:

Governor Josh Green, MD
Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi
State Senator Mike Gabbard & Tulsi Gabbard
Howard High, Japanese American Veterans Association (JAVA) president
Edward Cruickshank, O'ahu Veterans Council (OVC) president
Her Holiness Shinto Ito
Atsushi Matasunaga
Reverend Eitaro Hayashi, Shinnyo-en Buddhist Order

RE: Valerie Richardson: The Washington Times

May 22, 2024

Aloha Valerie ~

Please reference our website and BOYCOTT Shinnyo-en movement in the Aloha State of Hawai'i. Our efforts have been ongoing for over five years.

SEE [BOYCOTTshinnyo.com](https://boycottshinnyo.com)
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Thank you for your article about the temporary retraining order filed against Knights of Columbus in the U.S. District Court for holding their annual Memorial Day Mass inside a national cemetery in Petersburg, Virginia. The tradition dates back over 60 years and now the National Park Service has rejected their application for the second year in a row. Petersburg National Battlefield offered the fraternal Catholic organization use of a location "immediately adjacent to the cemetery."

In Hawai'i, the Japanese Buddhist Order Shinnyo-en has trampled on Memorial Day tradition and overwhelms the public's observation of our fallen, heroic men and women by hosting Floating Lantern Hawai'i each Memorial Day Monday. About eight to ten people, generally older people, turn out for the traditional somewhat quaint and outdated military activities, which include a couple gatherings of highly-decorated top brass, photo ops for local and national politicians, and a poorly-unattended short parade. Younger generations have no interested at all.

Floating Lantern Hawai'i, on the other hand, is a sophisticated, high-energy event with modern production and entertainment promotions. Floating Lantern Hawai'i attracts over 45,000+ participants, as civilians remember their lost family and friends. They have little understanding of the real meaning of Memorial Day. As an example, compare two tragic and painful losses:



The Chin Ho family lost their beloved 96-year old grandmother last November. They would like to honor her life on Memorial Day Monday at Floating Lantern Hawai'i. Should the Ho family be offered a the same opportunity to use our national day of remembrance day as three Army Reservists killed in combat?

Specialist Kennedy Sanders and her unit were pinned down in a remote base in Jordan, some 10,000 miles from home. Kennedy was 24 years old and had volunteered for the Army Reserves in 2019. They were defending our nation from Iranian-backed terror attacks, when she and two of her elite squad were killed during a drone strike aimed at their headquarters in Jordan. Kennedy, Specialist Breonna Moffett and Sergeant William Rivers gave their lives to save hundreds more American troops and continue the fight to protect Americans here at home.

We don't wish Floating Lantern Hawai'i to end. We have asked ONLY that Japanese Buddhist Order Shinnyo-en host their heartwarming event on Sunday. The deaths and loss of our service men and women must be exalted and held to a higher standard of observation.



The Knights of Columbus sued the National Park Service for denying a permit for its annual Memorial Day Mass at a Virginia National park cemetery. (Getty/Pat Schmidt/NPS)

The three Georgia military families are still in mourning, with both tears and pride:

“I’m just taking it really moment by moment,” said Oneida Sanders tearfully, mother of Army Reserve Specialist Kennedy Sanders of Waycross. “We have been surrounded by nothing but support from the time we heard the news. Having everybody around to keep us busy and occupied has been a good distraction.”

Breonna’s mother, Francine Moffett said she had an opportunity to speak with her daughter the previous week, “Because she wanted her strawberry shortcake and her sunflower seeds, and her real estate book because she was studying to become a realtor, as well. She always had a smile on her face. She always loved her friends. She always loved her family. She always just commanded attention. And she just loved life. She was definitely going to re-enlist and do one more tour because she wanted to become a sergeant. And she wanted to become a realtor part-time.”

Shawn Sanders said if he could speak with his daughter just one more time, “I would say I’m proud of her. I mean, I would always let her know that I was proud of her service. I was proud of her being a young lady, a young woman, and the choices she had made so far. And we were looking forward to years and years of just being together.”

It is too much to ask that Americans and residents in Hawai'i keep this day sacred and exalted for those who gave the ultimate sacrifice to our nation and each of us? Why must our Gold Star Families suffer in silence and with so little public respect.

Will your report on this trampling of tradition in Hawai'i. We have offered to support Shinnyo-en Floating Lantern Hawai'i on Sunday. Would love to attend. Even suggested creating a Memorial Weekend: Shinnyo Sunday; Military Monday, in the Purple Heart City of Honolulu. We believe this compromise embodies the Aloha spirit in our state, as well as the harmonious, peaceful and enlightened teachings of Buddha. Shinnyo-en for over five years has simply given us the "finger." This Japanese group shows our military heroes and American tradition absolutely no respect.

Shinnyo-en makes millions of dollars hosting their event on Memorial Day Monday. Specialist Kennedy Sanders of Waycross, Specialist Breonna Moffett of Savannah and Sergeant William Jerome Rivers of Carrollton gave their lives not for personal financial gain, but because of the Great Love they have for each of us and our nation.

Please WRITE OUR STORY !!! Me Ke Akua e aloha

Scott Goold

SOURCES:

- [1] <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2024/may/21/knights-columbus-sues-national-park-service-hold-m/>
- [2] <https://www.foxnews.com/media/catholic-group-sues-biden-administration-denying-permit-memorial-day-mass-way-out-line>
- [3] <https://www.11alive.com/article/news/local/specialist-kennedy-sanders-sergeant-william-jerome-rivers-breonna-moffet-iran-jordan-drone-attack/85-3220eb60-5561-4ef2-b508-c43bbeaf965e>