



Japanese American Veterans Association

General Elections: Voting is Now Open!



Dear JAVA Family and Friends,

On behalf of the President and Executive Council, JAVA will be conducting our biennial election during the month of January 2026 by Google forms or mail in vote. JAVA War Veteran Members and General Members are eligible to vote.

Voting Options

Option 1: Members may complete a ballot of officer candidates by clicking the link below. Please use your **JAVA registered email.** Voting via Google Forms will be completed **January 6 - 27th, 2026.**

Option 2: Members may also send a proxy vote to another War Veteran or General Member. A proxy vote must be a signed letter with your name and a statement granting permission for the said member to vote in your place. The letter must be submitted by the proxy as a Google Form attachment.

Option 3: Members may mail an individual ballot or proxy votes with accompanying signed permission letters to the JAVA P.O. Box. All mailed ballots and mailed proxy votes must be postmarked by **January 21, 2026.** Please send to: Japanese American Veterans Association, P.O. Box 341198, Bethesda, MD 20827.

If there are questions or updates to your JAVA registered email, please contact Antoinette Phelps, Executive Director at: javapotomac@gmail.com.

Election Timeline:

- Google Forms voting will take place from January 6 to 27, 2026.
- Mail-in voting will take place from January 6 to 21, 2026.
- Election results will be announced at the General Membership Meeting.

If you have any questions or concerns, please e-mail Antoinette Phelps at javapotomac@gmail.com

Candidates

President



Howard High Incumbent President

Howard High assumed the role of Vice President of the Japanese American Veterans Association (JAVA) in 2019 followed by the role of President in 2024. Professionally, Mr. High currently serves as a civilian in the U.S. Army CECOM G2 (Intelligence and Security) as the Senior Security Advisor at the Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

His active duty experience in the U.S. Army spans roles as both an enlisted soldier and an officer. He enlisted as a 98G, Voice Interceptor, which required him to attend the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California. He graduated with honors from the Russian Basic Course and successfully completing the National Security Agency Russian Extended Course. After serving as an enlisted soldier for two years, he received an Army ROTC Scholarship and attended the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where he earned a bachelor's degree in Slavic Languages and Literature, with a specialization in the Russian language. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in June of 1981 through UCLA's ROTC program.

Subsequently, Mr. High served in various capacities as an intelligence and counterintelligence officer, including a command assignment in a tactical military intelligence battalion in Germany. Selected to become a Foreign Area Officer, he furthered his education at the University of Kansas, obtaining a master's degree in Russian and East European Studies. He left active duty after 13 years of service.

Howard High was born in Yokohama, Japan, to a Japanese mother and an American father and relocated to the United States at the age of six. His upbringing in Los Angeles, California, involved active participation in numerous Japanese cultural and athletic organizations, which deepened his appreciation for and pride in his Japanese heritage.

Of notable mention, he holds a 7th dan (black belt) in Shindo Jinen Ryu (karate), with a training history of over 50 years with Japan Karate-Do Ryobu-Kai (JKR). Currently, Mr. High serves as the Chairman of JKR International's Yudanshakai Executive Council, where he leads to advance the practice of Shindo Jinen Ryu and oversees the management of JKR organizations on every continent except Antarctica. Additionally, he continues to teach and practice the ancient samurai arts of iaijutsu and kenjutsu.

Mr. High, in his leisure time, enjoys pursuits such as bicycling, videography/photography, and the study of history and languages.

Vice President



Danielle J. Ngo, USA (Ret)
Incumbent Vice President

Colonel Danielle Ngo, U.S. Army (Retired), is currently serving as the JAVA Vice President after serving on the Executive Council for two years prior. She was born in Vietnam and evacuated by the United States at the end of the Vietnam War with her mother and sister. She has previously served as a fellow for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C.; Executive Officer for the U.S. Army Inspector General, Pentagon, Washington, D.C.; and Executive Officer for the U.S. Army Pacific Commander at Fort Shafter, Hawaii. COL Ngo is notable as the highest-ranking Asian American female to command an operational engineer brigade. COL Ngo served in leadership assignments throughout the United States and overseas, including deployments to Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan. During her commands, her units provided humanitarian assistance for two of the largest and most destructive wildfires in Colorado history, the Waldo Canyon and Black Forest Wildfires, and later, construction projects throughout the Pacific from Hawaii to the Republic of Korea. She participated in the US-China Disaster Management Exchange in Kunming while in command. When not serving operationally, she has held positions as a Joint Chiefs of Staff Intern, the Chief of Engineer Maneuver Support Organizations, and the Military Assistant to the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee.

Colonel Ngo holds a distinguished graduate master's degree in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College (USAWC), a master’s in Theater Studies from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), and a master's in public policy from Georgetown University. She is also certified as a Project Management Professional (PMP).



William Franco III

As Commander of the Veterans Affiliated Council, William Franco III has dedicated his life to serving veterans, military families, first responders, and communities throughout the Sacramento region and beyond. His work centers on organizing meaningful, unifying events that honor service and strengthen community bonds. He is proud to lead California's largest Veterans Day Parade—an event that brings together thousands in recognition of our nation's heroes.

Throughout the year, William oversees major observances including Memorial Day ceremonies at Sacramento's historic cemetery, citywide Fourth of July celebrations, and 9/11 remembrance events, including an annual ceremony and golf tournament that support military and first responder communities. He also plays an active role in the Sacramento MLK March & Parade, reflecting his commitment to unity, patriotism, and service across all communities.

Supporting those in need is a core part of his mission. He leads large holiday giving programs that provide Thanksgiving and Christmas meals to military families and underserved communities. Each year, he adopts the 319th Signal Battalion to ensure military children receive toys and support during the holiday season. He also coordinates flag-planting missions at cemeteries across the region and partners with the Boy Scouts of America to conduct respectful flag-retirement ceremonies.

In 2024 and 2025, William expanded the Council's reach by partnering with the United States Navy during Navy Week, hosting more than 75 events. These included STEM programs for local schools and preparing meals for over 500 homeless individuals at Loaves and Fishes. He also assisted with a mass swearing-in ceremony at the California Capital Airshow, honoring new service members as they began their military careers.

He has personally spearheaded workforce-development initiatives that create pathways to positions at technology companies for military families. These partnerships include organizations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Hiring Our Heroes, Salesforce, BOSCH, and others.

His statewide involvement includes participating in the California State Fair's Military, Veterans & First Responders Day, where he continues to promote recognition for those who serve. Under his leadership, the Veterans Affiliated Council generated more than \$300,000 for Veteran Service Organizations in 2024 and 2025, directly benefiting veterans and their families.

William Franco III's passion for service, patriotism, and community engagement continues to guide all of his work. He remains committed to uplifting veterans, active-duty personnel, families, and communities across California and the nation.

Secretary



Mayumi Kimura

Mayumi Kimura is a PTSD and trauma specialist, Nisei Navy veteran, and California state leader whose work spans statewide and national outreach, complex systems coordination, and direct support for veterans facing housing, mental health, and transition challenges. She collaborates with community, cultural, and veteran organizations across California and beyond to strengthen networks of care and uplift the voices of underrepresented veterans.

Honoring and advancing the stories of Japanese American veterans is central to her mission. She is dedicated to ensuring that their bravery and contributions remain a vital part of how the nation understands service and sacrifice.

Mayumi would serve as a strong JAVA Secretary, bringing exceptional skills in record management, multi-stakeholder communication, and accountability through accurate and timely documentation. Her discipline, cultural insight, and deep commitment to the Japanese American veteran legacy guide her continued service to the community.



Gregory Doss

Gregory Doss is a life member of the Japanese American Veterans Association and is honored to be considered for the position of Secretary.

Gregory is a disabled U.S. Air Force veteran of the Korean Defense and Global War on Terrorism, having served as a Staff Sergeant. A Hapa from Hawai'i now residing in Georgia, he has deep family ties to Japanese American military and wartime history: his great uncle, Hiroshi Inouye, served in the 1555th Engineering Battalion, and another family member was incarcerated at Honouliuli.

Gregory brings extensive experience in veterans' service and organizational leadership. He previously served as Post Service Officer, Adjutant, and Junior Vice Commander for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He also has a strong background in administrative support, typing 50 words per minute, and managing ongoing projects in his current role with the Department of Veterans Affairs as an Electronics Technician for the Healthcare Technology Management Service Line.

He comes from a long tradition of military service, with at least one member of each generation —both in his family and his wife's—serving in the U.S. military, many in combat or combat zones. Gregory has also served as the Special Emphasis Program Manager for the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Special Emphasis Program within the Equal Employment Opportunity office at the Atlanta VA Healthcare System.

An active veterans advocate, Gregory is a life member of multiple organizations, including the VFW, DAV, JAVA, IAVA, Korean Defense Veterans Association, Vetlanta, and Merging Vets and Players.

Gregory looks forward to the election results and the opportunity to further support JAVA through dedicated service as Secretary.

Treasurer



Gabriel Cervantes Okamoto

Gabriel Okamoto is honored to be considered for the role of Treasurer for the Japanese American Veterans Association.

As a Japanese American servicemember, a member of the U.S.–Japan Council, and JAVA’s Digital Community & Collaboration Coordinator, Gabriel cares deeply about the legacy the organization protects. His grandfather, Paul Yoshio Okamoto, was incarcerated during World War II and later served in the U.S. Army as an Interpreter—an experience that shaped Gabriel’s understanding of duty, stewardship, and what it means to honor the community’s history.

Professionally, Gabriel brings strong experience in financial management and program oversight. He served as the Cooperative Agreement Program Manager for the California National Guard’s Youth and Community Programs, where he managed a \$43 million annual budget and ensured compliance with federal and state requirements. He also served as Treasurer for the Veterans Affiliated Council, handling donor tracking, reporting, and 501(c)(3) compliance.

If elected, Gabriel intends to focus on maintaining clear and accurate financial records, strengthening donor relationships, and ensuring scholarship funds are managed responsibly and transparently.

Gabriel would be honored to support JAVA in this role.



Rachel Myeong-Bae Kim

Major Rachel Myeong-Bae Kim is a West Point graduate, Army acquisition officer, and seasoned finance professional with over a decade of leadership in military financial management, public-private investment strategy, and Asian American community advocacy. As a second-generation Korean American born and raised in Queens, NY, Rachel brings a deep personal commitment to the AAPI veteran community. Her blend of military service, cultural mentorship, and nonprofit governance makes her uniquely suited to serve as Treasurer for JAVA.

Key Highlights – AAPI Cultural Leadership & Mentorship

- **Officer-in-Charge, Korean American Relations Seminar (KARS), West Point** – Mentored over 100 AAPI cadets during her tenure as OIC, organizing cultural programming, professional development sessions, and alumni engagement to foster belonging and heritage awareness.
- **Informal Mentor, Army AAPI Soldier Network** – Provides ongoing career mentorship to junior officers and enlisted soldiers across the Army, supporting identity-centered leadership and career development in underrepresented communities.
- **Vice President, NextGen Committee, Korean American Association of Greater NY (KAAGNY)** – Created intergenerational Korean American programming and community engagement events across NYC.
- **President, Associate Board, Korean Community Services (KCS)** – Oversaw strategic planning and donor development for one of the city's longest-standing Korean social service nonprofits.
- **Rotary Volunteer & Peace Corps Collaborator** – Led equity-focused volunteer initiatives in Ghana and Kosovo supporting female entrepreneurship and civic capacity-building.

Key Highlights – Financial and Budgetary Experience

- **Assistant Program Manager – Business Management, JPEO Armaments & Ammunition** – Currently leads financial planning and execution for defense acquisition programs, managing complex appropriations and sustainment strategies.

- **Comptroller, 160th SOAR(A) & 266th FMSC (Europe)** – Oversaw defense budgets totaling over \$200M+, managing aviation sustainment, procurement, and overseas contingency operations in Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Romania.
- **Fellow, Morgan Stanley (Wealth & Venture)** – Advanced enterprise GenAI risk frameworks and led analysis of inclusive investment pipelines for pre-seed founders through the Inclusive Venture Lab.
- **Certified Defense Financial Manager – Acquisitions (CDFM-A) and Project Management Professional (PMP)** – Equipped with technical fluency in fiscal law, SAP ERP, and government procurement policy.
- **Secretary, West Point Society of New York and VP, AUSA West Point Chapter** – Maintains board-level leadership with responsibilities for financial oversight, recordkeeping, and donor engagement.

Rachel represents the next generation of AAPI veteran leadership—rooted in service, disciplined in financial stewardship, and committed to uplifting our community. Her long record of mentoring fellow cadets and soldiers, advancing Korean American civic life, and managing multimillion-dollar budgets makes her exceptionally qualified to serve as Treasurer of JAVA. With deep respect for the Japanese American legacy of military service, Rachel seeks to continue JAVA’s mission of education, remembrance, and advocacy with fiscal transparency and inclusive leadership.

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Questions or Suggestions: Please contact Antoinette Phelps at javapotomac@gmail.com.

Japanese American Veterans Association: Address: P.O. Box 341198, Bethesda, MD 20827 | <http://java-us.org>

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