

**Decades of Dedicated Service**

5/22/2015 - Enterprise News

Jason Kamiya followed his father's example, serving more than 30 years in the Army.



Gen. Kamiya addresses Marines during a joint command assignment in Afghanistan in 2005.

Retired Maj. Gen. Jason Kamiya, a senior vice president at USAA, followed in his father's footsteps to serve in the U.S. Army. Their careers exemplify the many contributions Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders have made to this country.

"Good leaders," Jason Kamiya says, "frequently ask themselves, 'If today I suddenly lost my rank and title — in other words if today I was just Jason Kamiya rather than General Kamiya or Senior Vice President Kamiya — would those you lead and serve still follow you?'"

That's a question Kamiya encourages others to ask themselves as he does during personal self-reflection. "When you look beyond the workplace, everyone is a leader in some way, such as within their family, church and community. If the answer is 'no,'" he says, "then you have some honest soul-searching to do and leadership behavior adjustments to make."

Kamiya's leadership acumen comes after more than three decades in the Army where he rose to major general. His career began as an infantry platoon leader in Korea and evolved into his participation in three major combat campaigns, one in which he commanded a joint service force in Afghanistan composed of 18,000 Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps service members and a multinational coalition of allies. He also served in the Office of the President as special assistant to a member of the cabinet and as a principle representative to the secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Throughout his career, Kamiya has remained humble. It's a trait he learned from his father, who served with one of the most highly decorated units of World War II, the 442nd Central Postal Directory. It was an outfit of Japanese-Americans who fought valiantly in Europe.

"Of all the different attributes that my background and ethnicity provide, the strong sense of obligation to family, to defend the nation and to serve others in helping them achieve their personal goals and aspirations clearly stand out," Kamiya says.

His father, Lawrence Masanobu Kamiya, who was raised in a sugar plantation community in Hawaii, was drafted after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Many of the men who fought in the 442nd put their lives on the line while their families were confined to internment camps back in the States.

The 442nd is also known for rescuing the "Lost Battalion," a unit of about 275 Texas soldiers who were surrounded by the enemy in the mountains of France during WWII. In the fight to break through and rescue the Texans, 800 of the 442nd soldiers were killed or wounded. In 1962, Kamiya's father and other veterans of the 442nd were named "honorary Texans" for their gallantry.

Kamiya says his father and other 442nd veterans helped open the door not only for other Japanese-Americans but also for all minorities. Their courage, loyalty and service are an example to all.

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**Keywords:**

Diversity & Inclusion; Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month; Jason Kamiya

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**Take Aways**

Jason Kamiya

- Born in Honolulu, Hawaii
- Wife, Carmen, is from Kauai; two daughters
- Prior to retiring from the military, served as director for joint training, U.S. Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, Virginia
- Was promoted to major general in 2005 and was the most senior U.S. military officer in Italy at one time
- During WWII, Gen. Kamiya's father helped liberate Sant'Angelo d'Alife, a town in Italy about 55 miles north of Naples. Every year the town celebrates its liberation from the enemy. He was privileged to serve as the town's guest of honor in 2004 as a direct descendant of an American soldier who took part in the liberation.
- Some of his military awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit with four Oak Leaf Clusters, the Bronze Star, Ranger Tab, and the Parachutist, Air Assault, Pathfinder and Expert Infantryman badges.
- Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month will be celebrated on Wednesday in the Home Office. There will be fashion displays, traditional dance demonstrations, henna tattoos and Rangoli, a traditional floor art.

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Plc. Lawrence Masanobu Kamiya

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**Comment on this article**

- Kotch, Stephanie** wrote on May 22, 2015 01:50:49PM

Thank you for demonstrating what servant leadership truly is, and for setting the integrity and leadership bar high for the rest of us. Thank you also for your continued words of support and guidance to those of us that need it. This is why we love you, Jason!
- Lombardi, William** wrote on May 22, 2015 01:49:59PM

Jason you are a pioneer in leadership and a selfless leader that demonstrates servant leadership every day. You always have one priority taking care of the troops (employees). Thank You to your father who represents a group of great Americans. I feel privileged to be in the same family with you at USAA!
- Peralta, Freddie** wrote on May 22, 2015 01:42:30PM

Aloha from this Ewa Beach boy. "Go For Broke!"
- McKenna, Peter** wrote on May 22, 2015 01:40:23PM

Thank you Jason for being a steadfast example of outstanding leadership! We are blessed to follow you!
- Beal, Adam** wrote on May 22, 2015 01:30:14PM

Love this article!
- Zoeller, Terri** wrote on May 22, 2015 01:21:26PM

Thank you Jason for your service, leadership, and humble spirit. You are a great role model of which I've personally been a beneficiary. You've led, inspired, taught, coached, championed, and cared making a difference in the lives of others in your life journey. This is a true testament of servant leadership.
- Cunningham, Tony** wrote on May 22, 2015 12:45:43PM

Let's continue to open doors for those who are still forgotten ..the late Senator Daniel K Inouye was a member of the Go For Broke 442nd and was one of the few Asian-AMERICAN role models that I remember growing up --- Good article and it's nice to see a leader who looks a " little " like me ( General kamiya is much better looking) ---Represent !!
- Dunn, Nicole** wrote on May 22, 2015 12:38:09PM

what an incredible demonstration of self awareness; to ask if those would still follow you if you had no title or rank above them, that is a quality of truly remarkable leader!
- Hagood, Dana** wrote on May 22, 2015 12:35:21PM

Thank you for sharing your story Jason and for your service. I admire your passion, heart and commitment to our country and company!
- Lacayo, Omar** wrote on May 22, 2015 12:18:56PM

Great story!
- Villanueva, Rudy** wrote on May 22, 2015 11:36:06AM

Jason, it has been my privilege and honor to have met you and Carmen. Two things which bring back memories of my parents. One, my Dad also served during WWII, was working the cotton fields when drafted and was wounded twice in Europe. Second, my Mom's name is Carmen who married my Dad after he returned from Europe. Great story and I would definitely still follow you regardless of rank.
- Causey, Latasha** wrote on May 22, 2015 11:26:13AM

Great story from a great leader! Thank you for sharing Jason and thank you for your leadership!
- Miller, Loretta** wrote on May 22, 2015 11:09:29AM

Sir, not only are you an exceptional leader, but you are a very compassionate and caring person. I can only imagine how great a man your father was to have raised a son, husband, mentor like you. God Bless.

<b>Estevez-Breton, Julio</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 10:50:07AM	Thanks Jason for everything you have taught the team and I. Your dedication to making the team better is outstanding and the shadow you cast as a leader is large and positive. I paid my respects to the Brothers in Valor of the 442nd at the Waikiki Memorial. What a wonderful way to keep their memory alive. More info at: <a href="http://www.hawaiiforvisitors.com/oahu/attractions/brothers-valor-memorial.htm">http://www.hawaiiforvisitors.com/oahu/attractions/brothers-valor-memorial.htm</a>
<b>Johnson, Pretangia</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 10:41:56AM	I have had the honor of working with Jason since he walked in the USAA building as our leader over the MX Staff Ops area in Feb 2010. Being here myself for 24 yrs, I can personally attest that he is one of the best leaders that USAA has ever had. He is phenomenal, humble, and caring all wrapped up in one person who has a genuine concern for the "troops", all of us. I had the pleasure of meeting his mother a few weeks ago when she was visiting. She is a very proud wife, mother, and grandmother. We were exchanging pleasantries and I mentioned what a great leader Jason is to us here at USAA and her question back to me was what makes him great in my eyes? What a wonderful time we had sharing. Jason I would definitely still follow!!!!!!
<b>Reckseidler, Jeffrey</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 10:41:01AM	I shared an elevator in G with Maj. Gen. Kamiya the other day. I had just arrived at HO after driving through that pounding morning rain storm. He asked how my drive-in was, and seemed to really care about how it went. If leadership is about making the person with you feel cared about, well it was a job well done that day. Thank you sir.
<b>Asomoza, Erin</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 10:41:00AM	Thank you, Jason, for sharing your story and important words of advice. Your words always come from the heart which I greatly admire.
<b>San Miguel, Janie</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 10:35:52AM	Thank you for your service. This is a great overview of your family history with a powerful message.
<b>Lloyd, Patti</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 10:15:37AM	Moving and powerful story. I feel gratitude deep in my soul for you, your family and all those who have served. Thanks and Blessings to you all.
<b>Taplador, Jerry</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 10:08:36AM	Powerful leadership messages. ^.^
<b>Butler, Heather</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 10:07:27AM	The depth of our leadership here at USAA never ceases to amaze me! Thank you sir for your service and your family's service!!
<b>Krebs, Emily</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 10:06:05AM	Deeply felt thanks to you and your father for some incredible service. What an amazing role model! There is great wisdom and truth in your words about leadership not being reliant on titles. Humility is also extremely powerful, and sadly, not a trait we see glorified as often as it should be.
<b>Gatewood, Robert</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 10:05:30AM	Jason, Thanks for serving our country and sharing your amazing family story. I am especially touched by your challenge to assess my leadership effectiveness as you have throughout your life.
<b>Eberhart, Mark</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 09:56:18AM	Great insights from a proven leader! Thanks for sharing, General Kamiya!
<b>Egan, Christopher</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 09:36:38AM	"Go For Broke!!" 442nd RCT Motto
<b>Clark, Matthew</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 09:31:10AM	I had the opportunity to attend a meeting with Maj. Gen. Kamiya at the Lakeview office in 2014 and can say unequivocally he is a natural leader who wants to hear from his "troops" on the front lines. Keep up the great work and thank you for your service!
<b>Coons, Barbara</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 09:21:43AM	Inspirational story, Maj. Gen. Kamiya. Thank you for sharing and thank you for your service.
<b>Gibbs, Eric</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 09:10:40AM	Overcoming the enemy in a feat of arms is daunting enough, overcoming your own country's distrust at the same time is something else. Many famous Japanese Americans, including PFC Kamiya and Dan Inouye (who later became the Senator for the state of Hawaii) served in the 442nd RCT. Motivating indeed.
<b>Gilliss, Mary</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 09:08:56AM	Thank you for sharing your story Jason. It's an honor to work on your team. "Good Leaders must first become good servants" - Robert Greenleaf. You have certainly been both a good leader and servant. Thank you for your service and the service of your family!
<b>Martinez, Rebecca</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 09:07:14AM	Thank you, Jason for sharing your family history. As you illustrate the pride you have for your dad, we are equally proud of you! Thank you for your "lessons in leadership"...
<b>Petro, Daniel (PS)</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 09:05:35AM	Jason thanks for sharing. What a great story.
<b>Aikens, Debbie</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 08:47:10AM	Thanks for sharing your story, Jason! I agree with the comments about your humble leadership.
<b>Schaffer, Robert</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 08:46:45AM	Leaders worth following need no title - powerful stuff. Jason, let's continue to open all diversity and inclusion doors here at USAA just like your Dad and his fellow Veterans of 442nd RCT did in their day - now that is a way we can honor and remember their trail-blazing!
<b>Holmes, Allison</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 08:42:48AM	What an exceptional legacy - thank you for sharing!
<b>Joyce, Thomas</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 08:41:38AM	True servant leadership. Inspiring and encouraging words, Sir, and thank you for sharing your story.
<b>Waclawczyk, Ken</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 08:40:42AM	It's an honor to work with you Gen. Kamiya. You are a true leader! And yes, we would follow you!
<b>Finley, Steven</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 08:28:03AM	I can attest to Jason being one of the most humble leaders I have ever known. He sets a fine example for all of us to follow.
<b>Babb, Kathy</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 08:26:26AM	Thank you for your service and leadership. Humbling and inspirational at once!
<b>Crane, Allen</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 08:02:56AM	"Would those you lead and serve still follow you?" - Thought-provoking and inspiring. Thank you, General!
<b>Adair, Danny</b> wrote on May 22, 2015 08:01:05AM	That's a very inspirational family journey, and I particularly appreciate the 'If today I suddenly lost my rank and title ...' self-reflection tool. That's not only

07:58:51AM

a great question for current leaders to ask, but for aspiring leaders to figure out whom to emulate on their leadership journey.

Saine, Benjamin  
wrote on  
May 22, 2015  
07:57:33AM

Bastogne, Sir!!

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