

STATEMENT OF GUY T. KIYOKAWA, NOMINEE TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
FOR ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE
HEARING TO CONSIDER PENDING NOMINATIONS

OCTOBER 6, 2021

Thank you, Chairman Tester, Ranking Member Moran, and distinguished Committee Members, for this great honor and opportunity to serve our Veterans and their families and caregivers. After meeting with you and your staff, I am even more appreciative of your dedication and commitment to improving our nation's support for those who have served. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your staff.

I'm joined today by my wife, Kathryn. We have been married for 27 years and she understands the challenges of being a military spouse – including raising our three children while enduring multiple moves across this country and overseas during my 29 years in the Army. Also with me today is my youngest son, Ian, who is a senior in high school here in Vienna, VA. My mother, Fusae Kiyokawa, also joins us today. She is 92 years young and was born and raised in Hilo, Hawaii, which is a rural town on the Big Island. Her father was a World War I Veteran who rests in a State of Hawaii Veterans cemetery. Another Veteran in our family, Uncle Mits, ran a flight school with four planes in Honolulu. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, his planes were taken, and he immediately wanted to join the military as a pilot. But the Army wouldn't allow him to serve as an officer, so he enlisted. In his wedding picture, he is wearing an Army uniform with officer's pants as evidenced by the

stripe along his trouser leg. It was his small way of saying that he should be an officer.

When he passed, he was interred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific

“Punchbowl” in Honolulu. I placed on his urn my Aviation Branch insignia I received when commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. That insignia’s design originated from the Army Air Corps which would have, and should have, been my uncle Mits’s.

In 1982, I was fortunate to receive a four-year Army ROTC scholarship to the University of Southern California. Every cadre member in my ROTC unit was a Vietnam combat Veteran. These men and their experiences in combat shaped me as an officer. Each had their unique story, yet they all had something in common...unending commitment to the Army Core Values.

The values that continued to drive me throughout my Army career were selfless service, respect, duty, and integrity. As a MEDEVAC pilot, my flight crews developed the trust and selflessness that was critical to our ability to carry out our missions, as a team, to save lives.

Later, I found a niche in integrating functions within large matrixed organizations such as Walter Reed and Brooke Army Medical Centers. The Army Values continued to help me integrate complex organizations and understand the challenges of the wounded, ill, and injured. At Walter Reed, I was introduced to what eventually became known as Gulf War Illness. My experiences planning the construction of the first Intrepid Spirit Center for TBI at Fort Belvoir opened my eyes to a holistic, Soldier-focused path to address TBI and PTSD.

These experiences, grounded by the Army Values, help me understand the unique challenges Veterans face.

If confirmed, the Office of Enterprise Integration would provide me the best opportunity to apply these experiences to support Veterans and their families. My nomination to join the VA team is timely as Secretary McDonough addresses strategic priorities including delivery of care, ensuring benefits for toxic exposures, the electronic health record program, VA's infrastructure, and continued implementation of the bills passed into law by Congress. The Veterans Health Administration is by far the largest organization within the VA, but it is reliant on seamless enterprise functions such as IT, acquisition, logistics, and construction. If confirmed, I would work to create that seamless enterprise using experiences from my work as the Deputy Director of the Defense Health Agency. During these past 6 years, I have had the honor, and challenge, of working to bring together functions in the Army, Navy, and Air Force that best served the service member and their family as an enterprise instead of four separate entities. These experiences will help to gain and keep Veterans' trust by helping them to build civilian lives of opportunity keeping the faith with their families and caregivers. I will ensure that every person entering a VA facility feels safe and free of harassment and discrimination.

I am grateful for the opportunities in my 35 years of military and federal service supporting multiple generations of Veterans from the Vietnam War, to the post-911 era. Thank you for

the potential opportunity to continue supporting Veterans and I look forward to answering your questions.