



Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America

Chartered By an Act of Congress

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Stephen Zeitz

National Commander

**Office of Governor Rick Scott
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001**

Dear Governor Scott:

I understand that you will meet shortly with Japanese Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara about his country's bid for Florida's high-speed rail contracts. In your meeting with Mr. Maehara, I hope you can persuade him to tell Japanese corporations that they have a duty to American former POWs of Japan to apologize for their slave labor and abuse and to establish a fund for reconciliation, research, exchange, and education.

Over 36,000 American GIs suffered the brutality of Japan's POW camps and slave labor for many of the Japanese companies involved in the high-speed rail bids. Nearly all the Japanese train component manufacturers, such as Sumitomo, Hitachi, Kawasaki, and Nippon Sharyo, used POW forced labor that they purchased from Japan's military to maintain war production in violation of the Geneva Conventions. Further, the predecessors of Japan's rail consortia, such as JR Central and JR East, were paid to transport American POWs to these death-through-work camps.

SNCF, the French bidder on high speed rail contracts, recently apologized for its complicity in the Holocaust for transporting Jews to transit centers on to extermination camps. It also committed itself to educating new generations about their war crimes by funding dialogues, historical research and remembrance projects with museums, libraries, and private organizations. By contrast, the Japanese rail companies have yet to acknowledge or apologize for their abuse and misuse of American POWs.

Japan's corporations have remained silent even after their own government this fall officially apologized to American former POWs of Japan and invited six 90-year old survivors to Japan for reconciliation and healing. Unlike SNCF, the Japanese companies refuse to establish a fund to show that they are "eager to do whatever is necessary" to ensure that the historical questions raised are examined and the history of their victims preserved.

The need for an educational program, similar to SNCF's, was made abundantly clear in a recent article in a prominent Japanese magazine that essentially denied the Bataan Death March. The piece implied that the descriptions by Army Sgt. Lester Tenney of the abuses and tortures he endured as a POW were merely Jewish lies. A translation of the article is attached.

The American POWs of Japan do not ask for compensation. They simply ask for an honorable apology for

their slave labor and the establishment of an educational fund to ensure that the sort of history outlined in this popular Japanese publication is never again written.

With the encouragement of Governor Charlie Crist, SNCF acknowledged in November its complex Holocaust history. We hope that you will ask Mr. Maehara for comparable acknowledgments from Japan's rail bidders.

I welcome an opportunity to talk with you further about this important issue affecting Florida veterans of our greatest generation, many of whom are Jewish.

Sincerely,



Stephen R. Zeitz

National Commander, Jewish War Veterans of the USA

See:

<http://www.wiesenthal.com/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=IsKWLbPJLnF&b=5711859&ct=8971705>

<http://www.wiesenthal.com/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=IsKWLbPJLnF&b=5711859&ct=8654103>

<http://newasiapolicypoint.blogspot.com/2010/12/war-educational-lapses.html>

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/opinion/os-ed-rail-pow-japan-120310-20101202,0,3242098.story>

<http://www.us-japandialogueonpows.org/Tenneyop-edMainichi.htm>