



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
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APR 26 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP  
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: 2024 Department of Defense Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month Observance

The Department of Defense recognizes May 1-31, 2024, as Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month. AANHPI Heritage Month is an opportunity to pay tribute to members of the AANHPI community for their dedication and service to our Nation. Their remarkable contributions shaped our collective history and enriched the fabric of our diverse society.

This year's theme, "Advancing Leaders Through Innovation," celebrates the contributions of AANHPI pioneers in the areas of science, art, business, civilian public service, and military strategy. Bringing varied and unique perspectives, these colleagues are critical contributors to developing innovative approaches to meeting defense priorities. Their expertise enhances DoD capability as we defend our Nation, deter aggression, and build a resilient Joint Force and defense ecosystem.

The innovative and technological advancements led by members of the AANHPI community are many. Notable leaders include Dr. Eleanor Concepcion "Connie" Mariano, the first female Filipina promoted to Rear Admiral, who served as a White House Physician and spearheaded advancements in military healthcare and wellness programs, and retired General Eric Shinseki, a Japanese American Army officer, who led efforts to modernize military operations and enhance force readiness during his tenure as the 34th Chief of Staff of the Army. These visionary leaders, among many others, left an enduring mark on history of innovation and excellence, shaping the course of military technology and strategy for generations to come.

As we celebrate AANHPI Heritage Month, we honor the remarkable legacy of innovators and their groundbreaking contributions that continue to shape the trajectory of our military readiness. Let us draw inspiration from their achievements to strive for excellence and innovation in all aspects of our mission. For resources and help with leading and organizing observances, visit: <https://www.deomi.mil/Special-Observances/#asian-american-pacific-islander-heritage-month>.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ashish S. Vazirani".

Ashish S. Vazirani  
Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of  
Defense for Personnel and Readiness