



**Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
Information Base**

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Instructions

Choose the items you'd like to include on your document from the Information Base. Copy and paste desired items into the blank templates located on DEOMI's Special Observances tab, under Observance Products. You can also paste facts into emails and other social media. Be creative and share your ideas!

Note: DEOMI will not, necessarily, update these every year. It is important that the EO practitioner modify these to fit the current time/situation/environment.

May

Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

People



Photo from defenseculture.mil

Thailand-born Ladda “Tammy” Duckworth is an Iraq War Veteran, Purple Heart recipient and former Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who was among the first handful of Army women to fly combat missions during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Duckworth served in the Reserve Forces for 23 years before retiring at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 2014. She was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2016 after representing Illinois’s Eighth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives for two terms.

<https://www.duckworth.senate.gov/about-tammy/biography>

Nicknamed “Road Runner” for her energy and enthusiasm, Carolyn Hisako Tanaka served in Vietnam despite having been placed in an internment camp with her family following the attack on Pearl Harbor when she was six years old. After the war, the family returned to find their home had been burned down. In 1966, as an emergency room nurse, she enlisted in the Army, telling skeptical friends, “I have a skill that is needed in Vietnam, and I’m going there to do my duty for my country.”

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhpstories/loc.natlib.afc2001001.07154/>

Duke Kahanamoku was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1890. As a swimmer, he set multiple world records and won gold and silver medals in both individual and team events in the 1912, 1920, and 1924 Olympic Games. He is credited with making surfing popular around the world, effectively saving it from being among the many Hawaiian traditions that disappeared. He traveled the United States and Australia doing swimming and surfing exhibitions and became known as the “Father of Modern Surfing.”

http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Duke_Kahanamoku.aspx<http://www.bia.gov/FAQs/index.htm>

Dr. David Ho was voted Time magazine’s 1996 “Man of the Year” for his ground breaking AIDS research on the effects of protease inhibitors and other antiviral drugs on HIV. Dr. Ho joined the likes of Kennedy, Churchill, and King on the cover of Time for how he “shaped the course of this century’s history.”

The A list 1997. (1997, January 31). A. Magazine, pp. 3-4.

Joseph Ting of Houston, Texas is the C.E.O. of West Plaza Management, an investment and management company. In addition, he is the Vice Chairman of Metro Bank, a community bank that serves the Greater Houston and Dallas areas. In 1985, he founded Unitex Bags, Inc., a manufacturing plant based in Houston. In 1996, Ting joined with city officials to promote business relationships among the cities of Houston, Beijing, Hong Kong, and Taipei.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/AAPI>

A rather broad term, Asian-Pacific encompasses all of the Asian continent and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji, and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, and the Federated States of Micronesia), and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, and Easter Island).

<http://asianpacificheritage.gov/about.html>

There are more than 39 different Pacific Island languages spoken as a second language in the American household.

<http://ed.gov/about/inits/list/asian-americans-initiative/what-you-should-know.pdf>

Dat Nguyen, the son of Vietnamese immigrants, battled the perception that he was too small to play football for as long as he was involved in the game. For seven seasons, he was starting middle linebacker for the Dallas Cowboys of the National Football League. Following his senior season at Texas A&M, he was one of the Nation's most decorated collegiate players, earning All-American honors from: Walter Camp; The Sports Network; The Sporting News; Burger King/AFCA; Football News and College Football News.

http://www.realclearsports.com/lists/asian_american_athletes/dat_nguyen.html

Kristi Yamaguchi, born July 12, 1971, reached for the gold and got it. This Japanese-American figure skater made history on many fronts. In 1989, Yamaguchi was the first woman in thirty-four years to win two medals at the U.S. National Championships with a silver medal in the singles competition and a gold medal in the pairs competition. After placing in several championships over the next few years, Yamaguchi won the gold medal at the 1991 World Championships followed by her lifelong dream—a gold medal at the Olympic Games.

Zia, H., & Gall, S. (Eds.) (1995). Notable Asian Americans. Vol II. New York, NY: Gale Research, Inc

Born in Hawaii, Ellison Onizuka entered active duty with the U.S. Air Force in January 1970. He was an aerospace flight test engineer before becoming a mission specialist on the Discovery and Challenger Space Shuttles. Aboard the Discovery, Onizuka and the crew completed 48 orbits of the Earth. Onizuka died in January 28, 1986 when the Challenger exploded.

<http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/onizuka.html>

Brigadier General Viet Luong became the first Vietnamese-born general officer in the U.S. military on August 6, 2014. Luong was 9 years old when his family escaped Vietnam the day before Saigon fell in 1975. His father, who served in the Vietnamese Marine Corps, inspired him to join the military. He also credits his experience of escaping Vietnam on the USS Hancock with making him deeply patriotic with a desire to give back to the nation that provided him with great opportunities.

<http://archive.armytimes.com/article/20140806/CAREERS03/308060058/New-one-star-U-S-military-s-first-general-born-Vietnam>

Secretary Elaine Chao was appointed to two Presidential cabinet positions: U. S. Secretary of Transportation and U. S. Secretary of Labor. When she was unanimously confirmed to her first cabinet post as Secretary of Labor, she became the first woman of Asian American & Pacific Islander heritage to serve in the President’s cabinet in history.

<https://www.elainechao.com/biography/>

For five decades, PFC Sado S. Munemori of the 442d Regimental Combat Team was the only Japanese American to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. During World War II in Seravezza, Italy, Munemori gave his life to save two of his comrades when he smothered a grenade blast with his body. For his “swift, supremely heroic action,” PFC Munemori was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor on March 13, 1946.

<http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Sadao%20Munemori/>

In 1942, at the age of 23, Fred Korematsu was arrested for defying the government’s mandate for all Japanese Americans to be incarcerated in Internment Camps. He appealed his case all the way to the Supreme Court, until 1944, when the Court ruled against him, arguing that the incarceration was warranted due to military necessity. Forty years later, a legal team re-opened Korematsu’s case on the basis of government misconduct, and his conviction was overturned in federal court. Korematsu remained a civil rights activist throughout his life, and his legacy continues to inspire people today.

<http://www.korematsuinstitute.org/fred-t-korematsu-1/>

Master Jhoon Rhee of McLean, Virginia is a world-renowned martial arts instructor with over 60 affiliated Tae Kwon Do studios in the United States and 65 in the former Soviet Union. A 10th degree Black Belt, Rhee has been introduced into the Black Belt Hall of Fame and is regarded as the “Father of Tae Kwon Do” in both the U.S. and the former Soviet Union. Rhee was a special advisor to the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports from 1985 to 1988, and he served on the National Council on Vocational Education from 1988 to 1991.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/AAPI>

Korean-American Herbert Choy, previously a 1st Lieutenant in the U.S. Army, became the first Asian-American federal judge in 1971.

<http://chcp.org/memorialday.html>

The 1st American Volunteer Group (AVG) of the Chinese Air Force, nicknamed the Flying Tigers, was comprised of pilots from the United States Army Air Corps, Navy, and Marine Corps. From December 20, 1941 (just 12 days after the attack on Pearl Harbor) until July 4 of the following year, the Flying Tigers consisted of 3 squadrons of around 30 aircraft each. The nose of each aircraft was emblazoned with the face and teeth of a shark and quickly became one of the most easily recognized images of an aircraft or combat unit in World War II.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flying_Tigers

Stanford graduate and Internet entrepreneur Jerry Yang co-founded in 1994 the Internet search company, *Yahoo*. *Yahoo* became an instant success. In 1996, when the company made its initial public offering, share prices jumped from \$13 at the start to \$33 at the day's close, making Mr. Yang a multi-millionaire. When the company reached its peak, it was valued well in excess of a billion dollars.

The A list 1997. (1997, January 31). A. Magazine, pp. 3-4.

Min Chueh Chang was a Chinese scientist specializing in reproductive biology, and he paved the way to the creation of birth control and other discoveries in human reproduction. At Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, Chang demonstrated an egg from a black rabbit could be fertilized in vitro by sperm from a black rabbit and result in all-black offspring when transferred to a white rabbit surrogate. His research was monumental in the realm of in vitro fertilization and proved the lack of influence from a surrogate.

<http://embryo.asu.edu/pages/min-chueh-chang-1908-1991>

Flossie Wong-Staal is a molecular biologist and one of the world's authorities on Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). After receiving her Ph.D. in molecular biology from UCLA, she began research on retroviruses with Robert Gallo at the National Cancer Institute. In 1983, Wong-Staal and her colleagues discovered HIV. She became the first researcher to clone HIV which paved the way for the existence of blood tests to screen for HIV.

<http://www2.edc.org/WomensEquity/women/wong.htm>

At the age of 25, An Wang immigrated to the United States from China to further his engineering studies and received a doctorate in applied physics from Harvard University just two years later in 1947. Wang, along with fellow scientist Howard Aiken developed a machine that could store information without mechanical motion using a magnetic memory core. His company, Wang Laboratories, marketed desktop calculators, typewriters with memory, and computer monitors with extreme success until 1985 when it was affected by economic depression. In 1984, Forbes magazine thought Wang to be the fifth-richest person in America.

Zia, H., & Gall, S. (Eds.) (1995). Asian American Biography. Vol II. New York, NY: Gale Research, Inc.

On November 6, 1996, Gary Locke was elected the first Asian American Pacific Islander governor of a continental state, Washington. It was Wing Luke, one of America's first AAPI city council members who inspired Locke to get into politics. Locke stated, "*I was completely mesmerized. I realized that if I really cared about the issues affecting our community, I ought to run for office.*" Minority representation promotes group pride and encourages others to enter the political arena and provide new perspectives in American politics.

The A list 1997. (1997, January 31). A. Magazine, pp. 3-4.

On May 6, 2015, President Barack Obama appointed Ravi Chaudhary to the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. In this role, he advised the president on matters regarding the economic status, community development, education, and veterans of the AAPI community. Chaudhary is currently the Executive Director for Regions and Center Operations at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/arc/key_officials/chaudhary/

Private Jose B. Nisperos became the first Filipino and the first Asian American to be awarded the Medal of Honor. On September 24, 1911, while fighting as a member of the 34th Company, Philippine Scouts, he was severely wounded. His left arm was broken and lacerated, and he had several spear wounds that made him unable to stand. Despite his injuries, Nisperos continued to fire his rifle with one hand until the enemy was repulsed, helping to prevent the annihilation of his party.

<http://valor.militarytimes.com/recipient.php?recipientid=2051>

Dalip Singh Saund was born in India in 1899. After finishing a bachelor's degree, he moved to the U.S. and earned a Ph.D. from the University of California in 1924. Saund started the Indian Association of America to help promote the Luce-Cellar Act of 1946 to open citizenship to Indian immigrants, which President Truman signed into law. He became a U.S. citizen in 1949, and in 1956, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives as the first Asian American and the first Sikh in Congress.

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-2506300146.html>

At the age of 20, Jimmie Kanaya enlisted in the Army in 1941—months before the attack on Pearl Harbor. After helping his parents relocate from their Oregon home to an internment camp, Kanaya took his skills as a medic to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. He aggressively looked out for his men. Captured by German troops, he escaped three times and at war's end was the only non-Caucasian in his prisoner of war camp. Kanaya continued to serve his country during the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhpstories/loc.natlib.afc2001001.21666/>

Florence Smith Finch, the daughter of an American soldier and a Filipino mother, was working for the U.S. Army when the Japanese occupied Manila, the Philippines. As a Filipino citizen, she avoided internment. She joined the underground resistance movement and smuggled food and supplies to American captive. Eventually, she was arrested by the Japanese, tortured, and sentenced to three years of imprisonment. After being freed by American forces, she enlisted in the Coast Guard.

<http://www.womensmemorial.org/Education/APA.html>

On June 21, 2013, Brigadier General John M. Cho became the first Active Component American Soldier of Korean descent to achieve that rank. Cho graduated high school at age 16, then studied at UCLA for a year before going to West Point. He joined the Army because of the sense of loyalty and appreciation for America his parents instilled in him. His father, who had been a Republic of Korea lieutenant fighting in the Korean War, moved to the U.S. after losing his mother and sister in that war.

[http://www.army.mil/article/106793/FIRST_ACTIVE_COMPONE
NT_AMERICAN_OF_KOREAN_DESCENT_PROMOTED/](http://www.army.mil/article/106793/FIRST_ACTIVE_COMPONE
NT_AMERICAN_OF_KOREAN_DESCENT_PROMOTED/)

In 2007, Ken Niumatalolo was named head coach of the U.S. Naval Academy's football team, making him the first Samoan collegiate head coach. He had previously been a position coach for the Naval Academy. In college, he was a quarterback at the University of Hawaii, where he stayed on as a full-time assistant after graduating. Niumatalolo was born and raised in Hawaii. His parents were immigrants from American Samoa, and his father was a cook in the U.S. Coast Guard for 23 years.

<http://www.army.mil/mobile/article/?p=103433>

Captain Francis B. Wai joined the National Guard and was commissioned as an officer in 1941. Wai was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions in 1944 in the Philippines. After their leaders had been killed or wounded, the American troops were disorganized, so he took command. He was killed after purposely drawing fire to himself to reveal enemy positions. His actions allowed the Americans to defeat the enemy. His award was upgraded to the Medal of Honor in 1998.

<http://www.asianweek.com/2009/07/07/chinese-american-hero-francis-b-wai>

Kalpana Chawla was born in India in 1961. She earned a degree in aeronautical engineering before moving to the U.S. and becoming a citizen in the 1980s. After earning her doctorate in 1988, she worked at NASA's Ames Research Center. In 1997, she became the first Indian-born woman in space when she flew aboard the space shuttle Columbia. In 2003, she flew on her second mission, also aboard Columbia. Upon re-entering the atmosphere, the shuttle broke up, killing the entire crew.

<http://www.space.com/17056-kalpana-chawla-biography.html>

In 2013, Democrat Mazie Hirono became the country's first Asian-American female senator. She was also Hawaii's first-ever female U.S. senator. In addition, she's the first senator born in Japan.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/aapi>

One of the first Chinese American woman pilots, Maggie Gee received her flight licenses and joined the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs). Since women were not allowed to regularly serve in combat at the time, she trained male pilots and also copiloted military planes for simulated dogfights. In 2010, she and other WASP pilots would receive the Congressional Gold Medal for their contributions.

<http://www.timetoast.com/timelines/50-important-dates-in-asian-american-history--2>

Brig. Gen. Vicente “Ben” T. Blaz was only 13 years old when Japanese forces attacked and captured Guam in 1941. Through the occupation he was forced to be a laborer for his captors until Navy and Marine forces liberated the island in July 1944. Blaz assisted the Marines during the liberation, guiding them through the terrain as they battled Japanese troops. Through his time in service to the Corps, he attended a number of schools to include the Navy’s School of Naval Justice, the Army’s Artillery and Guided Missile School and the Naval War College, where he became a distinguished graduate. In 1972, he was the commanding officer of the 9th Marine Regiment, one of the major units involved in the liberation of his native Guam.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/119524/memorial-honors-marines-life-service>

Hazel Ying Lee joined the Women Airforce Service Pilots, better known as WASP, and was trained to ferry aircraft. She was the first Chinese-American woman aviator, and the first Chinese- American woman to fly for the United States military. Lee was killed in the line of duty, the last WASP to die in service to her country.

<http://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/580998/hazel-ying-lee-showcased-asian-american-involvement-in-war-effort/>

On April 14, 1945, during the invasion on Okinawa, a kamikaze crashed into the Sigsbee, reducing her starboard engine to five knots and knocking out the ship’s port engine and steering control. The attack killed 23 crewman and nearly sank the destroyer. Despite the damage, Commander Gordon Chung-Hoon kept his anti-aircraft batteries delivering “prolonged and effective fire” against the air attack while concurrently directing the damage control efforts that allowed the destroyer to make port under her own power. He retired as a two-star admiral and was the nation’s first Asian-Pacific American flag officer.

<http://www.public.navy.mil/surfor/ddg93/pages/history.aspx>

Native Filipino Florence Finch worked for Gen. Douglas MacArthur's intelligence office before the Japanese invasion of the Philippines. After the fall of the island, she smuggled supplies to American prisoners-of-war and Filipino guerrillas. The Japanese arrested Finch, where she was interrogated and tortured. She was freed by American forces in 1945 where she boarded a Coast Guard-manned transport bound for the United States. She enlisted in the Coast Guard Women's Reserve becoming the first Pacific Island-American woman to don a Coast Guard uniform.

<http://www.cabq.gov/humanrights/public-information-and-education/diversity-booklets/asian-and-pacific-island-heritage-in-new-mexico/filipino-americans>

Telesforo de la Cruz Trinidad was a Filipino fireman 2nd class in the U.S. Navy. He received the Medal of Honor for his actions in 1915 when he, at great personal risk, rescued two of his crewmates in spite of being injured by multiple boiler room explosions that burned him about the face.

<https://valor.militarytimes.com/hero/2912>

In addition to being the first Japanese-American to serve in Congress, Sen. Daniel K. Inouye was the second person to ever receive both the Medal of Freedom and Medal of Honor. In WWII, he led a platoon in Italy that found itself within 40 yards of a hostile force. Without regard to his own safety, Inouye engaged to within 5 yards of entrenched enemy bunkers to neutralize multiple machine gun nests. Despite being wounded by enemy sniper fire, Inouye continued to engage other hostile positions at close range until an exploding grenade shattered his right arm. Even still, he refused to evacuate until enemy resistance was broken and his men were deployed in defensive positions.

<https://www.army.mil/asianpacificamericans/profiles/>

Coral Wong Pietsch was the first Asian American woman to reach the rank of Brigadier General in the U.S. Army. She was also commissioned into the Judge Advocate General Corps.

<https://diversity.defense.gov/Portals/51/Documents/Resources/Docs/Factsheets/Asian%20Pacific%20Americans%20in%20Defense%20of%20our%20Nation.pdf>

Lieutenant Colonel Ellison Shoji Onizuka was the first Asian American astronaut. He logged a total of 74 hours in space. His death, along with the deaths of the rest of the crew, in the Challenger explosion was mourned by the entire nation.

https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/onizuka_ellison.pdf

Captain Gene Yu, known by his pen name 'Chester Wong' for his semi-autobiographical and comedic book "The Yellow Green Beret," was a member of U.S. Army Special Forces who carried out many anti-terrorist combat missions in Iraq and the Phillipines during his 12-year service, during which he was awarded two Bronze Stars. He is also the nephew of the former president of Taiwan, Ma Ying-jeou.

<https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2013/12/23/2003579632>

Eric K. Shinseki is a U.S. Army officer who was the first Asian American to achieve the rank of four-star general. He commanded NATO peacekeeping forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, served as Army Chief of Staff from 1999 to 2003, and was Secretary of Veteran Affairs under the Obama administration in 2009 to 2014. Shinseki was inspired to join the military by his uncles' service during WWII when anti-Japanese sentiment was high in America. Despite extreme scrutiny, his uncles served with distinction and honor, paving the way for his esteemed military career.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Eric-K-Shinseki>

The Korean Augmentation to the United States Army, otherwise known as KATUSA, was a group of Korean people who joined the U.S. Army units on the battlefield during the Korean War. They enhanced U.S. combat readiness in many ways, such as providing rations for troops or acting as interpreters. Some even served on the frontline as soldiers.

<https://diversity.defense.gov/Portals/51/Documents/Resources/Docs/Factsheets/Asian%20Pacific%20Americans%20in%20Defense%20of%20our%20Nation.pdf>

The "Fita-Fita Guard" was a Samoan unit that served the U.S. Navy on American Samoa until 1951. "Fita-Fita" is the Samoan word for soldier, and the unit was responsible for protecting the vital and vulnerable U.S.-Australian supply line during WWII.

<https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/museums/nmusn/explore/photography/diversity/asian-americans/world-war-ii/fita-fita-guard.html>

May

Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Events



The month of May was chosen for the Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month because of two important dates in the middle of the month. On the seventh of May in 1843, the first Japanese immigrant traveled to the United States. On the tenth in 1869, the transcontinental railroad was completed. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.

<http://www.asianpacificheritage.gov/about.html>

Between 1848 and 1924, hundreds of thousands of immigrants from China, Japan, the Philippines, and Korea came to the United States. Although this period represents a significant wave of immigrants, it is not the first instance of Asian Americans coming to North America. It is speculated that Buddhist missionaries from China visited the West Coast as early as the fifth century, and it is known that the Spanish brought Chinese shipbuilders to California as early as 1571.

Fong, P. Timothy. The Contemporary Asian American Experience: Beyond the Model Minority. 2008. Pearson Education, Inc.: Upper Saddle River, NJ.

During World War II, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team was a unit made up of Americans of Japanese ancestry. The 442nd was the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in the entire history of the U.S. military.

http://www.goforbroke.org/about_us/about_us.php

From 1943–1945, U.S. Army recruiters entered Japanese internment camps seeking volunteers for an entirely Japanese-American combat unit in Europe (the 442nd RCT) and for military intelligence linguists who could interrogate prisoners, translate, and decode Japanese language documents in the jungles of the Asian- Pacific theater.

<http://www.the442.org/>

Filipino-American women worked with the underground resistance movement to help American forces in the Philippines throughout the three-year period of Japanese occupation during World War II. These courageous individuals smuggled food and medicine to American prisoners of war and carried information on Japanese deployments to Filipino and American forces working to sabotage the Japanese Army.

<http://www.womensmemorial.org/Education/APA.html>

Asian Americans are the highest-income, best-educated, and fastest-growing racial group in the United States. They are more satisfied than the general public with their lives, finances, and the direction of the country, and they place more value than other Americans do on marriage, parenthood, hard work, and career success, according to a comprehensive recent nationwide survey by the Pew Research Center.

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/06/19/the-rise-of-asian-americans/>

Each year, the National Cherry Blossom Festival commemorates the 1912 gift of 3,000 cherry trees from Mayor Yukio Ozaki of Tokyo to the city of Washington, D.C. The gift and annual celebration honor the lasting friendship between the United States and Japan and the continued close relationship between the two countries.

<http://www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/about/history/>

Over the years, the National Endowment for the Humanities Division of Preservation & Access has funded numerous preservation projects that emphasize the cultural contributions of the diverse peoples of Asia and the Pacific Islands. These projects include cataloging and preserving rare cultural and religious artifacts, digitizing fragile textiles and art, and working to preserve endangered languages.

<http://asianpacificheritage.gov/index.html>

The Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders reported that 16.6 million Asian American/Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) reside in the U.S., comprising 5.4 percent of the U.S. population. By 2050, AAPIs will make up 9.7 percent of the total United States population—over 40 million people. AAPIs represent over 30 countries and ethnic groups that speak over 100 different languages.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/aapi/data/critical-issues>

The Bataan Death March is one of the most horrific events in Filipino history. Beginning on April 9, 1942, over 70,000 Filipinos and Americans were forced to endure the march to prisoner of war camps. The Filipino and American troops, already injured and starving, were forced to march over 65 miles through sweltering, disease-infested jungle. On the march, they were starved, subjected to random beatings, and tortured. Many were executed along the way.

<http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/bataan-death-march>

In February 2014, the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center opened *Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation*, a groundbreaking exhibition at the National Museum of Natural History. The exhibition will explore the heritage, daily experience, and numerous, diverse contributions that Indian immigrants and Indian Americans have made to shaping the United States.

<http://asianpacificheritage.gov/index.html>

In December 2012, for the fourth year, the White House celebrated Dilawi, a holiday observed annually by Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and some Buddhists throughout India and across the world. Known as the “festival of lights,” Diwali offers time for both reflection and celebration. Its stories and rituals focus on the triumph of light over darkness and compassion over hatred. The day signifies the renewal of life and the promise of prosperity for the year to come.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/aapi/blog?page=2>

The Philippines officially became a U.S. colony in 1898, after the United States defeated Spain in the Spanish-American War. Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippine Islands were sold to the United States for \$20 million dollars. Filipinos would continue to struggle for independence until the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act in 1935, making the Philippines a self-governing commonwealth of the United States.

<http://www.cabq.gov/humanrights/public-information-and-education/diversity-booklets/asian-and-pacific-island-heritage-in-new-mexico/filipino-americans>

According to a study undertaken by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, one in five Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) experienced discrimination in the rental and homebuying process. AAPIs have suffered the largest percentage decline in homeownership of any racial group.

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/asian-american/notables.htm>

The My Lai Massacre was one of the most horrific incidents of violence committed against unarmed civilians during the Vietnam War. A company of American soldiers brutally killed most of the inhabitants of the village of My Lai on March 16, 1968. The horrific incident ended only after Warrant Officer Hugh Thompson landed his aircraft between the soldiers and the retreating villagers and threatened to open fire if they continued their attacks. In an interview, Thompson said, regarding the soldiers' actions that day, "That's not what a soldier does, in any country."

https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/my-lai-massacre-1#section_4
<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-39567002>

A study from 2012 on the disparity of mental health regarding Asian American and Pacific Islander veterans found that, despite being physically healthier than other ethnic groups, AAPIs reported poorer mental health and were less likely to utilize mental health services. Racism and race-related stressors have been shown to contribute to more severe post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, which may play a role in these findings.

<https://academic.oup.com/milmed/article-pdf/177/11/1438/20894188/milmed-d-12-00214.pdf>

In 2021, in response to a rise in domestic terrorism directed toward Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, some organizations, many of which were longstanding support groups for our Service members, chose to publish statements affirming their support for Asian American and Pacific Islander communities and denouncing hate-based violence toward AAPIs as "Anti-American and unpatriotic."

<https://www.nmcra.org/press/entry/nmcra-stands-with-asian-american-and-pacific-islanders-community>

May

Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Milestones



Since the mid-twentieth century, Asian Americans have come to dominate many aspects of the small business niche. From 1990 to 2004, their buying power rose from \$118.1 billion to \$363 billion. The growth represents a 207 percent increase –more than double the 101.1 percent increase for the United States as a whole at the time.

Fong, P. Timothy. The Contemporary Asian American Experience: Beyond the Model Minority. 2008. Pearson Education, Inc.: Upper Saddle River, NJ.

According to the 2014 Census, the estimated number of U.S. residents who were Asian, either alone or in combination with one or more additional races, was 18.2 million.

Census.gov

Thirty-three Asian American and Pacific Islander veterans have received the Medal of Honor.

<http://www.navy.mil/moh/faq.html>

According to the 2010 Census, the largest population of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders reside on the West coast of the U.S., with the highest concentrations in the following counties: Los Angeles County, Santa Clara County, and Orange County.

https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/aapi_demo_graphics_counties.jpg

The 113th Congress is the most diverse group of representatives in history. There are 98 women, 43 African Americans, 31 Latinos, 12 Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and 7 gay and bisexual people who are now new members of the House and Senate. Rep. Tammy Duckworth said, “*It is good to see Congress starting to look more like the rest of America.*” Duckworth, a double-amputee veteran, is one of the historic numbers of Asian-Americans elected.

<http://www.alipac.us/f9/meet-113th-congress-more-diverse-than-ever-269642/>

The year 2014 marks 40 years since the Lau v. Nichols decision, a landmark ruling that expanded the rights of non-English speaking students in America. Language access remains a critical civil rights issue today for Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and other immigrant communities. Over 25 million individuals—about 9 percent of the U.S. population over age 5—reported having limited English proficiency. English is not spoken at home for over two-thirds of Asian Americans and nearly one-third of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/aapi/blog?page=1>

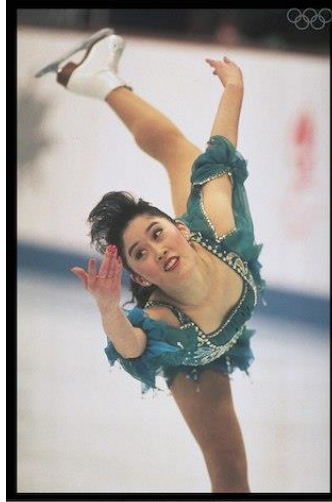
The observance of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage month is an occasion to remember the patriotism of AAPIs who have served, and are currently serving, in the United States Military. The first recorded instance of Asian Americans fighting on behalf of the United States was in 1815, when General Andrew Jackson recorded that “Manilamen” had fought alongside him in defense of New Orleans, under the command of Jean Baptiste Lafitte.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/aapi/blog?page=2>

May

Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Quotes



“To this day, the 442nd remains the most highly decorated unit in the history of the United States military, for its size and length of service. You gentlemen, have much to be proud of. For each and every one of you, through your individual acts of heroism and sacrifice, played a part in underwriting the freedoms we enjoy today, not just here in America, but in Italy and France, and most of Europe.”

-Admiral Harry B. Harris Jr.

<http://www.cpf.navy.mil/leaders/harry-harris/speeches/2015/01/legion-of-honor.pdf>

“I’m proud of my Asian American heritage, and being able to blend the two cultures together and to learn from each is fulfilling. I feel the values and traits of my Japanese ancestors have been instilled in me through my parents and grandparents, and I know their sacrifices paved the way for me to live the American dream.”

-Kristi Yamaguchi, Olympic Gold Medalist

<http://www.army.mil/asianpacificamericans/>

“I feel very fortunate to have two sets of cultures to enjoy—American and Vietnamese. Rather than divide my identity in half, these two sets of experience double my understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the world around me.”

-C.N. Le, professor of sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst

<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/article/2011/05/20110504104908esiul0.9260218.html>
