



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

SEP 15 2021

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

SUBJECT: 2021 National Hispanic Heritage Month

The DoD recognizes September 15 to October 15, 2021 as National Hispanic Heritage Month. Originally observed as "Hispanic Heritage Week" in 1968, under President Lyndon Johnson, it was later extended to a month during President Ronald Reagan's Administration in 1988. During this month, we recognize the contributions of Americans with ancestors from Spain or Latin America, while celebrating their diverse cultures.

This year's theme is "*Esperanza: A Celebration of Hispanic Heritage and Hope.*" During this month, DoD reflects on the Hispanic American Service members, from past to present, who have protected our nation and helped to create a better future for all Americans. Americans with ancestors from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America have distinguished themselves by serving with patriotism, fortitude, and courage in every U.S. conflict and in every Military Service. Examples include: Seaman Philip Bazaar, first Hispanic Congressional Medal of Honor recipient; Lieutenant Colonel Marisol Chalas, first Hispanic woman to become a National Guard Black Hawk helicopter pilot; the Honorable Edward Hidalgo, World War II Veteran and first Hispanic Secretary of the Navy; and Ms. Michele Pearce, first Hispanic woman to serve as the Acting General Counsel of the Department of the Army.

While many were fighting on two fronts, for citizenship and equity, Hispanic Americans took tremendous pride in their devotion to duty and continued in their military service from the American Revolution to Afghanistan. Approximately 350,000 Hispanic Americans are currently serving in the Armed Forces and over 86,000 serve as DoD civilian employees. The past and present sacrifices of Hispanic Americans serving our country remain an integral component of our national defense and strength. We will continue to recognize and leverage this talent in support of our national security.

We are proud of the contributions of our Hispanic Service members and civilian employees and honored to celebrate their legacy of achievement. We encourage all DoD Components and commands to salute their service to our national defense. For resources and help with leading and organizing observances, visit: <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Human-Relations-Toolkit/Special-Observances/#national-hispanic-heritage-month>.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.", is located below the text.

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.