

CULTURAL
AWARENESS

OBSERVANCE



ASIAN AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH



The Department of Defense pays tribute to the generations of Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) who have enriched our nation's history and who continue to be pivotal to our success as a nation as we move into the future.

AAPI encompass a diverse group of cultures, ethnicities, races, and languages. They include all Americans who trace their ancestry back to the Asian continent and the many Pacific islands of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.

Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage Month dates back to the 95th Congress (1977-1978) when they introduced five joint resolutions proposing that a week in May be designated to commemorate the accomplishments of AAPI.

After a congressional bill passed in 1978, President Jimmy Carter recognized the first 10 days of May as Asian-Pacific Heritage Week.

In 1992, President George H.W. Bush extended the celebration to cover the entire month.

May serves as the observance month to commemorate the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants to the United States on May 10, 1843. The date also marks the anniversary of the transcontinental railroad completion on May 10, 1869.

From 1865-1869, twelve thousand Chinese immigrants constructed the western section of the transcontinental railroad—one of the greatest engineering feats in American history.

The rich heritage of AAPI spans across the world and through the depths of America's history.

Generation after generation, AAPI have forged a proud legacy that reflects the spirit of our nation—a country that values the contributions of everyone who calls America "home."