

Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month Facts of the Day



**DEFENSE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE
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Date	Fact	Source
1	For the 2016 Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) has chosen the theme “ <i>Walk Together, Embrace Differences, Build Legacies.</i> ”	www.fapac.org
2	The month of May was chosen for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Observance 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 May 10, 1869 the transcontinental railroad was completed. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.	http://www.asianpacificheritage.gov/about.html
3	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
4	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
5	Asian/Pacific American women first entered military service during World War II. The Women's Army Corps (WAC) recruited 50 Japanese-American and Chinese-American women and sent them to the Military Intelligence Service Language School at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, for training as military translators. Of these women, 21 were assigned to the Pacific Military Intelligence Research Section at Camp Ritchie, Maryland. There they worked with captured Japanese documents, extracting information pertaining to military plans as well as political and economic information that impacted Japan's ability to conduct the war.	http://www.womensmemorial.org/Education/APA.html

6	<p>In 2013, Brigadier General Miyako Schanely made history as the first female engineer in the Army Reserve and second in the Army to make general officer following her promotion ceremony at the 412th Theater Engineer Command headquarters in Vicksburg, Mississippi. It also made her the second Japanese-American woman to reach the flag rank.</p>	<p>http://www.army.mil/article/117068/Miyako_Schanely_makes_history_as_first_female_Army_Reserve_engineer_to_make_general_officer/</p>
7	<p>Kalpana Chawla was an Indian-American astronaut and the first Indian woman in space. She first flew on Space Shuttle Columbia in 1997 as a mission specialist and primary robotic arm operator. In 2003, Chawla was one of the seven crew members killed in the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster.</p>	<p>http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/chawla.html</p>
8	<p>Dr. Eleanor Concepcion “Connie” Mariano is a physician, the first Filipino-American to reach the rank of Rear Admiral in the United States Navy, the first graduate of the Uniformed Services University of Medicine to reach flag officer status, and the first woman to be the director of the White House Medical Unit.</p>	<p>https://www.whitehouse.gov/AAPI</p>
9	<p>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 (POWs) and carried information on Japanese deployments to Filipino and American forces working to sabotage the Japanese Army.</p>	<p>http://www.womensmemorial.org/Education/APA.html</p>
10	<p>The Battle of Bataan ended April 9, 1942, when U.S. Gen. Edward P. King surrendered to Japanese Gen. Masaharu Homma. Seventy-five thousand soldiers became prisoners of war: 12,000 Americans and 63,000 Filipinos. What followed was one of the worst atrocities in modern wartime history—the Bataan Death March. The Japanese rounded up the soldiers and began marching them north toward Camp O'Donnell, 65 miles away. The men were given little food or water for the entire length of the Bataan Death March. The Japanese guards killed between 7,000 - 10,000 men during the death march.</p>	<p>http://www.army.mil/asianpacificamericans/history</p>

11	<p>Ladda “Tammy” Duckworth is an American politician who has been the U.S. Representative for Illinois's 8th congressional district since 2013. A Democrat, she is the first Asian American woman elected to Congress in Illinois, the first disabled woman to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, and the first member of Congress born in Thailand.</p> <p>She previously served as Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs in the United States Department of Veterans Affairs from April 24, 2009 to June 30, 2011, and as the Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs from November 21, 2006 to February 8, 2009.</p>	<p>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tammy_Duckworth</p>
12	<p>33 Asian American and Pacific Islander veterans have received the Medal of Honor.</p>	<p>http://www.navy.mil/moh/faq.html</p>
13	<p>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 on January 28, 1986 when the Challenger exploded. Sunnyvale Air Force Station was renamed to Onizuka Air Force Station on January 26, 1994. The base was active from 1960-2010.</p>	<p>http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/onizuka.html</p>
14	<p>Viet Xuan Luong achieved the rank of Brigadier General, Aug. 8, 2014, at Fort Hood, Texas. Luong emigrated from Vietnam with his family to the United States in 1975 as a political refugee. Luong's nearly 27-year military career was inspired from his experience on the deck of the USS Hancock when he was a little boy leaving Vietnam. Almost 40 years after his rescue, family and friends watched as Luong became the first Vietnamese-born general/flag officer in the U.S. military.</p>	<p>http://www.army.mil/asianpacificamericans/profiles</p>

15	<p>In 2010, Representative Tulsi Gabbard became the first female American Samoan and Hindu to ever serve as a member of the U.S. Congress. She is also one of the first two female combat veterans. Gabbard was the first female Distinguished Honor Graduate at Fort McClellan's Officer Candidate School and the first woman to receive an award of appreciation from the Kuwaiti military.</p>	<p>http://www.army.mil/asianpacificamericans/profiles</p>
16	<p>Private Jose B. Nisperos became the first Asian/Pacific American to be awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on Sept. 24, 1911, while engaged in combat at Lapurap, Basilan, Philippine Islands. He served in the 34th Company, Philippine Scouts. In 1913, having been badly wounded (his left arm was broken and lacerated and with several spear wounds in the body so that he could not stand), Nisperos continued to fire his rifle with one hand until the enemy was repulsed, thereby aiding materially in preventing the annihilation of his party.</p>	<p>http://www.army.mil/asianpacificamericans/medalofhonor</p>
17	<p>Elaine L. Chao is the first Asian/Pacific American woman appointed to a President's cabinet in U.S. history. Her experiences and skills as an executive leader in private, public, and nonprofit sectors uniquely qualify her to lead the U.S. Department of Labor. Her experience comes from her time in roles such as a Distinguished Fellow at the Heritage Foundation, a public policy research and educational institute, as President and Chief Executive officer of United Way of America, and as Director of the Peace Corps, the world's largest international volunteer organization.</p>	<p>http://www.dol.gov/general/aboutdol/history/chao</p>
18	<p>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 6 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."</p>	<p>http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp-stories/loc.natlib.afc2001001.07154/</p>

19	<p>After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Japanese-Americans were perceived as a threat to national security based solely on their ethnic ancestry. Consequently, in 1942 President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the War Relocation Authority. Thousands of Japanese-Americans were involuntarily moved to internment camps. Despite being subjected to prejudice and discrimination, a large number of Nisei (first generation Japanese-Americans born in the United States) volunteered for service in the U.S. Army. These Soldiers served with great honor in the European and North African campaigns. Other Asian-American groups also answered the call to duty and served with great distinction.</p>	<p><i>http://www.army.mil/asianpacificamericans/history</i></p>
20	<p>The history of Vietnamese Americans is very different from that of most other Asian Americans. Immigration to the U.S. from Vietnam was virtually non-existent before the 1970s. The fall of Saigon in 1975 started an exodus from Vietnam that would eventually see the resettlement of 900,000 Vietnamese refugees in the United States.</p>	<p><i>http://www.cabq.gov/humanrights/public-information-and-education/diversity-booklets/asian-and-pacific-island-heritage-in-new-mexico/vietnamese-americans</i></p>
21	<p>Brigadier General Coral W. Pietsch became the first woman to be promoted to the rank of brigadier general in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps in 2001. In her military career, Judge Pietsch participated in numerous exercises and deployments throughout the Asia Pacific Region. In 2012, she was nominated by President Barack Obama and subsequently appointed a Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.</p>	<p><i>http://www.army.mil/asianpacificamericans/profiles</i></p>
22	<p>The 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT) was an infantry regiment in the United States Army comprised of Americans of Japanese ancestry. The 442nd fought in Italy and France during World War II against the German Army of Hitler's Third Reich. The 442nd earned a reputation for being a crack infantry unit and the regiment and its men received considerable battle honors and individual medals of valor.</p>	<p><i>http://the442.org/home.html</i></p>

23	<p>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 three squadrons of around 30 aircraft each. The nose of each aircraft was emblazoned with the face of a shark and quickly became one of the most easily recognized images of an aircraft or combat unit in World War II.</p>	<p><i>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flying_Tigers</i></p>
24	<p>Sunita Lyn “Sunī” Williams, is an American astronaut and United States Navy officer of Indian-Slovenian descent. She holds the records for total spacewalks by a woman (7) and most spacewalk time for a woman (50 hours, 40 minutes). Williams was assigned to the International Space Station as a member of Expedition 14 and Expedition 15. In 2012, she served as a flight engineer on Expedition 32 and then commander of Expedition 33. She also became the first person to run the Boston Marathon from the space station on April 16, 2007.</p>	<p><i>http://www.nasa.gov/astronauts/s_williams_profile.html</i></p>
25	<p>In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Asian/Pacific Americans assumed an even greater role and acceptance in American society and culture. In 1956, Dalip Singh from California became the first Asian-American elected to Congress. In 1962, Daniel K. Inouye from Hawaii was elected to the Senate, and Spark Matsunaga from Hawaii elected to the House. Two years later, Patsy Takemoto Mink from Hawaii was elected to the House, becoming the first Asian-American woman in Congress. In 1965, immigration law finally abolished national origins as the basis for allocating immigration quotas, giving Asian-Pacific Americans full legal equality with other groups.</p>	<p><i>http://www.army.mil/asianpacificamericans/history</i></p>
26	<p>From 1943–1945, U.S. Army recruiters entered the 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.</p>	<p><i>http://www.the442.org/</i></p>

27	<p>The first Native Hawaiian to be awarded the Medal of Honor came during the Korean War. Pfc. Herbert K. Pilila'au of Waianae, Oahu, received this award posthumously for valor shown on September 17, 1951 while serving with the 2nd Infantry Division. In January 2000, the United States Navy named a strategic sealift ship (T-AKR 304) after him.</p>	<p>http://www.history.army.mil/html/topics/apam/hawaii.html</p>
28	<p>In 1996 Congress directed the Secretary of the Army to conduct a review of all Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in World War II “to determine whether any such award should be upgraded to the Medal of Honor.” The task of identifying soldiers who qualified for the review and locating the required official documentation was given to the Command History Office at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center. The research was completed in September 1998 and turned the findings over to the U.S. Army's Military Awards Branch. In June 2000, President William Clinton awarded the Medal of Honor to 22 Asian-Pacific Americans.</p>	<p>http://www.history.army.mil/html/topics/apam/apmoh2.html</p>
29	<p>Soldiers of Hawaiian ancestry served throughout the Army during World War II. At least 22 soldiers of mixed Hawaiian and Japanese ancestry served in Europe with the 100th Infantry Battalion and 442d Regimental Combat Team. Several Hawaiian soldiers in other units were decorated for valor. The most decorated Native Hawaiian was Captain Alexander Kahopea, who was awarded the Silver Star for action with the 83d Infantry Division in Normandy in 1944.</p>	<p>http://www.history.army.mil/html/topics/apam/hawaii.html</p>
30	<p>Korean Americans have played a vital role in the shaping of the United States. Senate Resolution 185 stated, “<i>For the past century, Korean immigrants and their descendants have helped build America's prosperity, strengthened America's communities, and defended America's freedoms. Through their service in World War I, World War II, the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam War, and other wars, Korean Americans have served our Nation with honor and courage, upholding the values that make our country strong.</i>”</p>	<p>http://www.cabq.gov/humanrights/public-information-and-education/diversity-booklets/asianand-pacific-island-heritage-in-new-mexico/korean-americans</p>

31	<p><i>“The rich heritage of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders spans the world and the depths of America's history. Generation after generation, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have forged a proud legacy that reflects the spirit of our Nation -- a country that values the contributions of everyone who calls America home. During Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, we honor the perseverance of those who courageously reached for their hopes and dreams in a new land, and we celebrate the important impact the AAPI community has made on our Nation's progress.”</i> —President Barack Obama</p>	<p><i>https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/04/30/presidential-proclamation-asian-american-and-pacific-islander-heritage-m</i></p>
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