



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



April 20, 2010

Asian and Pacific American Heritage Month

"Our nation is diverse; our Navy must be no less so. When we recognize and capitalize on the strength that diversity brings to the Navy, we are better able to develop new ideas and reach out to partners around the world. America's greatest asset is not our assembly lines or weapons systems, or even our great ships, submarines, and airplanes...it's our people."

– Vice Adm. Harry B. Harris, Jr, Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet

May was officially designated in 1992 as Asian and Pacific American Heritage Month. In May we commemorate as a nation the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States in May 1843 and the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad in May 1869 – constructed largely by Chinese immigrants. With this year's theme of "Diverse Leadership for a Diverse Workforce," we celebrate the wealth of ideas, traditions and commitment that those of Asian and Pacific Island heritage bring to our Navy. Today nearly 19,000 uniformed personnel and more than 29,000 civilians of Asian and Pacific American heritage serve in the Navy's Total Force.

Asian and Pacific American Sailors and Civilians – Contributions to the U.S. Navy

Tens of thousands of individuals of Asian and Pacific Island heritage have served with distinction in the Navy and have contributed in significant ways to the Navy's legacy. Some notable stories are recounted below:

- [Wesley Ishizu](#), Mid-Pacific Division Director for Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific and of Japanese heritage, was recognized as Asian American Executive of the Year by the Chinese Institute of Engineers in Feb. 2010.
- Vietnamese-born [Cdr. H. B. Le](#) took command of the USS Lassen (DDG 82) in May 2009 and made a port visit to Da Nang, Vietnam, in Nov. 2009, his first visit back to his homeland since his family fled in 1975.
- Capt. Raquel Cruz Bono, deputy director of TRICARE Management Activity, was honored as one of the [100 Most Influential Filipina Women](#) in the U.S. by the Filipina Women's Network in Oct. 2009.
- PS1 Borree Tibi, a Naval reservist of Filipino descent, received the Military Meritorious Service Award from the [Federal Asian Pacific American Council](#) in May 2009.

Engaging in Diversity Outreach – Highlighting Achievements

Each year, the Navy's sustained outreach efforts reach a variety of diverse populations. Some events highlighting the development of Asian and Pacific Islanders this year include:

- [Federal Asian/Pacific American Council \(FAPAC\)](#) annual symposium, May 3-7, National Harbor, Md.
- [Japanese American Citizens League National Convention](#), June 30-July 4, Chicago
- [Asian Heritage Awards](#), July 10, San Diego
- [National Association of Asian and American Professionals](#) 24th annual convention, Aug. 12-14, San Francisco

Key Messages

- Uniformed and civilian Asian and Pacific Islanders have served with distinction in the U.S. Navy, providing valuable skills, services and perspectives.
- The Navy's goal is to ensure diversity is present throughout the ranks, to include the most senior levels of leadership.
- The Navy employs top-performing Sailors and civilians whose diverse backgrounds, experiences and skills are necessary to meet today's challenges.

Facts & Figures

- Six flag officers, 11 members of the Senior Executive Service, three Rear Admirals (sel.) and 137 Master Chiefs of Asian and Pacific American heritage are currently leading the Navy.
- More than 340,000 veterans of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage make up approximately 1.5 percent of the 23 million American veterans.
- In May, visit the Naval History & Heritage Command website: <http://www.history.navy.mil> where the history of Asian and Pacific Americans in the Navy will be highlighted.