



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



April 13, 2009

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month

"We see Asian-Pacific Americans in our military leading the way to bridge cultural and communication barriers between the various countries in this region. We see great Americans doing everything they can for our country as we prosecute the global war on terrorism. And, we see statesmen, scholars and future leaders developing before our eyes. Asian-Pacific Americans contribute immeasurably to the success of the U.S. Pacific Command and this region."

– Rear Adm. William Van Meter Alford Jr., USNR (Ret.), Former Chief of Staff, U.S. Pacific Command

After 14 years celebrating a national Asian/Pacific Heritage Week, 1992 legislation officially designated May as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. Choosing May commemorates the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869 – constructed largely by Chinese immigrants. The 2009 national theme is "Leadership To Meet The Challenges Of A Changing World."

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

Since very early in our nation's history, tens of thousands of individuals of Asian or Pacific Island heritage have served in the Navy. The Navy story would not be the same without these men and women, including the Filipinos who have served a significant role since the late 1800s, the Japanese-Americans who joined the Armed Forces in evidence of their extraordinary patriotism during World War II, numerous other groups' contributions, and the approximately 55,000 individuals of Asian/Pacific heritage serving in the Navy Total Force today. Some interesting stories are recounted below:

- [Conjee Rustumjee Cohoujee Bey](#) (a.k.a. Antonio Frank Gomez), a member of Indian royalty who enlisted during the Civil War (changing his name), worked for the Navy for many years, and was buried at the Presidio ([Story by Francis C. Assisi and Elizabeth Pothen](#)).
- [Rear Adm. Eleanor "Connie" Concepcion Mariano, M.D. \(Ret.\)](#) was the first Filipino American to attain the rank of Rear Admiral, and the first military woman in American history to be appointed White House Physician.
- [Navy SEAL QM2 James E. Suh](#), of Korean-American heritage, was awarded the Bronze Star with Combat "V" for Valor (along with a Purple Heart) posthumously for his actions during a counter-insurgency operation in Kunar province, Afghanistan in 2005.

Professional and Personal Development – Contributing to the Whole Person

Professional and personal development can help individuals respond appropriately in an emergency, be more sure as a leader, develop skills in a unique area that increases productivity, become more physically fit, emotionally sated or financially secure; in short, a more diverse and more effective member of the team.

- [Federal Asian/Pacific American Council \(FAPAC\)](#) annual symposium, May 11-15, Houston
- Information on a broad variety of [affinity groups](#) and [events](#) is available on the Navy Diversity Web site.

Key Messages	Facts & Figures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal and professional development contributes to the synergy and success of the Navy Total Force. • A variety of ideas, experiences and skills is essential to mission accomplishment, and because of this, the Navy is eager to retain and expand its diversity. • Enabling professional and personal development improves job satisfaction, better life-work integration, overall command performance and retention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigration Act of 1917 defined the 'Asiatic Barred Zone,' disallowing most Asian/Pacific immigration. • Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 eliminated race as a consideration for immigration/naturalization. • Web sites of interest: Naval Officer Mentorship Association (NOMA), Library of Congress, Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute; Navy Center for Personal and Professional Development