



# RHUMB LINES

*Straight Lines to Navigate By*



April 28, 2008

## Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

*"From the fierce patriotism of World War II soldiers to today's diverse enlistees — many of whom join for the educational benefits — Asian Americans have found a solid place in the United States' military institutions."*

*-- AsianWeek.com*

The forty-plus nations of Asian/Pacific Islanders (API) heritage span more than 50% of the earth's surface, millions of square miles of ocean, and hundreds of religions and cultures. The Navy's interests in these areas are vast and significant, as Asia/Pacific countries represent 60 percent of the world's population, including the world's two most populous countries – China (1.3 billion) and India (1.1 billion).

### The impact of Asian/Pacific Islanders on the Navy

APIs have long served with distinction in the armed forces and help bridge cultural and communication barriers between the various Asian/Pacific countries and their citizens.

- In 1915, Fireman 2nd Class Telesforo Trinidad received the Medal of Honor for extraordinary heroism while serving on USS San Diego (ACR 6) during a boiler explosion. Thirty-one other Asian-Americans in the armed forces have been awarded the Medal of Honor.
- In 1985, Cmdr. Tem Bugarin became the first Filipino American to command a surface ship, USS Saginaw (LST 1188).
- The first API line officer to achieve flag rank was Rear Adm. Gordon Chung-Hoon, recipient of the Navy Cross and Silver Star for action in World War II. DDG 93 is named in his honor.
- Today, there are nearly 19,000 active component APIs, or 6.2% and 3.7% of the enlisted and officer communities, respectively. The current senior Navy API is Rear Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr., Director of Operations, U.S. Southern Command. Admiral Harris has been nominated for a third star.

### Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (APAHM) and how Navy leaders can participate

APAHM started in 1978 as a 10-day event; May was chosen to coincide with two historical events – the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants (May 7, 1843) and the contributions of Chinese workers to the transcontinental railroad (completed on May 10, 1869). In 1992, Congress expanded the week to the entire month of May.

- Getting involved – This year's theme is "[Leadership, Diversity, Harmony – Gateway to Success.](#)"
- Attend a conference – The 23rd Annual [Federal Asian Pacific American Council](#) (FAPAC) National Leadership Training Conference is June 23-27, 2008, in New York City. FAPAC is a non-profit, non-partisan organization promoting equal opportunity and cultural diversity for APIs in the federal government.
- [Nominate](#) a Sailor for an award – FAPAC's meritorious service award provides an excellent opportunity to recognize outstanding military personnel. One active and reserve component Sailor from this year's 20 nominees will be selected at the training conference.

For more information on APIs in the Navy, visit <http://www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/Diversity/>.

### Key Messages

Every leader has a part in promoting the Navy. Diversity outreach efforts must include recruiting and retention.

- Recruiting: Talk to neighbors, church, school and civic groups about Navy opportunities. Visit your old high school, volunteer to give tours of your command, send crewmembers TAD for [hometown recruiting](#).
- Retention: Be a mentor, ensure every minority junior officer has a mentor, and send them to conferences like ANSO, FAPAC or NNOA.

### Facts & Figures

- 86% of single-race Asians 25 and older have at least a high school diploma.
- In 2050, a projected 33.4 million people will be single-race Asians, a 213% increase from 2000 to 2050.
- 2.3 million people five and older speak Chinese at home in the United States. After Spanish, Chinese is the most widely spoken non-English language in the country.