



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



September 8, 2008

Hispanic Heritage Month

"The contributions of Hispanics to the development and success of America are woven into almost every segment of the nation's history. To envision America untouched by Latinos is to imagine a country without much of its folklore and many of its achievements."

– Cecilia M. García in "Hispanic Threads In America"

Hispanic Heritage Month was established in 1988 by President Ronald Reagan, expanding the heritage week established in 1968. It begins on Sept. 15; the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Additionally, Mexico and Chile celebrate their own independence days on Sept. 16 and Sept. 18 respectively.

Recognizing our diversity

The Navy recognizes the service of more than 63,000 Hispanic Sailors and civilians who comprise approximately 11% of our active, reserve and civilian forces. Prominent Hispanics in our Navy include:

- Hospitalman 2nd Class Luis Fonseca Jr. who received the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism in the presence of great danger during Operation Iraqi Freedom on March 23, 2003.
- [Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy](#) (SW/FMF) Joe R. Campa Jr., the first Hispanic MCPON.
- CDR Yvette Davids, currently in command of the USS Curts (FFG 38) and the first Hispanic woman to command a surface combatant and naval vessel at sea.
- Four Hispanic officers who currently hold Flag Officer rank: Rear Adm. Albert Garcia III, Rear Adm. Patrick Brady, Rear Adm. Samuel Perez Jr. and Rear Adm. William Rodriguez.

Expanding our diversity

By 2020, one third of the nation's workforce will be minority; by 2050, one half. The Navy must keep pace with workforce diversity to attract and retain the talent we need. Some of the ways to commemorate this month include:

- Encourage all, especially junior officers and enlisted members in their professional and personal development by enabling participation in groups such as the [Association of Naval Services Officers \(ANSO\)](#).
- Conduct outreach activities in areas of Hispanic concentration – top 10 cities include New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Diego, Miami, San Antonio, El Paso, Phoenix, Dallas and Houston. This includes volunteering for a [Hispanic Youth Symposium](#), but the possibilities are limitless.
- Submit nominees to the awards that highlight Hispanic contributions to our nation and our Navy. For more information on diversity and available awards, visit: <http://www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/Diversity/>.
- Read *Hispanic Military Heroes* by Virgil Fernandez, a [Navy Diversity Directorate recommendation](#). It is a historical review of the accomplishments made by Hispanic military veterans and civilians who participated in military campaigns throughout our country's history.

Key Messages

- The Navy proudly joins the rest of the United States in the celebration of the contributions of Hispanics in the United States Navy and our country.
- Our Navy represents the strength of the nation's diversity.
- Diversity is understanding and valuing every person's different skills, talents and experience.

Facts & Figures

- Hispanic Americans have fought in every U.S. war since the American Revolution.
- Forty-three men of Hispanic origin earned the Medal of Honor, including 21 who sacrificed their lives. Latinos are the largest single ethnic group, in proportion to the number who served, to earn this prestigious award.
- The U.S. Navy's Spanish language recruiting website is available at: www.elnavy.com