

# Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

*Diverse  
Leadership  
for a Diverse  
Workforce*

## **Preface**

Major Karen J. Gregory, USAFR, is an Air Force Behavioral Scientist and consultant for the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI). Major Gregory formerly served as the Organizational Assessment and Development Division Chief, J-9 Research Directorate, Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute and as Course Director and Assistant Professor for the Organizational Behavior Course, Management Department, U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA). She has served as a consultant for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chief Staff of the Air Force, USNORTHCOM/NORAD, Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, Navy Warfare Center, U.S. Coast Guard, Patrick AFB Tides Club, and the Department of Behavioral Science and Leadership (USAFA).

Run Date	Fact	Source
1-May	In 1938 while serving as the Chinese General Consul in Vienna, Dr. Feng Shan Ho began issuing Austrian Jews visas against his boss' orders. A true hero, these lifesaving documents allowed thousands of Jews to leave Austria and escape death during the Holocaust.	<a href="#">Scholastic</a>
2-May	Asian Pacific American Heritage Month had its origin in 1978 when Congress requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the 7-day period beginning on May 4, 1979 as "Asian-Pacific American Heritage Week."	<a href="#">Library of Congress</a>
3-May	The Asian Pacific Americans encompasses over 50 ethnic/language groups including native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. Asian and Pacific Islanders represent a vast array of languages and cultures with more groups than ever before—28 Asian and 19 Pacific Island subgroups.	<a href="#">Army.mil</a>
4-May	In 2007, 3.54 million Asians of Chinese descent lived in the United States. Chinese Americans were the largest Asian group, followed by Filipinos, Asian Indians, Vietnamese, Koreans, and Japanese.	<a href="#">US Census Bureau</a>
5-May	In 2007, 2.5 million people 5 years and older spoke Chinese in the home. Chinese was the most widely spoken, after Spanish, non-English language in the country. Tagalog, Vietnamese and Korean were each spoken at home by more than 1 million people.	<a href="#">US Census Bureau</a>
6-May	On May 7, 1990 President George H.W. Bush issued a proclamation designating May 1990 as the first "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month," changing the observance from a week to a month.	<a href="#">Library of Congress</a>
7-May	The first Japanese immigrants arrived in the United States on May 7, 1843.	<a href="#">Library of Congress</a>

8-May	The Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) was founded in 1985. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization FAPAC represents civilian and military Asian Pacific American employees in the Federal and District of Columbia governments.	<a href="#">Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC)</a>
9-May	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 to send them to the Military Intelligence Service Language School at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, for training as military translators.	<a href="#">Women's Memorial</a>
10-May	On May 10, 1869 the first transcontinental railroad in the United States was completed with significant contributions from Chinese pioneers.	<a href="#">Library of Congress</a>
11-May	Filipino American women worked with the underground resistance movement to help American forces in the Philippines throughout the 3-year period of Japanese occupation during WW II. These courageous women smuggled food and medicine to American POWs and carried information on Japanese deployments to Filipino and American forces.	<a href="#">Women's Memorial</a>
12-May	Korean-American Herbert Choy previously a 1st Lieutenant in the Army became the first Asian-American federal judge in 1971.	<a href="#">Chinese Historical and Cultural Project</a>
13-May	A native of Taiwan, Jerry Yang came to America at the age of 10. In April 1994, he co-created Yahoo! the Internet navigational guide with David Filo. He went on and co-founded Yahoo! Inc. in April 1995. He served as chief executive officer of the company from June 2007 to January 2009.	<a href="#">Yahoo! Press Room</a>
14-May	Thailand-born Ladda "Tammy" Duckworth is Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for public and intergovernmental affairs. She is also a National Guard soldier, Black Hawk pilot, and an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran. In 2004, her helicopter was shot down during a combat mission in Iraq, resulting in the loss of both legs and partial use of one arm.	<a href="#">Army.mil</a>
15-May	From 2001 to 2008, David S.C. Chu, Ph.D., was the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. He was the highest-ranking civilian Asian-American in the U.S. Department of Defense during this time frame. He now serves as President and CEO of the non-profit Institute for Defense Analyses.	<a href="#">US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce</a>

16-May	Disney created several movies with Asian Pacific influence to include the movies <i>UP</i> , <i>Lilo and Stitch</i> , and <i>Mulan</i> . Nine-year-old Jordan Nagai, who is Japanese-American, is the voice behind the Asian-American boy scout, Russell, in the movie <i>UP</i> . Ming-Na, who is Chinese American, is the voice behind <i>Mulan</i> .	<a href="#">MANAA</a>
17-May	In the 111th Congress, 12 Asian Pacific Americans were elected to the United States Congress, a new record including 2 Senators, 8 Representatives, and 2 Delegates. Forty Asian-Pacific Americans have served in Congress from 1903 to the present.	<a href="#">Congressional Research Service</a>
18-May	In 1958, Hawaii's Hiram Fong became the first Asian-American senator. He served from 1958–1976 and in 1964 was a presidential candidate.	<a href="#">Asian American Action Fund</a>
19-May	On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 ordering the removal of Japanese immigrants and descendants en masse to “relocation camps” for the duration of the war. On December 27, 1944, the U.S. War Department ends interment of Japanese Americans.	<a href="#">History.com</a>
20-May	Norman Y. Mineta served in Congress for more than 20 years during his career. First, as Secretary of Commerce under President Clinton and then as Secretary of Transportation under President George W. Bush. Mineta was the driving force behind passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which officially apologized for and redressed the injustices endured by Japanese-Americans during World War II.	<a href="#">Smithsonian Institute</a>
21-May	On January 21, 2009, former Army Chief of Staff and now retired Army General Eric K. Shinseki was sworn in as the Nation’s Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Born in 1942 on the island of Kauai, Hawaii, Shinseki graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., in 1965.	<a href="#">Dept of Veteran Affairs</a>
22-May	Dalip Singh Saund made history in 1956 when he became the first Asian elected to Congress. Born in India in 1899, Saund came to the U. S. in 1920 to study at the University of California, Berkeley. Due to anti-immigrant feelings in the U.S. he ended up working in farming for the next 20 years before becoming a U.S. citizen in 1949, then he served three terms in the U.S. Congress.	<a href="#">Scholastic</a>
23-May	Dr. Steven Chu, distinguished scientist and co-winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics (1997), was appointed by President Obama as the 12th Secretary of Energy and sworn into office on January 21, 2009. He recently led the Berkeley National Laboratory in pursuit of new alternative and renewable energies.	<a href="#">Dept of Energy</a>

24-May	The first Asian Pacific American line officer to achieve flag rank was Rear Admiral Gordon Chung-Hoon, recipient of the Navy Cross and Silver Star for actions in World War II. An Arleigh Burke-class Aegis destroyer named in his honor, has served in U.S. Navy since 2004.	<a href="#">NAVOCEANO Ocean Frontier</a>
25-May	On December 15, 1943, Wilbur Carl Sze was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant and the first Chinese-American officer in the U.S. Marine Corps.	<a href="#">Chinese Historical and Cultural Project</a>
26-May	Juan T. Salas was the first Chamorro (Asian Pacific Islander from Guam) to graduate from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy (Class of 1968). He was also the first Chamorro to reach the rank of commanding officer. Salas was also the first cutterman to be Captain of the Port, Marine Safety Office Guam, 1992 to 1994.	<a href="#">US Coast Guard</a>
27-May	In 2007, there were 277,751 single-race Asian military veterans. About one in three were 65 years and older. Additionally, there were 26,878 single-race Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander military veterans. One in five was 65 years and older.	<a href="#">US Census Bureau</a>
28-May	As of February 28, 2009, 81 Asians and 49 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander military deaths occurred in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Eight Asians and nine Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander military deaths have occurred in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).	<a href="#">Congressional Research Service</a>
29-May	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. Onizuka died on January 28, 1986 when the Challenger exploded.	<a href="#">Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center</a>
30-May	During World War II, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team was a unit made up of the sons of Nisei-American born sons of Japanese immigrants. The 442nd was the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in the entire history of the U.S. Military.	<a href="#">Go For Broke National Education Center</a>
31-May	31 Asian-Pacific Americans received the Medal of Honor.	<a href="#">Medal of Honor</a>