

## ASIAN-PACIFIC-AMERICAN HERITAGE WEEK - 1990

### I. PREFACE

This report was prepared by LtCol F. T. Fowler, USMC, during a 30 day research internship at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) during November/December 1989. DEOMI appreciates Colonel Fowler's dedication and skill in researching and writing the report.

DECEMBER 1989

NOTE: LOCAL REPRODUCTION IS AUTHORIZED AND ENCOURAGED.

### II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the cultural heritage of the widely varied ethnic groups which have been consolidated under the title Asian-Pacific Americans. Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, Pilipinos, Vietnamese, Thais, Cambodians, Hmong Tribesmen, Asian Indians, Pakistanis, Afghans, Iraqis, Iranians, Polynesians, Melanesians, and others have all been grouped into this single statistical category. The relatively small number in some of these groups makes it impractical to track each of them as a separate minority. It is only very recently that the Armed Forces have begun to specifically report statistics on and track this minority grouping. Many of these ethnic groups have virtually no representation in the U.S. military. We should be aware, nonetheless, that each of the nationalities included in the Asian-Pacific American statistical "pool" has a distinct cultural heritage. The values of the individual members of these groups derive directly from their heritage and may vary as a function of their personal geographic, religious, and economic backgrounds. This paper provides an overview of the values and contributions of the larger groups that are well represented in the military.  
(26:1,2)

### III. GENERAL BACKGROUND

The United States is a nation comprised almost entirely of immigrants and their descendants. Throughout our history there have been waves of immigrants of various nationalities, most driven here by the common desire for a better life. Whether

fleeing war, famine, political ideology, religious intolerance, or economic collapse, they have looked to America as the land of opportunity. Each group of immigrants has brought its own ethnic values which have combined and slowly evolved into the American culture we have today. Many of the early immigrant groups have been assimilated into the American "melting pot" after only a few generations. Those of European, White extract generally sought a permanent residence in America. They were able to blend in and did not have to face prejudice generated because they "looked different." Asian-Pacific Americans were different from the White majority and often came to America as "sojourners" looking for temporary work. They were easily identified as different, stereotyped, and marked for prejudice. The Asian-Pacific nations were generally discriminated against and excluded from "free immigration" until 1965. Since that time the number of Asian immigrants has swelled to 20,000 or more a month. (9; 14:2; 23)

Each year, the President designates one week in May as "Asian-Pacific American Heritage Week." There are now over 4 million Americans who trace their ancestry to Asia or the Pacific Islands. Their history is one of proud accomplishment with many contributions to the arts, literature, science, agriculture, industry, and commerce. They have fought in America's wars since the Spanish-American War of 1898. Despite constant adversity and frequent violence against them, Asian-Pacific Americans have contributed significantly in the struggle for America's national goals and in the quest for freedom and opportunity. Asian-Pacific American Heritage Week fosters an increased national awareness of the history and contributions of these people. It also inspires a renewed sense of pride among Asian-Pacific Americans. (13; 14)

The Pilipinos, Koreans, Japanese, Chinese, and to a lesser extent the Pacific Islanders, all have significant representation in the U.S. Armed Forces. Asians are now the fastest growing segment of America's population. Their number is expected to increase from 3.5 million in 1980 to an estimated 10 million by the year 2000. The future is almost certain to see a rise in the number of military recruits from this minority as its population rises. (7; 13; 15:92)

The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 abolished the national origins systems that, since 1924, had given almost exclusive preference to Europeans. The tumultuous political upheavals and U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia has generated an ongoing tidal wave of Asian immigrants to the U.S. These

immigrants come from all educational and economic levels, from the educated English-speaking professional to the illiterate peasant farmer. (13)

#### IV. ETHNIC DIVERSITY

I. M. Pei, the renowned Chinese-American architect, summarizes the diversity of Asian-Pacific Americans very well.

People must realize that there really isn't such a thing as an Asian-American. There are Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, Vietnamese, Indians and so forth. So many different cultures. So many different experiences. We need to understand their differences and complexities, their successes and failures. The first priority for Americans is to learn more about Asia. (15:89)

Thus the Asian-Pacific American category is not a homogenous category. Each of the groups within it has its own distinct values. Emigrants from each nation bring with them a unique and deeply ingrained culture. (15)

The most pervasive ancient tradition that still infuses the societies of China, Korea, Japan, and Viet Nam is Confucianism. Although distinct in their own way, each of these cultures was founded on the teachings of Confucius. A scholar and frustrated office-seeker, Confucius was trying to find principles that would .pa bring order to a chaotic and war-torn society. He emphasized a deeply structured hierarchy, discipline, family, hard work, and, above all, education. (15:74)

"Confucianism is an ethical code and not a religion, and a lot of it works in an American context," comments Wan-go Weng, the former president of the China Institute in America. (15:74)

A substantial minority of Asian-Pacific Americans come from non-Confucian societies. Asian Indians have a much more diffuse and religious background than the Confucian-based societies. The Philippines have a multi-layered history with tribal, Spanish, and American influences. The Catholic Church is a predominant force in the lives of 80 percent of the Pilipinos. Vietnamese, and other Indo-Chinese immigrants, bring a Confucian background that has been tempered by decades of war, French colonialism, and

now, Communism. (15:75)

#### A. CHINESE-AMERICANS

The status of the Chinese in the United States has undergone drastic changes since the pioneer days. They were initially welcomed as cheap labor, but were treated as lesser beings by the White majority. They were stereotyped, persecuted, and excluded at various times in our history. During and after World War II, the U.S. government began to develop a more enlightened approach and gradually extended to the Chinese the basic right of equality before the law. (22:226)

The original Chinese immigrants came to America as sojourners. They came to work and save, planning to return triumphantly to China with their American riches. They left their families in China and continued to see themselves as Chinese. They maintained traditional dress, language, and social customs. Confucianism and the cult of ancestor worship kept them tied to kin and village. They revered the past, respected and cared for their elders, and obeyed their parents. Chinese society in America initially revolved around a predominantly single-male society. Life centered around Chinatown and its social structure. No effort or desire to assimilate into American society was shown; they were temporary workers who intended to return to China. (23)

The Chinese were industrious and hard-working, eager to prove themselves. Banned from most jobs and land ownership, they were forced into accepting the menial tasks considered below the dignity of other Americans. This resulted in the development of the many Chinese laundries and restaurants that were ubiquitous in turn-of-the-century California. (23)

The nucleus of the Chinese culture is family, extended to include the kinship group and ancestors. The well-being of the family is placed above the individual. Basic Chinese values that were brought to America were a love of nature, frugality, patience, cheerfulness, and industriousness. (2; 23)

In 1980, the Chinese in America were the largest segment of the Asian-American population at 23.4 percent, or approximately 812,000 people. The immigrants of today range from the wealthy and well educated, immigrating from Hong Kong and Taiwan, to the poor, illiterate peasants from Mainland China. (26:2)

## B. JAPANESE-AMERICANS

The history of the Japanese in America has been relatively short, but it has been fraught with hardships and frustration. Unlike other minority groups, their mother country has often played a role in the life of the Japanese-American. During times of hardship the Japanese government has often intervened with the U.S. government, negotiating to ease the plight of Japanese immigrants. (6:vii)

The first Japanese immigrants came to Hawaii and California in 1868 and 1869, but were not immediately followed by others due to mistreatment. They were discriminated against in housing, education, and working conditions by their plantation bosses. By 1886 immigration resumed to Hawaii. In 1898 there were 60,000 Japanese workers in Hawaii, and approximately 12,000 in California. The early Japanese immigrants came from a feudal society that was crumbling due to the changes brought by industrialization. The Japanese people sought a change for the better, but they did not lose their traditional values. They continued to adhere to the Confucian precepts of exact, hierarchical social relations, to a rigid code of group cohesiveness, and to the blend of Buddhism and Shintoism which taught every Japanese the impermanence of worldly things and the importance of inner discipline. The majority of the first generation Japanese immigrants arrived between 1890 and 1924. Each successive generation has maintained homogeneity in age, culture, and experience. This homogeneity, combined with Japanese emphasis on filial piety, has led Japanese-Americans to identify themselves by generation: Issei, the immigrants or first generation; Nisei, the second generation; Sansei, the third generation; and Yonsei, the fourth and current generation. (5; 6; 22)

The Japanese, like the Chinese, developed their own social order and discipline and tended to live together in mutual support. They were more likely to adapt western dress and habits than the Chinese, but were still easily recognized by their language and physical appearance. Due to the laws denying them citizenship and basic rights, the Japanese banded together into associations that dominated the lives of the immigrants. As a result of this social order, the Japanese were seen by the Americans as unassimilable, loyal only to Japan, hopelessly alien, and dangerously efficient economic competition. (22)

The Nisei, who were American citizens by birth, were seen by their parents as the future for the Japanese in America. Their parents sacrificed and invested heavily in the Nisei's education and future. Most of the Nisei learned English, as well as Japanese, and assumed American habits. Nevertheless, they remained as much a target of prejudice as their parents. The Nisei, prior to World War II, were in an untenable position; they were not accepted as Americans and yet they were too thoroughly assimilated to feel wholly Japanese. (22)

The attack on Pearl Harbor led to the internment of many Japanese-Americans. But the war also gave the Nisei the opportunity to prove themselves as Americans. The internment of 110,000 West Coast Japanese has been described as the worst assault on civil rights in American history. Release from internment resulted in a much wider distribution of the Japanese throughout America. (22)

The postwar years were initially much the same for the Japanese. The Nisei capitalized on the G. I. Bill to continue their education. They worked diligently to become a political and economic force, especially in California and Hawaii. Japanese-Americans are a powerful factor in state politics in Hawaii and a growing factor in California. Immigration since the war has been relatively small, initially led by wartime brides being brought to America. The assimilation of recent Japanese immigrants has been relatively easy due to the presence of friends, relatives, and the existing local Japanese communities. (22)

### C. KOREAN-AMERICANS

The Korean immigration did not begin until after the turn of the century. The Koreans, like the Japanese and Chinese before them, were lured by jobs in agriculture. They, too, developed their own social order on the plantation in the form of the "Dong-hoi" or village council. They established a number of sworn brotherhood organizations for collective aid and support in an alien culture. The church, predominantly Christian, also became an indispensable instrument for maintenance of Korean culture. (10; 11; 22)

The early immigrants were held together by their collective desire to drive the occupying Japanese out of Korea. Many of the eventual leaders of the Korean independence movement came from the Korean community in America. (10; 11; 22)

The Korean-American community has been numerically strengthened by new waves of immigrants. By 1980 the Korean-American population had grown to approximately 358,000 people, over 10 percent of the total Asian-Pacific American population. Ninety percent of the Koreans here in 1980 had been here for less than 15 years. Many of the new Korean immigrants are educated, well-to-do professionals and lack confidence in the future of their home country. Nearly half of the Korean community has a college education. Virtually all of the new immigrants are Christian and look to the church as a focal point of their society. (10; 22; 26)

The Korean community lacks the solidarity of the Chinese and Japanese communities. The community is plagued by social discord. Old immigrants look down on new immigrants due to their lack of knowledge of American ways. Despite these shortcomings, the Koreans as a whole are doing well in their assimilation to America. But the cost of their success has been high; Korean-Americans have higher rates of divorce, mental illness, juvenile delinquency, and suicide than other Asian immigrant groups. Many of these problems are attributed to the fact that the Koreans did not maintain tight ethnic circles. The political factionalism at home in Korea also persists here in America. (10; 11; 22)

#### D. PILIPINO-AMERICANS

Pilipinos have been coming to the U.S. since the beginning of the 20th century. But this immigrant group has grown to its present size of approximately 781,000 only quite recently. At least half the Pilipinos in America are foreign born. (22; 26)

Following the cession of the Philippines to the United States by Spain and the subsequent hard fought Philippines War for Independence, the Philippines came under U.S. rule until after World War II. Up to 1934, the Pilipinos were considered to be American nationals, had American passports, and could travel freely to America. They were not American citizens and soon found that they faced the same prejudices in America as the other Asians who had preceded them. In 1934 Pilipinos were reclassified aliens for immigration purposes and were limited to 50 immigrants per year. (22)

Between 1900 and 1938 some 14,000 Pilipinos had traveled to the U.S. to attend universities. Most of them returned home, but not before facing the bitterness and hardship generated by

prejudice. That prejudice conflicted with the very ideals of liberty and freedom that the American rulers in the Philippines were teaching. (9; 22)

The overwhelming majority of immigrants in the first half of the twentieth century were unskilled peasant laborers. Growing hostility toward the recruitment of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean laborers led the Hawaiian plantation owners to look to the Pilipinos. Most of these immigrants came on 3-year labor contracts and planned to return home. Records are sparse, but it appears that a large majority of them did, in fact, return to the Philippine barrios. The Hawaiian Sugar Plantation Association (HSPA) recruited these workers for 3-year jobs with guaranteed free transportation to and from Hawaii, wages, housing, water, fuel, and medical attention. HSPA was bound to these contracts; the recruits were not. A recruit could walk away and simply forfeit the guarantees. Some did, and remained in Hawaii or drifted to California. (9; 22)

Language is and has been the principal basis of association among Pilipino immigrants; overseas the Ilocanos, Tagalogs, and Cebuanos form separate community groups. Local and regional identification are far more important to these groups than national identification. Unlike other Asian groups, the Pilipinos did not form cohesive nationality-based support groups. (9; 22)

The Pilipino immigrants brought with them a widely diverse cultural background. The Pilipino people are, themselves, the product of earlier migrations from Asia and Indonesia. Fourteenth century Arab traders brought Islam to the southern islands, the home of militant Muslims, even today. Spanish colonial rule for over 300 years resulted in widespread Catholicism and Hispanic influences. American imperialism in the 20th century added ideas of freedom, liberty, and independence. The one common bond of the pre-World War II immigrants to the U.S. was their support of the Philippines Independence Movement. (22)

Following the 1965 changes to the immigration laws, large numbers of Pilipinos came to the U.S. These new immigrants were not single male sojourners; they were families, moving to a new home in the hope of better lives for their children. More than two thirds of the post-1965 immigrants qualified as "professional, technical and kindred workers" whose skills were needed in the U.S. Large numbers of Pilipinos continue to arrive

each year. (22; 26)

Pilipino loyalty to family and regional groups has precluded their achieving success in American politics. They regard as unacceptable behavior any attempt by a group member to seek and win office, because it sets that person "above" the others. As in the early part of the century, family and group loyalty result in a significant interchange with the home country. Significant numbers of dollars are sent to the Philippines each month by the immigrants. These ties are expected to diminish as the first generation of American-born Pilipinos reach adulthood. Subsequent generations can expect to be assimilated much as their Chinese and Japanese predecessors. (9; 22)

## V. ASIAN-PACIFIC AMERICANS AND THE U.S. MILITARY

It is only in recent years that detailed records of this minority's service in the military have been kept. The history of Asian-Pacific American participation in the U.S. Armed Services is very poorly recorded and generally referred to only coincidentally. The following discussion provides limited snapshots of Asian-Pacific American participation in the nation's defense. It is by no means all-inclusive.

**THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR.** Seven Issei (first generation Japanese) and one Chinese are reported to have been among the crew members killed when the USS Maine was sunk in Havana Harbor in 1898. (4) Pilipino Army units fought side-by-side with the American Navy against the Spanish in Manila. Unfortunately, those same soldiers were soon to fight the U.S. Army in their struggle for independence--1898-1902. (18)

**PHILIPPINE SCOUTS.** Following the defeat of Spain and the quelling of the Philippine Insurrection, the U.S. formed the Philippine Scouts within the U.S. Army in the Philippines. Pilipinos were considered to be American nationals, and the Philippine Division was fully integrated into the U.S. Army. There were Pilipino officers in the Army, but they could only be assigned to the Scouts. The highest ranking officer assigned to the Scouts was a major, thus limiting the Pilipino Officers to the rank of major. The Philippine Scouts remained in existence through World War II. They were an integral part of the U.S. Army in the Philippines. General Douglas MacArthur served with the Scouts on several occasions and was their Division commander in the late 1920's. He also served as the court martial officer

for 200 rebelling scouts in 1924, sentencing them all to dishonorable discharges and 5 years of hard labor. (16; 18)

**PILIPINOS IN THE U.S. NAVY.** In 1903, the U.S. Navy listed 9 Pilipinos in the ranks; by 1905, there were 178. Pilipinos were restricted to the steward rating until the late 1970's, but were found throughout the Navy, on ships, at shore stations, and wherever senior Navy officers were assigned. Between World War I and World War II, the number of Pilipinos remained more or less constant at roughly 4,000. Despite their restriction to the steward rating, duty in the Navy was far preferable to remaining in the barrio. A Pilipino steward remaining in the Navy until retirement could lump his retirement pay and savings together and live rather handsomely in his Philippine hometown. (8; 18)

World War II precluded the enlistment of native Pilipinos in the Navy, but immigrant Pilipinos in the U.S. were allowed to join both the Navy and the Army. But, as before, the Pilipinos in the Navy were limited to the steward rating. After the allied landings in 1944, native Pilipinos were again recruited by the U.S. Navy, with 2000 enlistments by 1946. (18)

The primary motivation for Pilipinos to join the Navy was, and is, poverty at home. The 1946 wartime devastation at home left little hope for a future in the Philippines. Those Pilipinos who had retired from the U.S. Navy and returned home were respected by their villages because of their high social and economic status. As a result, the number of Pilipinos wanting to enlist has always exceeded the number of available openings. Competition is keen for the limited slots. (17; 18)

Pilipinos have a "special relationship" with the U.S. Navy as a result of the Military Bases Agreement of 1947. Article 27 of that agreement allows the U.S. to enlist citizens of the Philippines into the Armed Forces of the United States. It did not initially set quotas or restrict the enlistees to the steward rating; those were Navy policy decisions. The agreement was modified in 1952 and 1954, setting the number of Pilipino enlistments at 1,000 and then 2,000. The thousands of applicants for these limited positions have allowed the Navy to selectively recruit only better qualified individuals, many with some college education. By 1983 there were 19,733 Pilipino enlisted persons and 379 officers in the U.S. Navy. The Navy Military Personnel Center reports that, as of September 30, 1989, there are 19,251 Pilipino enlisted personnel and 588 Pilipino officers in the Navy. These figures represent 3.7 percent of the enlisted force

in the Navy, and .8 percent of the officer force. All ratings that do not require specific security clearances are open to them just as they are to other personnel. (17; 18)

In 1985, Commander Tem E. Bugarin became the first Pilipino to command a surface ship of the line when he assumed command of USS Saginaw, LST1188. Bugarin was born in Bay-Bay Leyte (Republic of the Philippines) and immigrated to the U.S. with his parents at the age of 2. (1)

WORLD WAR II. The attack on Pearl Harbor had both positive and negative impact on the Asians living in America. It led to the internment and economic deprivation of 110,000 Japanese-Americans who are just beginning to be compensated, to some extent, for their hardship. But, at the same time, it opened up the U.S. Armed Forces to the immigrants who had previously been denied enlistment. The rapid expansion of the war effort opened many other jobs to those who did not serve in the military. Each of the Asian-American communities reacted to the war as an opportunity for them to prove their loyalty and value as Americans.

On the evening of December 7, 1941, Korean residents of Los Angeles gathered at the Headquarters of the Korean National Association and passed three resolutions:

- Koreans shall promote unity during the war and act harmoniously.
- Koreans shall work for the defense of the country where they reside and . . . . should volunteer for National Guard duty . . . . should purchase war bonds and . . . . volunteer for appropriate duties.
- Koreans shall wear a badge identifying them as Koreans, for security purposes. (10)

By December 29, 1941, 50 Koreans had registered for the California National Guard and begun training. The formation of a Korean Guard unit quickly followed. On December 4, 1943, Military Order No. 45 was issued exempting Koreans from enemy alien status, thus opening all of the Armed Services to Korean immigrants. (10)

The Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor generated a series of profound changes for the Chinese in America. The Chinese were

already anti-Japan because of the earlier Japanese occupation of China. America's entry into the war gave Chinese-Americans the opportunity to act. Chinese found work in defense industries, frequently in technical and scientific positions which offered good wages. The Navy waived its alien restrictions and recruited 500 Chinese-Americans as apprentice seamen immediately after Pearl Harbor. Chinese community leaders urged young Chinese to enlist as a demonstration of their loyalty. The New York Chinatown cheered itself hoarse when the first draft numbers included Chinese Americans. Of 11 Chinese of draft age in Butte, Montana, all enlisted before being drafted. Chinese soldiers fought side-by-side with Whites, whose ancestors had tried to expel the Chinese from America. Of 59,803 Chinese adult males in the U.S. in 1941, including citizens, residents, and students, over 20 percent were drafted or enlisted in the U.S. Army during World War II. Smaller numbers also served in the Navy and Air Corps. Two hundred fourteen Chinese-Americans are known to have died in the war. A small number compared to the rest of America, but it nevertheless demonstrated the patriotism of a people long discriminated against. The inroads the Chinese-Americans made into the American labor force were never reversed. American prejudice against Japan in World War II benefited the Chinese by comparison; with repeal of both the exclusion laws and of the naturalization prohibition, more and more Chinese could and did build normal lives in America. The old sojourner's bachelor society was supplanted by a highly structured social order and family system. American attitudes also changed. Many Whites began to accept the Chinese as valuable members of American society. Chinese-Americans were portrayed as modern, intelligent, proud, tolerant, and Christian. World War II unmistakably changed American images of the Chinese, as the Chinese self-image also changed. Chinese-Americans were discarding some traditional Chinese traits while adopting American ones, but they continued to hold to such Chinese values as reverence for family, respect for education and hard work, cultivation of propriety, and patience and restrictiveness in the upbringing of children. (22; 23)

The Pilipino-American experience paralleled that of the Koreans and Chinese to some extent. The Pilipino community did not have the solidarity of the others, but they, too, were willing, if not eager, participants in World War II against Japan. The Pilipino-Americans were already American nationals and therefore had a slightly different status than the Chinese, Koreans, or Japanese. (11; 17; 22)

The Philippines were part of the U.S., and when they fell to Japan it was accepted by all Americans that the Japanese had to be driven out. Thousands of Pilipino-Americans volunteered for military service immediately after Pearl Harbor, but were refused due to the U.S. citizenship requirement for service. But by December 20, 1941, Congress had passed resolutions allowing virtually unlimited enlistment and employment of the Pilipino-Americans in the war effort. (11; 17; 18; 22)

On April 22, 1942, the First Pilipino Infantry Battalion, U.S. Army, was activated at Camp San Luis Obispo, California, with three Pilipino officers and an American Army colonel in command. (9; 18)

This new unit is formed in recognition of the intense loyalty and patriotism of those Pilipinos who are now residing in the U.S. It provides for them a means of serving in the Armed Forces of the United States, and the eventual opportunity of fighting on the soil of their homeland. (Secretary of War, statement of February 19, 1942) (18)

On August 2, 1942, the Third Battalion, Pilipino Unit of the California State Militia of Salinas, received its colors. (9; 11)

The First Pilipino Regiment came home to San Francisco in 1946 with 555 men, mostly Pilipinos. The unit closely resembled the famed 442nd Regiment in prestige and combat distinction. But unlike the 442nd, the role of Pilipinos in the war is not widely known or recorded. The regiment had been organized with one primary task in mind: pre-invasion intelligence work. Six months before the Leyte Gulf landing on October 20, 1944, the First (Pilipino) Reconnaissance Battalion was ashore gathering information. The rest of the Regiment participated in the campaign for Samar and Leyte. (11)

The Pilipino-American units played a significant role in the eventual recapture of the Philippines. Their efforts and the efforts of the Pilipinos at home gained them greater recognition in Congress and led directly to the July 12, 1946 legislation which granted Pilipinos the right to become citizens. (11)

Pacific Islanders also took an active role in the eventual defeat of Japan. They developed a special relationship with U.S. Navy and Marine Corps units throughout the Pacific. Samoans,

Fijians, Guamanians, and others were allowed to enlist in the Navy and Marine Corps. They served as infantrymen, guides, translators, coast watchers, and in numerous other capacities. These islanders shared a common bond with America, a desire to defeat the Japanese and free their homes from occupation. (13)

The following is excerpted from an article on Japanese-American participation in World War II which was published by the Department of Defense in a pamphlet titled *A People Emerging*. It was published for the May 1981 celebration of Asian-Pacific American Heritage Week.

100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team:  
Their History Was a Record in Heroism

This is the story of Americans of Japanese ancestry who fought in World War II against the armies of the Third Reich. It is the story of the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team . . . .

. . . Early in 1942, there were many Japanese Americans already in the army in Hawaii. . . . Soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor, their loyalty was in question. They were disarmed and assigned to menial labor. The Hawaiian community requested that a Japanese American unit be formed from these trained men. The Army responded by creating a battalion of Americans of Japanese ancestry. . . the 100th Infantry Battalion.

In February 1943, the 100th Infantry Battalion was transferred to Camp Shelby, Mississippi. . . to undergo large-unit training before deployment for combat. Their training record was so superb that the 442nd Regimental Combat Team was activated on February 1, 1943. A call went out for Americans of Japanese ancestry to volunteer for service. . . . More than 3000 men from Hawaii and 1500 from the mainland responded to this call. Many of the mainland volunteers who came forth to serve had families that were being unjustly held in internment centers, behind barbed wire fences.

During the summer of 1943. . . the Army was still seeking answers to the question: how would American soldiers of Japanese ancestry acquit themselves in

combat? . . .

The 100th Infantry Battalion was sent overseas on August 11, 1943. . . . On September 19, 1943, the 100th landed on the beaches of Salerno, Italy. They engaged in their first firefight at Montemarano on the 28th. This was followed by fierce fighting at three separate crossings of the Rapido River. There was further action at Voltorno and Cassino and at the final breakout from the Anzio beachhead. During these battles, the 100th met every military objective. . . . Their ferocity in action and their determination to win against all odds led to their having such high casualties that they earned the name of the "Purple Heart Battalion." . . .

. . . Over 1000 Purple Hearts were awarded during this period. Major James Gillespie, the commander of the 100th stated: "They call themselves just plain Americans. . . they have earned the right. . . . Anybody who calls these doughboys 'Jap' is the most narrow-minded person I know of. They are just as American as I am."

The superb combat record of the 100th plus an excellent training record led to the decision to send the 442nd into action overseas. . . . On June 10, 1944 north of Rome, the 100th was attached to the 442nd.

. . . The 442nd first engaged the enemy on June 26, 1944. This was followed by one battle after another until the end of the war, leading to a total of five major campaigns. In the early phases of fighting, the 442nd was instrumental in the capture of Livorno, Italy, and in pushing the German Army north of the Arno River. In August, 1944, the 442nd's Anti-Tank Company took part in Operation Anvil (campaign of Southern France).

. . . The 442nd Regimental Combat Team moved up the Rhone valley in "40 and 8's" to Epinal where they were attached to the 36th division. Almost immediately thereafter they were pressed into action. After three days of bitter fighting, the 442nd liberated the French town of Bruyeres on October 18, 1944. After the fall of Bruyeres, the 442nd fought on to secure

the high ground beyond the town. They were relieved on October 23 for a rest--but not for long. On October 27, 1944, they received orders to break the German ring that surrounded the "Lost Battalion" of the 141st Regiment, 36th Division. The "Lost Battalion" had been isolated for almost a week and was low on food and ammunition--the 442nd was ordered to reach them at any cost. They moved into action, and during the next four days, they engaged in the bloodiest and fiercest fighting ever undertaken by the 442nd. They never stopped in their determined drive to reach the entrapped battalion. At the end of this action, more than 200 men of the 442nd were dead. In addition, 600 men were wounded, the total number of casualties exceeded the number of men saved, but the 442nd had fought through and rescued the "Lost Battalion."

At the beginning of this action, Company K had started with some 200 riflemen, but had 17 men left when the "Lost Battalion" was reached. I Company had only 8 men left. Both companies lost all their officers, and noncoms ran the companies for the last few days of action. All the other companies had suffered similar losses. . . .

The 442nd was relieved on November 8th and sent to southern France to guard the French-Italian border. . . . During this assignment, the 442nd was brought back to life with replacements of men and a fresh supply of material.

. . . The 442nd was returned to Italy in March, 1945. . . to create a diversionary action on the western anchor of the Gothic Line. This sector had defied Allied assault for over five months. The enemy had had ample time to fortify their positions, and the line appeared to be impregnable. Frontal assault was impossible--the enemy's guns were in complete control. The only solution was to conduct a surprise attack by going up over a nearly vertical mountainside. On April 5, the 442nd started their approach. During the dark hours before dawn, the men of the 442nd and the 100th climbed for hours in tense silence. They finally reached the top of the ridge and moved into position for the attack. In 32 minutes, the men took

two key mountaintop enemy outposts. With this break in their line, the other enemy positions fell one by one. What started out as a diversionary attack by the 442nd and the 100th soon developed into a major rout that destroyed the enemy's western section. The Gothic Line that had withstood assault for six months was finally broken!

. . . The 442nd were the first Allied troops to reach Turin. They were in complete control of the western sector when on May 2 the Third Reich surrendered and the war was over.

. . . The 100th and 442nd suffered 9,486 casualties, including 650 soldiers who were killed in action. The total number of casualties was more than twice the assigned complement of men in the unit.

. . . In less than two years, the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Combat Team had successfully fought in seven major military campaigns: Naples-Foggia Campaign; the Rome-Arno; Southern France (Operation Anvil); the Rhineland; the North Apennines; Central Europe Campaign; and the Po Valley. The Congressional Record reported that they had received among other awards and citations, ". . . a Congressional Medal of Honor; 52 Distinguished Service Crosses; 1 Distinguished Service Medal; 560 Silver Stars plus 28 Oak Leaf Clusters; 22 Legions of Merit; 15 Soldiers Medals; 4,000 Bronze Stars with 1,200 Oak Leaf Clusters; 9,486 Purple Hearts." . . .

Altogether there were 18,143 individual decorations for valor, thus making the 100th and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team "the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in the history of the United States." (13)

## KOREAN WAR

Following World War II, Asian-Pacific Americans were integrated into the Armed Forces. Segregated units were no longer formed, although some units such as the 100th Battalion Hawaii National Guard maintain a predominantly Asian-Pacific American membership.

The outbreak of war in Korea found U.S. forces unprepared. Reserves and National Guard units were mobilized. The draft was expanded and few groups were exempted from service. The severe shortage of front-line combat soldiers led to the foundation of the Korean Augmentation to U.S. Army (KATUSA) Program. The original KATUSA program started casually during the Korean War. Korean stragglers began joining in with U.S. Army units, primarily for rations and a home. In August 1950, General Douglas MacArthur made it official with initial plans for 20-30,000 Korean Army recruits assigned to U.S. units at the rate of about 100 per company or battery. This initial effort was somewhat less than successful, mostly due to the language barrier. (21:60) The KATUSA program has been on-again, off-again for the last three decades. It is currently an active program managed by the U.S. Eighth Army, U.S. Forces Korea. Current participants are members of the Republic of Korea Army who are recruited for 3-year tours of duty with the U.S. Army. They are recruited, paid, promoted, and disciplined by the ROK Army but are under the operational command and control of the U.S. Army. They are fully integrated into U.S. units and are treated in exactly the same manner as U.S. soldiers. They arrive at U.S. units assigned a military specialty but without specific training in the specialty. A KATUSA soldier will normally remain within the same company or battery for the duration of his or her tour of service. In addition to military specialty duties, they act as interpreters between U.S. and Korean personnel. They are invaluable in assisting U.S. personnel to adapt to Korean customs. They directly enhance U.S. combat readiness and reduce support costs for U.S. units in Korea. There are approximately 6,200 KATUSA soldiers assigned to the U.S. Eighth Army today. (19; 20)

## VIETNAM WAR

By the time of the Vietnam War, official segregation of minorities was long a thing of the past. Asian-Pacific Americans were integrated throughout the Armed Forces. They were subject to the draft under the same rules as all other Americans. Statistics on the number and service of Asian-Pacific Americans are not readily available for the Vietnam War era.

## VI. ASIAN-PACIFIC AMERICANS AS MILITARY DEPENDENTS

In May, 1979, the United States Commission on Civil Rights convened a 2-day consultation entitled "Myths and Realities,

Civil Rights Issues of Asian and Pacific Americans." This was a large proceeding which covered a wide variety of issues, one of which was the status of foreign-born Asian-Pacific American wives of military personnel. (25)

In 1979 it was estimated that there were roughly 200,000 foreign-born Asian wives who had immigrated to the United States with their husbands. These women come from many nations and are spread throughout the United States. They are largely invisible to society and their own ethnic Asian-Pacific American community. Some of these women have been residents of the United States for many years while others are relative newcomers with still others arriving every month. (12; 25)

Historically, the Japanese wives of American servicemen were the first to arrive in large numbers just after World War II and during the U.S. occupation of Japan. In the decades that followed World War II the pattern of immigration shifted from Japan to Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Small sample studies of this group of immigrants were conducted in 1954, 1959, 1972, 1973, 1975, and 1977. According to these studies the typical Asian wife of a U.S. citizen living in the U.S. was relatively young to middle-aged with a median educational level of eighth grade. The American born husband was likely to be a few years older or else markedly older or younger than she was. (12; 25)

The attitude toward these marriages ranged from cautious to outright hostility among the relatives and home communities of both the Asian women and their American husbands. Even today it is common for an Asian woman involved with an American to be ridiculed or disowned by her family. American servicemen are frequently suspected of sexual exploitation without long term commitment. Asian families may suffer anxiety that, when their daughter marries, she will either be abandoned when the husband rotates home, or she will leave, possibly to never return. Asian women typically feel guilt over marrying out of their culture, possibly breaking their cultural tradition of family interdependence. (12; 25)

Intermarried couples generally do well while still stationed in the wife's home country. There is little cultural adaptation for the wife to make and the husband has both his wife's cultural surrounding and the U.S. base support system with his culture. It is when the couples return to the U.S. that difficulty may arise. Communication may be a major drawback. A lack of English

proficiency and limited understanding of American mores make for a difficult transition for the wife. The burden of easing this transition falls to the husband. He must demonstrate tremendous patience and love to help his bride adapt. Many servicemen fail to comprehend the difficulties encountered by their wives. They feel they "got along" in her country, why can't she "get along" here? They often overlook the fact she is isolated and does not have the comfort of familiar cultural surroundings that he had in the base structure overseas. (12; 25)

The Asian-Pacific American wife may be overwhelmed by the situation she faces in America and become homesick, depressed, even physically sick. These problems, if not handled by the family, may quickly result in marital problems, physical abuse, separation, or divorce. Such ills may well be reflected in the husband's overall attitude and duty performance, reducing his readiness and the readiness of his unit. It is important that equal opportunity representatives be aware of these potential problems and work to help resolve them if they occur. (12; 25)

## VII. A POWERFUL POLITICAL FORCE

Asian-Pacific Americans have made tremendous gains in political organizations and public office-holding. They are a powerful force in local, state, and national politics in Hawaii; a significant but lesser force in California; and a large enough voting block to influence elections in New York, New Jersey, Texas, and Illinois. In Hawaii, Asian-Pacific Americans have been heavily involved in politics since World War II. Returning Nisei veterans were determined to maintain the gains they had made in the war. The G.I. Bill was heavily used by those veterans, many of whom have remained active in public service or politics. Asian-Pacific Americans have held numerous elected and appointed positions in Hawaii since statehood in 1959. Their numbers are far too great to list here, but the following is a small sample of their accomplishments in Hawaii. (2; 3)

**GEORGE ARIYOSHI.** Active in politics since 1954, he served in the old Territorial House and Senate, was elected to the newly formed State Senate (1959-1970), served as lieutenant-governor (1970-1973), acting governor (1973), and was elected governor in 1974, 1978, and 1982. (8; 27)

**BEN CAYETANO.** Served in the Hawaii State House and Senate (1975-1986), was elected lieutenant governor in 1986, and is

currently serving in that office. (27)

HIRAM FONG. Active in public service and elected positions since 1938. Elected to the U.S. Senate in 1958, he served three terms before retiring from active politics in 1976, and is looked to today as an elder statesman and advisor on local, state, and national affairs. (8; 27)

DANIEL INOUE. A member of the highly decorated 442nd Regimental Combat Team, he lost an arm in Europe during World War II. Active in politics since 1954; served in both houses of Hawaii State Legislature; elected to two terms in the U.S. House; elected to the U.S. Senate in 1962; was a member of the Watergate Investigating Committee; still serving today as senior U.S. Senator from Hawaii. (8; 27)

JOHN WAIHEE. Active in local and state politics since 1970; elected to Hawaii House of Representatives in 1980; elected lieutenant-governor in 1982; elected governor in 1986 and currently serving in that office. (27)

Other prominent Asian-Pacific Americans in Hawaii politics include: (27)

Spark M. Matsunaga - U.S. Senator 1976-

Patricia Saiki - U.S. Representative 1987-

Daniel Akaka - U.S. Representative 1977-

Patsy Mink - U.S. Representative 1962-1978

California has also had its share of prominent Asian-Pacific American politicians. The relatively large size of the Asian-Pacific population (approximately 350,000 in 1984) insures that they have an impact on all local, state, and national elections. In 1984, California's Asian-Americans included nine mayors, two Federal judges, two members of Congress, 33 State judges, 16 city council members, and 20 members on boards of education. (2) Prominent current California politicians include:

S. I. HAYAKAWA. Scholar, former professor and president emeritus of San Francisco State College, he was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1977 and retired from active politics in 1982. He has served as a special advisor to the U.S. Secretary of

State since 1983. (27)

ROBERT MATSUI. Active in local politics since 1971; president of the Japanese-American Citizens League; was elected to U.S. House in 1978 and is still serving there. (27)

NORMAN MINETA. Activity in the Japanese American Citizens League led him to a more prominent role in local and state politics; served on San Jose City Council; vice-mayor and then mayor of San Jose; was elected to the U.S. House in 1974 and is still serving there. (27)

The political influence of Asian-Pacific Americans is not nearly as great outside of Hawaii and California, but their presence is being felt. In 1984, S. B. Woo was elected Lieutenant Governor of Delaware, the highest state office attained by an Asian-American outside of Hawaii. Frank Horton is currently serving as a member of Congress from New York. As their population continues to increase and the new waves of immigrants become more Americanized, we can expect to see more Asian-Pacific Americans gain political prominence in areas outside of Hawaii and California. (2; 3)

## VIII. MILITARY NOTABLES

As of September 1989, there were 45,074 enlisted and 4,737 officers of Asian-Pacific ancestry serving in the Armed Forces of the United States, approximately 2.3 percent of the total force. Their representation in the Armed Forces is slightly higher than their 1.6 percent portion of the U.S. population (1980 census). As their numbers continue to rise in the general population, their representation in the Armed Forces can also be expected to rise. Appendix 1 contains charts depicting these figures.

As previously discussed, Asian-Pacific Americans have served in the defense of the United States since the Spanish American War. They have achieved much for such a small, diverse group.

The following Asian-Pacific Americans have been awarded the Medal of Honor:

- Pvt Jose B. Nisperos, Philippine Scouts (1911)

- Fireman 1st Class Telesforo Trinidad, USN (1915)
- Sgt Jose Calugas, Philippine Scouts (1942)
- PFC Sadao S. Munemori, USA, 100th BN, 442nd RCT (1945)
- Cpl Hiroshi H. Miyamura, USA, (1951)
- PFC Herbert K. Pililaau, USA, (1951)
- Sgt Leroy A. Mendonca, USA, (1951)
- SFC Rodney J. T. Yano, USA, (1969)
- Cpl Terry Teruo Kawamura, USA, (1969)

The following are Asian-Pacific Americans who have achieved General or Flag-officer rank in the Armed Forces: (3)

- Lieutenant General Allen Kenji Ono, USA
- Brigadier General John Fugh, USA
- Major General Dewey K. K. Lowe, USAF (Retired)
- Rear Admiral Ming E. Chang, USN
- Rear Admiral Samuel Lin, Assistant Surgeon General, Public Health Service
- Brigadier General Vincente T. Blaz, USMC (Retired)
- Brigadier General Arthur Unio Ishimoto, Hawaiian Air National Guard
- Brigadier General Alexic T. Lum, Hawaiian National Guard
- Brigadier General Theodore Shigew Kanamine, USA

Col Ellison S. Onizuka, USAF, a Japanese-American from Kealakakua, Hawaii, was an astronaut killed in the explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger in January, 1986. An Air Force Base in California now bears his name. (3)

In 1987, Hoang Nhu Tran, a former Vietnamese boat person,

graduated number one in his class of 960 students at the United States Air Force Academy. He was also a Rhodes scholar and Time Magazine's recipient of the 1986 College Achievement Award. (3)

## IX. CONCLUSION

The preceding provides a very brief review of the Asian-Pacific American communities and their role in the U.S. Armed Forces. Asian-Pacific American immigrants are a diverse and varied group. They come from all of the economic and educational levels of the origin nations. The second and third generations descended from past immigrants may be well assimilated into American culture, but they still carry with them the vestiges of their own unique ancestral culture. We have seen that Asian-Pacific Americans are the fastest growing minority in America, and as such their representation in the military is also likely to grow. The immigrants today are likely to produce the recruits of tomorrow. An awareness of past contributions and capabilities of this minority will better equip us to serve effectively with Asian-Americans.

## SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The following is a list of resources for learning more about Asian and Pacific Americans.

Asian-Pacific American Heritage Council  
P.O. Box 8135  
Rockville, MD 20856

Hawaii Visitors Bureau  
2270 Kalakaua Ave  
Honolulu, HI 96815

Intercom  
218 East 18th Street  
New York, NY 10003

Population Reference Bureau, Inc.  
2213 M Street  
Washington, DC 20037

The Guam Society of America, Inc.  
Box 180 (c/o NCSS)  
Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Progressive Alliance of Filipinos and Americans, Inc.  
8207 Barrett Road  
Fort Washington, MD 20744

Organization of Pan Asian American Women, Inc.  
915 15th St., N. W., Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20005

Asian and Pacific American Federal Employee Council  
P.O. Box 7809, Ben Franklin Station  
Washington, DC 20044

Organization of Chinese Americans, Inc.  
P.O. Box 592  
Merrifield, VA 22116

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Almodouar, Evelyn F. "First Filipino CO Was Runaway Teen Chasing a Dream." *All Hands* (August 1989) p. 49.
2. Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute. *A Review of Data on the Asian American Population*. Patrick Air Force Base, Florida
3. -----, *Asian-Pacific American Heritage Week 1988, A Decade of Achievement: 1978-1988*. Patrick Air Force Base, Florida
4. -----, *Quarterly Statistical Profile of Minorities and Women in the Department of Defense Active Forces, Reserve Forces and the United States Coast Guard*. Patrick Air force Base, Florida, September 1989.
5. Dunn, Lynn P. *Asian Americans: A Study Guide and Sourcebook*. San Francisco: Rand E. Research Associates, 1975, pp. 24-31, 63-64.

6. Herman, Masako. *The Japanese in America 1843-1973*. Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1974.
7. "Immigration Reform Pro and Con." *Congressional Digest*. (October 1989), pp. 226, 229, 230, 256.
8. Kim, Hyung-Chan. *Dictionary of Asian American History*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986, pp. 138, 139, 243, 244, 245.
9. -----. *The Filipinos in America 1898-1974*. Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1976, pp. 38-45.
10. -----. *The Koreans in America 1882-1974, A Chronology and Fact Book*. Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1974, pp. v, vi, 44, 45.
11. Melendy, H. Brett. *Asians in America: Filipinos, Koreans, and East Indians*. Boston: G. K. Hall and Co., 1977, pp. 50-53.
12. National Committee Concerned with Asian Wives of U.S. Servicemen. *Women in Shadows*. LaJolla, California, 1981, pp. 7-57, 103-106.
13. Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Equal Opportunity. *Asian-Pacific Americans in the Nation's Defense, A People Emerging*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1981.
14. Office of the Secretary of Defense. *Asian-Pacific American Heritage Week, Strength Through Unity*. Washington, DC (May 1984) pp. 17-18.
15. Oxnam, Robert. "Why Asians Succeed Here." *New York Times Magazine*, 30 November 1986.
16. Petillo, Carol Morris. *Douglas MacArthur, The Philippine Years*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981, pp. 129-142, 245, 277.
17. Pido, Anthony. *The Pilipinos in America*. New York: Center for Migration Studies of New York, Inc., 1985, pp. 110-111.
18. Regents of the University of California. *Letters in Exile*. Los Angeles: UCLA Asian-American Studies Center, 1976, pp. 1-20, 91, 96-111.

19. 2d Infantry Division. Commander's Guide to the KATUSA Soldier. Korea, Undated.
20. 2d Infantry division. Korean Culture Study Guide. Korea, Undated.
21. Stokesbury, James L. A Short History of the Korean War. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1988.
22. Thernstrom, Stephen. Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1981, pp. 217-234, 354-362, 561-571, 601-606.
23. Tsai, Shih-Shan Henry. The Chinese Experience in America. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986, pp. 110-118.
24. Tung, William. The Chinese in America 1820-1973. Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1974.
25. U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Myths and Realities Civil Rights Issues of Asian and Pacific Americans Consultation Proceedings Report. Washington, DC, (May 1979) pp. 114-118
26. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. We the Asian and Pacific Islander Americans. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office (September 1988).
27. Who's Who in America. 45th Edition, Volumes 1 and 2, Wilmette, Illinois: MacMillan Directory Division, 1989.