



2022 Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month

HISTORY

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) have played a vital role in Enriching America's history since the 1850s following the California Gold Rush. In 1978, President Jimmy Carter hosted a week long celebration during the first week of May, with following Presidents renewing the celebration over the next decade. In 1990, Congress passed a law expanding the observance into a month long event. It was in 1992 that the entire month of May was officially designated in law as AAPI Heritage Month.

SPOTLIGHT EVENT

Join us as the Department of the Air Force opens this year's AAPI commemoration with a stunning production of stories from Airmen and Guardians across the enterprise followed by a special AAPI Senior Leader Panel.



Ms. Gina M. Ortiz Jones
USECAF

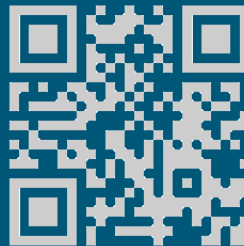


Mr. Edwin H. Oshiba
Asst. Secretary, SAF/IE

EVENT DETAILS

4 May 2022 @ 1500 EDT
[EVENT LINK](#)

Hear from senior leaders as they highlight challenges they've tackled and look to the future to ensure all in the DAF thrive.



Maj Gen Floyd W. Dunstan
ANG Assistant to AETC/CC

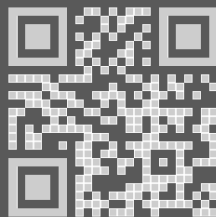


Brig Gen Jimmy R. Canlas
Commander, DLA Energy

STAY UP TO DATE

For the latest happenings around the Department, please visit the [DAF Diversity Page](#)

May Newsletters will be released weekly to celebrate the month's events.



FOOD & HERITAGE

Stay connected as the PACT showcases mouth watering cuisines with intriguing & wondrous history throughout the month of May. The first dish hails from the land of the Phillipines. Continue reading to see more!



CMSgt Hope L. Skibitsky
AFIMSC/CCC





SPEAK-EASY



The Riches of Language

Language is a core aspect of human society. It allows people to share ideas, express their emotions, and convey their thoughts in unique ways. There is power in the spoken word, and through it, humanity has founded bustling empires, caused the destruction of ancient civilizations, crafted beautiful stories of lore and wonder, and explored dangerous frontiers and vast unknowns.

“Speak a new language so that the world will be a new world.” -Jalaluddin Rumi

According to experts at the University of Houston, a lower estimate of **31,000** languages have existed throughout human history. With most languages fading into history due to a lack of a standard written form, globalization has led most of the world’s population to converge on a small cluster of prevalent tongues. Language diversity is crucial to the human identity and is directly interrelated to the intricate cultural heritages that satisfy our social curiosity. During the month of May, we invite you to be inspired by the many celebrations that will be showcased across the Department and take a leap into the essence of culture while exploring the world through the remarkable lens of language.



AAPI - "Origins" Volume 1

While a picture may be worth a thousand words, stories have the ability to transcend time and space. As humans, our brains become activated during storytelling because it resonates with our need to understand what is being told and decode it into meaningful experiences. This echoes truer in storytelling surrounding culture, as there are unique aspects of heritage that are simply impossible to describe without communicating in this vibrant and artistic form. Some of the greatest pursuits in human history revolve around the search for awe inspiring stories that stimulate our minds and transport its readers to worlds beyond imagination. With the onset of globalization and diversification of the military, one need not look further than their fellow servicemembers to unearth treasured epics of wonder. This month, we pay tribute to those AAPI storytellers, who continue to enrich our military and American history with their work ethic, breathtaking heritage, and volumes of untold tales.

Listen to their stories

"A Nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people." -Mahatma Gandhi



"I grew up in India in a small town named Baroda. After high school, I took flight for further education and landed in America in August 2016. I fixated on pursuing a B.S. in Mathematics to satisfy my love for numbers and a B.S. in Economics to understand how money runs the world. It sounds cool but there had to be more to make my experience of flying 8,000 miles across the globe worthwhile. I wanted to challenge myself with something extraordinary. Being charmed by the disciplined lifestyle of the military, I decided to join ROTC my sophomore year and pledged for a business professional fraternity which I thought to be hypothetical only in epsilon movies. I won a scholarship that same year, and my time in the Air Force began.

I grew up celebrating Indian holidays and festivals. My parents made every effort to show us the cultural nuances of India through our extensive travels. Trained to be an Indian classical dancer since the age of two, my heritage is a huge part of me. Diwali (Festival of Lights) and Navratri (9 day dance festival in Gujarat) have been some of my favorite celebrations. We enjoy them by lighting lamps, wearing ethnic clothes, and having a fiesta.



I commemorate these celebrations with the people around me. Spreading these traditional experiences brings us together. I share my culture by bringing in treats for my troops, which they have thoroughly enjoyed. It has been fascinating to see how different cultural experiences within our organization have helped build camaraderie and embrace our unique backgrounds. I am proud to celebrate my Indian culture and be a USAF Officer!"

**-2d Lt Veera Vyas, Dover AFB, DE
INDIAN**



"I am the luckiest person that I know. People often dream about winning the lottery... I feel like I have won it more times than I can count. I am blessed with a life that is beyond my wildest dreams. I was born in Japan and adopted by an American Airman and his wife. I grew up on Air Force bases all over the world and my parents were wonderful. My dad was a First Sergeant and if I am ever half the man that he was, I would be twice that of most. My mom was about as wide as she was tall and giggled all the time. She was loving and funny and took great care of us all. We did not have much money, but there was always lots of love in our house. I remember coming home one day and telling my mom that some kids picked on me because of my Japanese



features. She said: "... you tell those kids that if they aren't nice to you, your mom will come sit on them!" She could always make me laugh. I had a wonderful career in the Air Force. As a naturalized citizen and the son of a First Sergeant I am fiercely patriotic, so it was an honor to serve my country in uniform. The Air Force gave me the opportunity to do things and visit places that I never could have dreamed of. I can't honestly say that I loved "every minute" of every job, but I truly loved every job. The work was fulfilling and the people I got to work with were fantastic. It was great to work for a values-based organization where I was judged on the strength of my character and the quality of my work, instead of the color of my skin. As the Associate Chief Operations Officer of the United States Space Force, I support the Chief Operations Officer in the execution of overall responsibility for Operations, Intelligence, Sustainment, Cyber and Nuclear Operations of the United States Space Force. It is an honor every day to continue serve the Department of the Air Force and have a role in standing up this new Service. I look forward to coming to work every day with the finest military and civilian leaders in the world as we make history.

While I was still in uniform, I was reunited with my biological mother and it was AMAZING! Flowing out of that, I was introduced to the Japanese-American Community and inherited a rich and very proud heritage. I met many Japanese-American heroes and even had the opportunity to represent our community on a trip to Japan to meet the Prime Minister and Princess. A wonderful writer for the Washington Post covered the story of my reunion and follow-on story of finding my biological father's family. I hope you enjoy them."

-Mr. Bruce Hollywood, Pentagon, WDC
JAPANESE



[News Article Part 1](#)



[News Article Part 2](#)

On the Horizon

Entertainment Industry Panel - 19 May 22
White House Initiative for AANHPI - 24 May 22

LOCAL GRINDS

Edwards AFB showcases one of very own AAPI Heritage month Leads as he masterfully details the delicious history of a cultural favorite: [Adobo!](#)



AAPI Heritage Month – Week 1 Reading List

