



2022 Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month

FAPAC

The Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC), founded in 1985, is the oldest and largest AAPI affinity group, representing civilian and military AAPI employees in federal and District of Columbia governments. The organization promotes equal opportunity, cultural diversity and advancements of AAPI in the government work force.



MEET YOUR AAPI HERITAGE MONTH TEAM

We are grateful for the opportunity to showcase the AAPI community in a manner never done before. We specifically sought opportunities for Airmen and Guardians to tell their stories and celebrate their heritage. Our goal is to break barriers and push back against stereotyping through education and connecting with peers. We empower our community to find their inner strength to enact real change and shape the culture of inclusivity.

Maj Peter J. K. Lee

Co-Chair, AAPI Heritage Month



Mr. KrisRyan I. Borsil

Co-Chair, AAPI Heritage Month



Capt Joanne M. Whitlock

Co-Chair, AAPI Heritage Month

SYNC WITH PACT

[AAPI Air/Space Force Officer's FB](#)



[DAF PACT FB](#)



STAY UP TO DATE

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

In addition to what's contained on the website, May Newsletters will be released weekly to celebrate the month's events.



A FIRST FOR AN EMERGING NATION

Michael Lokjar becomes the first-ever Marshallese citizen to receive an appointment to the Air Force Academy. He will join the class of 2026 this coming fall. Learn more about his story [here!](#)



NATIONAL NURSE/TECH WEEK 6-12 MAY 2022





“RICE IS RICE”

Food as a Foundation



“Rice is rice.” That’s what the famous AAPI comedian, Jokoy, said his father commented about Asian food in one of his stand-up shows. While the idea of someone not of AAPI origins mistakenly verbalizing that comment is humorous, a hidden meaning exists and not in a bad way. While on the surface it may seem like an oversimplification, summarizing all AAPI food in one giant mix plate, there is some truth behind the phrase and beyond rice. Much akin to food; the AAPI Community is so diverse and vast in culture, that one unfamiliar with the roots cannot help but to generalize the heritage to make it easy to talk about. Because AAPI food is rich in history from the method, techniques, and how it’s consumed, one could also generalize in the sense that it is all deeply rooted and tells the stories of who we are and where we come from as a people.

“People can connect through food. I can showcase parts of my culture that can maybe open conversations.” – Hamza Khan



Rice is rice, because our food, in many cases, begins with the rice as our foundation. What many of us from Asia (like India, Philippines, China, Japan, Korea, and Thailand) to include regions of the Pacific Islands (like Guam and Hawaii) have in common is that no matter how good the food may be, it’s just not complete without the rice. Rice is what ties everything together, much like how we as a diverse people have something that links us all together as well. Our heritage, our history of how we became what we are today, that is our rice. No matter what the dish is, or what the ever-changing world brings to our tables, it’s never complete without the rice.



As for that giant mix plate, many of our dishes in the AAPI community have similarities that are by no means coincidental. These similarities resulted from foreign trade and immigration of our seafaring ancestors and the result of conflicts between nations. Like flowers that grow after a forest fire, food is something beautiful that adapted and grew after the devastation of wars throughout the centuries; cultivated by the hands of those who lived through it. What used to be necessity for survival became cultural icons and fine cuisine generations later. This speaks of the humble beginnings and the sound resiliency of the AAPI community. We are a stoic community full of unique and flavorful stories of the past and present, and we have come a long way. Throughout that journey, the AAPI community has influenced the great palate of modern society and it is evident in every state and city across America. We continue to welcome others to our tables. In AAPI cultures, sharing and offering food is sharing and offering stories of ancestors and culture. So, if you want to understand the journey of those people that sacrificed generation after generation to enrich our lives today, just remember to try the food, but don’t forget the rice.



AAPI - "Origins" Volume 2

Let their experiences resonate

"When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful." -Malala Yousafzai



"Growing up, I was born and raised in Germany, but moved around a lot as an Army brat. My American father soldier met my mother in South Korea and married her after being stationed there. My brother and I learned the cultures that surrounded us depending on where we lived (e.g. Germany) and the cultures of South Korea and America. Because we moved often, fitting in was already challenging as a military child, to included being one of only a few Asians within our schools no matter where we went. It wasn't until my father retired and moved back to Fort Hood, Texas, that I truly understood what it was like to be an Asian American child. By this point, my brother had joined the Air Force and ended up starting a family of his own, so I was practically raised as an only child. My mother attended a Korean American church and many of the children there were just like me, in that we had a South Korean mother and American Army fathers who had met their wives in Korea and settled down in Killeen. I learned the basics of the Korean language (Hangul) and the customs that I often didn't see at home such as a Korean wedding with a plethora of Korean food and magnitude of men and women in vibrant colored Hanboks (S. Korean clothes). These hanboks were used for not only weddings, but during special occasions and holidays. I learned the Korean holidays such as Chuseok (Korean Thanksgiving Day), which is often a mid-autumn harvest festival with colorful rice cakes, various Korean dishes, drinks, and games. A lot of these specialties were unknown to Asian-Americans who were thousands of miles from a society we were never raised in. I overcame many hardships trying to understand who I was growing up, but one thing I am most proud of is who I am. I have always worked hard and have been proud as a Korean-American, as I continue to learn more about my heritage through Korean classes to gain proficiency in my language and nation's history so I can continue to fully represent and see myself as a Korean-American."

-MSgt Crystal Manery, JBSA-Lackland, TX - KOREAN





“No matter what your background is, we all have a story. My story as a first-generation American revolves around gratitude. I am grateful for those who came before me, who risked everything for a dream. To provide our family with the freedoms that often get taken for granted. I have my mother and grandparents to thank for their will to fight, flee, and survive so they could one day call America home. They had to escape South East Asia during conflict and fled to multiple countries as refugees before settling down in the United States, but their dream became a reality. I was eventually born and raised in the Bay Area, California. Growing up, I learned

their story and quickly realized my call to serve would be because of them, so I set my sights on the Air Force, earned a scholarship through ROTC, and began my path as a Combat Systems Officer. My calling continues to propel me through my career, through my time as an AFSOC aviator on the U-28, and today as an AETC instructor at Undergraduate Combat Systems Officer Training.”

**-Capt Brandon Yeung
NAS Pensacola, FL
CHINESE**



“I’m Lloyd Alapaki Kapeleiala Wiltz, Native Polynesian Māori-Hawaiian. My mother is Native to the sacred lands of Kaua’ula, Maui, Hawai’i. We are descendants of the Nakaikuaana Ohana. As a Maori-Hawaiian, I’ve come to understand how impactful trans-culturalization has been for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC); familial languages, history, and cultural origins. At this moment in our story (vs history), it is important that we bring diverse cultures to the fight. As a representative of the AAPI Tribe, our call to action is to share our ancient principles, practices, and protocols with other Airmen & Guardians. The nation needs us to show up as our Authentic Mana, or power. Live Aloha va Mana (Love thru power) because it is our kuleana (responsibility) to operate from a position of LOVE as we co-create meaning to spiritually heal self and each other with our ha’a (breath of God) in thoughts, emotions, words and actions as we share time and space together.

Knowing who you are reveals your Authentic Mana. I am my Airmen & Guardian’s keeper, an Afro Indigenous Chata Yakni Polynesian Māori- Hawaiian Creole Luxembourger.”

**-Lloyd Alapaki
Kapeleiala Wiltz,
JBSA-Randolph, TX
MAORI/HAWAIIAN**



On the Horizon

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

AAPI Heritage Month – Week 2 Reading List

