



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

APR 28 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Department of Defense 2022 Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month Observance

The Department celebrates May 1-31, 2022 as Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, acknowledging the contributions of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in defending America's freedom.

This year's theme, "Advancing Leaders Through Collaboration," recognizes the collective benefits resulting from a spirit of community, cooperation, and cultural engagement. Despite racial and ethnic barriers to advancement, generations of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders sacrificed, and continue to serve, as military members and civilian employees. In 2021, they comprised approximately 8 percent of DoD's enlisted force, 6 percent of the commissioned officer corps, and 12 percent of civilian employees. There are many leaders from the Asian American Pacific Islander community who served in DoD with distinction and in mission critical positions such as Vice Admiral (Retired) Raquel C. Bono, former Director, Defense Health Agency; Dr. David Chu, former Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness; and General (Retired) Eric Shinseki, the first Asian American 4-star General and 34th Chief of Staff of the Army.

The richness of the AAPI Heritage promotes an intercultural exchange and fosters diverse perspectives in our Department. For example, alternative medical practices rooted in Asian traditions, like acupuncture, provide relief to American warfighters recovering from injury. Asian cuisines are a staple in the American economy; there are restaurants located on our military installations, and in every major city of our country we can see their cultural influence. American Marines, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Guardians, and their families have experienced a breadth of Asian and Pacific Island culture leading to lifelong connections that became extended family and friends.

America, as we know it, would not be the same without the vibrancy of the AAPI communities in our society. We honor their enduring legacy and contributions to our nation and stand united in fostering a community of belonging for all people. For resources and help with leading and organizing observances, visit: <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Human-Relations-Toolkit/Special-Observances/#asian-american-pacific-islander-heritage-month>.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.