



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

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

SEP - 8 2023

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

SUBJECT: 2023 Department of Defense National Hispanic Heritage Month Observance

The Department recognizes National Hispanic Heritage Month (NHHM) from September 15 to October 15. During this time, we honor the culture and contributions of persons who trace their origin or descent to Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central and South America, and other Spanish cultures. People who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race.

This year's NHHM theme is *Todos Somos, Somos Uno: We Are All, We Are One*. For generations, Hispanic Americans have demonstrated allegiance to our Nation through military and public service. According to the DoD demographic data for 2022, over 8 percent of DoD civilian employees indicate Hispanic ethnicity and approximately 19 percent of active duty military personnel identify as Hispanic or Latino. They are a vital component of our Total Force and in accomplishing our mission.

Leveraging the diverse talents, perspectives, and experiences of personnel with Hispanic heritage contributes to operational success. The Department continues to engage in outreach to Hispanic and Latino communities to broaden their exposure to the full range of DoD career opportunities.

We value the past and present contributions of Service members and DoD civilian employees of Hispanic heritage. As a tribute to their service, the Department recently renamed Fort Hood, Texas to Fort Cavazos in honor of General Richard Cavazos, a 33-year veteran of both the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and the Army's first Hispanic four-star general. Throughout his career, General Cavazos demonstrated personal valor and commitment to both his troops and mission and received numerous decorations to include two Distinguished Service Crosses, a Purple Heart, and the Legion of Merit, among others, for exceptional service in war and peace.

As we celebrate the achievements of our Hispanic military and civilian employees, the Department recognizes the operational advantages this diverse and dynamic community provides to operations at home and abroad. For resources and help with leading and organizing observances, visit: <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Special-Observances/#national-hispanic-heritage-month>.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.