



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

APR 26 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Department of Defense 2016 Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month Observance

The Department of Defense (DoD) joins the Nation in celebrating Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month during the month of May. The theme of this year's observance is "*Walk Together, Embrace Differences, Build Legacies.*" Our nation draws strength from the vast diversity and lasting contributions of the AAPI community. DoD honors those who have helped shape our nation's history and its future through their invaluable service and leadership.

AAPI Heritage Month is observed in May, in part to recognize two important dates relating to AAPI history: the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants to the United States on May 7, 1843, and completion of the transcontinental railroad by predominantly Chinese laborers on May 10, 1869. Today, with a population of more than 18 million in 23 distinct Asian American groups and 19 distinct Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander groups, the AAPI community is recognized as one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse groups in the country.

For over 170 years, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have contributed to our nation's greatest undertakings, shaped our cultural diversity, and added significantly to the vibrancy of our national fabric. We recognize and celebrate their achievements in the arts, literature, academia, industry, the government and our military. Comprising six percent of the nation's population, AAPIs have enriched our culture and advanced our social well-being on a broad scale and continues to immeasurably contribute today.

All DoD Components are encouraged to recognize Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Mr. Norvel Dillard, Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity, is the DoD point of contact at (703) 614-3397, or [norvel.l.dillard.civ@mail.mil](mailto:norvel.l.dillard.civ@mail.mil).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clarence A. Johnson", is positioned above the typed name and title.

Clarence A. Johnson  
Director  
Office of Diversity Management  
and Equal Opportunity

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