

# Diversity Matters

MAY 2018



**May's special observance month is:  
Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage Month**

**This observance runs through the month of May and celebrates the service and sacrifices of Asian/Pacific Islanders throughout the United States.**

**This year's theme: Unite Our Vision by Working Together**



The U.S. Congress recognized the significance of the month of May as it relates to the history of Asian/Pacific Islanders.

- May 7, 1843 is the date the first Japanese immigrants arrived in the United States.
- On May 10, 1869 the first transcontinental railroad in the United States—built in large part by Chinese pioneers—was completed.

### Rear Admiral Gordon Chung-Hoon:

Rear Admiral Gordon Pai'ea Chung-Hoon was the recipient of the Navy Cross, the second highest Navy award for combat valor, and the Silver Star for conspicuous gallantry and extraordinary heroism as Commanding Officer of USS Sigsbee.

On April 14, 1945, during the invasion on Okinawa, a kamikaze crashed into the Sigsbee, reducing her starboard engine to five knots and knocking out the ship's port engine and steering control. The attack killed 23 crewmen and nearly sank the destroyer.



Portrait courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Despite the damage, Chung-Hoon, then a commander, kept his anti-aircraft batteries delivering “prolonged and effective fire” against the air attack while concurrently directing the damage control efforts that allowed the destroyer to make port under her own power. He retired as a two-star admiral and was the nation’s first Asian-Pacific American flag officer. In 2004, the Navy honored him by naming a guided missile destroyer after him.

## Pilot Hazel Ying Lee:

Hazel Ying Lee joined the Women Airforce Service Pilots, better known as WASP, and was trained to ferry aircraft. She was the first Chinese-American woman aviator, and the first Chinese-American woman to fly for the United States military.

Lee was killed in the line of duty, becoming the last WASP to die in service to her country. Identical landing orders were given to Lee and another pilot. The two planes collided, engulfing them in flames. Three days after her death, her parents were notified that Lee's brother Victor, who was serving with the U.S. Tanks Corps, had been killed in combat in France.



Photo courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

## Sipex Sun

In 2017, Sipex Sun, project engineer and general engineer for Dugway's Test Support Division, was honored as one of 10 Asian American Engineers of the Year. A Civil Service employee for the Army, he was the only representative of the U.S. military selected for the honor.

Born in 1966 in Cambodia, he had just finished 3rd grade when the communist dictator Pol Pot and his followers took power in 1975. When North Vietnam overthrew Pol Pot in 1979, Sun and his family walked through mine fields to a refugee camp in Thailand. Two years later, Sun's family was sponsored to enter the United States.

In 1990, he became the first Cambodian to graduate from Utah State University, earning a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. He worked in a variety of jobs related to engineering until hired in 2002 by Dugway. Sun's expertise, communication abilities across multiple levels, and innovation were emphasized in recommendations from management, coworkers and command for this award.



The rich heritage of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders spans the world and the depths of America's history. Generation after generation, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have forged a proud legacy that reflects the spirit of our Nation—a country that values the contributions of everyone who calls America home.

Article provided by: DEMOI

**Next month's special observance day: LGBT Pride month**