



# ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS in DEFENSE OF OUR NATION



Philippine Scouts in 1904; Chinese Americans who served on the USS Houston during WWII



Part of the 442nd Regiment which deployed to Europe during WWII; the three Ahn siblings of California's first Korean immigrant family who enlisted in the US military during WWII



Asian Pacific Americans have served with great honor and valor in defense of our nation since the 19th century. Many initially immigrated to the US because there were abundant opportunities for employment in mines and on railroads. They soon found opportunities to serve in uniform. After World War I soldiers of Asian ancestry were granted citizenship in recognition of their contributions in battle. After the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1942 Japanese Americans faced discrimination and internment. However, many joined the military during World War II to defend the nation they loved. In addition, Filipino Americans, Korean Americans, and over 20,000 Chinese Americans participated in the war effort. In the 1950s and 1960s changing laws allowed for greater immigration and naturalization of Asians. The Fall of Saigon and the rise of the oppressive Khmer Rouge also led to a significant increase in the number of Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees to the US. Individuals from all of these groups integrated into the ranks of the US Armed Forces and served with distinction throughout the Cold War.

## FAMOUS MILITARY UNITS

**Fita-Fita Guard** – native Samoans recruited into the US Naval Reserve to help maintain law and order in Samoan Islands from 1900 to 1952

**Philippine Scouts** – an integral part of the US Army made up of native Filipinos; first organized in 1901, they also fought on the Bataan Peninsula during WWII

**442nd Infantry Regiment** – later known as the 100th Battalion; an Army unit made of mostly Japanese Americans that fought in the Europe during WWII; one of the most highly decorated regiments with 21 Medal of Honor recipients; among the troops that liberated concentration camps near Dachau

**14<sup>th</sup> Air Force Chinese American Composite Wing** – the 'Flying Tigers'; created during WWII as a bomber and fighter group; consisted of pilots from both the US and China; deployed to the Pacific Theater

**Korean Augmentation to the US Army (KATUSA)** – the severe shortage of front-line soldiers led to the formation of KATUSA during the Korean War; they were Korean stragglers who joined US Army units in the battlefield, primarily for rations; some also acted as interpreters and enhanced US combat readiness



Many Asian Pacific Americans served in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) during WWII as translators, air traffic controllers, and weather forecasters; after the war, thirteen Japanese American WACs traveled to Japan to help build cultural bridges



Three combat soldiers of the US Army's Korean Augmentation program (KATUSA) near Yonjugol; Hiroshi H. Miyamura, a machinegun squad leader and prisoner of war in Korea, was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Eisenhower in 1951



Left to Right: Joseph L. Pierce enlisted in the 14th Connecticut Infantry (1862) and fought during the Civil War at Antietam and Gettysburg; Chiao-Shun Soong was a Coast Guardsman in 1879; Amencio Beang was a Filipino sailor in the 1920s on board the USS Rizal; Hazel Ying Lee was the first Chinese-American woman to receive her pilot's license (1932) and served as a pilot during WWII; Albert Lyman was the first Asian American general (1942); Ruth A. Tanaka joined the Army Nurse Corps in 1949 and retired as a lieutenant colonel; Masato Nakae, a private in the US Army, was awarded the Purple Heart and the Medal of Honor for his actions during WWII; Florence (Ebersole) Smith Finch worked for Army intelligence in the Philippines during WWII and was arrested by the Japanese for smuggling food and medicine to American POWs; Rodney J.T. Yano was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions in the Army Air Cavalry during the Vietnam War (1969)

For More Information Visit:  
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Today Asian Pacific Americans encompass over fifty ethnic and language groups. With each new opportunity, Asian Pacific Americans persistently demonstrate their immense capabilities and strong devotion to the US. Some, like Private Second Class Jonathan Ioakimo Falaniko and Sergeant Uday Singh serving in Iraq, pay the ultimate sacrifice for our sake. The traditions and values of Asian Pacific Americans -- importance of family, excellence in education, and community service -- continue to strengthen our nation. Furthermore Asian Pacific Americans have excelled in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics making valuable contributions to our nation's security. As countless Asian Pacific Americans have demonstrated, anyone who is motivated, hardworking, and has the commitment and honor to serve can achieve great things.



10/24/2011 Colonel John Kim receives a gift of 1,000 origami cranes in appreciation of his unit's disaster relief efforts in the Tohoku area of Japan devastated by the earthquake and tsunami

*"Our military men and women are our greatest national treasure. They should be safeguarded as such upon their return. They have never asked to be thanked, but we can never thank them enough."*

- Tammy Duckworth, an Iraq War veteran and former US Army helicopter pilot whose severe combat injuries resulted in the loss of both her legs and damaged one of her arms; she also served as Assistant Secretary of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs for the US Department of Veterans Affairs from 2009-2011



< Commander Elysia Ng, a Chinese American, will soon deploy as a Legal Mentor to the Afghan National Army's Central Corps; she was previously stationed in Singapore with the US Navy JAG Corps



< Marine Corps Reserve Sergeant Jeffrey Chao served in both Iraq and Afghanistan; he was recently honored for his community service, raising support for Asians and military veterans

Lieutenant Colonel Ellison Shoji Onizuka was the first Asian American astronaut; his first mission was on the Space Shuttle Discovery



Chaplain (Captain) Philip Jeon, second generation South Korean immigrant >



Airman 1st Class Chris Korenaga checks the camera system of an RQ-1 Predator unmanned aerial vehicle >



Coral Wong Pietsch was the first Asian American woman to reach the rank of Brigadier General in the US Army; she was commissioned into the Judge Advocate General Corps



< A graduate of the US Naval Academy, Robert Kihune was the first Hawaiian Vice Admiral; he was also involved in direct support of the Lebanon crisis, the capture of terrorists in the Achille Lauro hijacking, and the anti-terrorism air strikes against Libya



< Lieutenant Colonel Betty Garner, deputy director of the Joint Combat Casualty Research Team, administers acupuncture in Kandahar, Afghanistan

General Eric K. Shinseki was the first Asian American to reach the rank of a four star general; he also became the 34th Army Chief of Staff



Staff Sergeant Leah Morgan replaces a decoding card on a video recorder at Ramstein Air Base, Germany >



Staff Sergeant Jersouk Touy-Myers, a squad leader in the Massachusetts National Guard, has worked on a program to combat human trafficking >



Dr. Eleanor Concepcion Mariano was the first Filipino-American to reach the rank of Rear Admiral in the United States Navy and the first woman to be the director of the White House Medical Unit



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