



**Department of
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News Release

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VA Celebrates Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

WASHINGTON, D.C. – This month the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) honored the contributions of more than a quarter-million American Veterans of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage at various events.

“Nearly 15 million Americans trace their roots to Asia and the Pacific,” Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki said. “As a country we derive unique strength from our diversity of world cultures. But for all our vast differences and complexities we share in common the hope for a better life, the quest for opportunity, justice, equality and security for ourselves, and more importantly our children, and our children’s children.”

More than 340,000 Veterans of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage make up about 1.5 percent of the 23 million American Veterans.

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month is celebrated in May to commemorate the contributions of people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent in the United States. The 2009 national theme is “Leadership to Meet the Challenges of a Changing World.”

List of events Secretary Shinseki and Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs L. Tammy Duckworth attended in celebration:

- On April 30, Assistant Secretary Duckworth accepted an award from the Asian American Institute at their Milestone Awards Benefit in Chicago, Ill.
- On May 7, Secretary Shinseki hosted a kick-off celebration at VA Headquarters in Washington, D.C., to mark 2009 Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

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- On May 18, Assistant Secretary Duckworth spoke at the U.S. Army's celebration at the Pentagon Hall of Heroes.
- On May 21, Secretary Shinseki spoke before Department of Justice / U.S. attorneys gathering in Washington, D.C.
- On May 22, Secretary Shinseki spoke at Walter Reed Army Medical Center Command's celebration.
- On May 28, VA hosted a cultural fair at VA Headquarters in Washington, D.C., to celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

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