



# ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS

in the UNITED STATES NAVY

*Our Nation is diverse; our Navy must be no less so.*

—VICE ADMIRAL HARRY B. HARRIS JR., 2009

AMERICA'S  
**NAVY**

A GLOBAL FORCE FOR GOOD.™



*Asians and Pacific Islanders of various nationalities and ancestry—  
Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Southeast Asian, Asian Indian,  
Polynesian—have been serving in the Navy since the early 19th century.*



**W**hen he was a small boy in Shanghai on the eve of World War II, Ming E. Chang sat for hours on the bank of the Whangpoo River, watching U.S. Navy ships of the Asiatic Fleet steaming up and down the

◀ *Opposite page:* Lt. Manuel Querido shows an Afghan citizen how to use a radio during a civic action mission in Helmand Province. Querido is the chaplain with the 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, conducting counterinsurgency operations with Afghan national security forces, September 2009.

*Left:* Rear Adm. Ming E. Chang, Commander, Cruiser Destroyer Group Two, right, salutes Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman Jr., as he gets ready to depart the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69), August 1983.

crowded channel as they had been doing since the early 1900s. His father was a petty officer and cook on board one of those ships. Chang determined that someday he, too, would be a Sailor. Eventually, he became a naturalized U.S. citizen and joined the Navy.

Chang's foreign birth presented obstacles to advancement early in his career, but changes in U.S. law

governing naturalized citizens eventually permitted him to command warships as well as cruiser and destroyer divisions during his 34-year career. In 1980 the Navy promoted him to rear admiral, making him the first naturalized Asian Pacific American naval officer to reach flag rank. Seven years later the Navy appointed him Inspector General. In that position he adopted the motto "defending the rights of every Sailor and Marine" and helped improve the environment for women and minorities.

The U.S. Navy had maintained a presence in East Asia since the 1830s to safeguard American interests during Chinese civil unrest. Ships whose crews counted men of Asian descent on the Asiatic Station protected U.S. commerce, missionaries, and diplomats in the region. During the American Civil War, Chinese men served on dozens of Union vessels. For the rest of the century Asians continued to turn up on the rolls of U.S. warships.



◀ *Left:* Following in her family's tradition of naval service, the newly commissioned Ens. Donalda Charlotte Chang stands with her father Rear Adm. Ming E. Chang, October 1982.

*Top right:* The U.S. gunboat *Ashuelot*—part of the Asiatic Squadron, which operated along the coast of China, up the Yangtze River, and among the Japanese treaty ports—carried a crew in 1883 that was four-fifths Asian-born from Thailand, Japan, or China.

*Bottom right:* An artist's depiction of the explosion aboard battleship *Maine*.



## GORDON PAIEA CHUNG-HOON

Gordon Paiea Chung-Hoon, a star halfback on the Navy football team, graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1934. Ten years later, he took command of the destroyer USS *Sigsbee* (DD 502) and led his Sailors through harrowing combat in the Pacific, which earned him the Silver Star, the third highest combat award. On 14 April 1945, when kamikazes attacked *Sigsbee* and five other destroyers off Okinawa, one plane crashed into *Sigsbee*'s stern, causing a tremendous explosion that flooded parts of the ship. Once the rest of the enemy planes had been shot down, Chung-Hoon concentrated on directing damage control, enabling the crew to save the ship, which limped to Hawaii for repairs. For his actions, Chung-Hoon received the Navy Cross, the Navy's highest medal and the nation's second highest combat decoration. He retired in 1959 as a two-star admiral and the Navy's first Asian Pacific American flag officer.

*“It was thanks to the ship’s damage control group that we saved her [USS Sigsbee].”*

◀ Cmdr. Gordon Paiea Chung-Hoon, c. November 1945.

In 1898 the battleship *Maine* exploded and sank in Havana harbor. The blast, which killed 266 men, including those of Japanese and Chinese extraction, provided the catalyst for a war with Spain that spread to its colonies in the Far East where the U.S. Asiatic Squadron, commanded by Commodore George Dewey, defeated the Spanish fleet in the Battle of Manila Bay. As a result of the war, the United States gained the Philippines as a territory as well as other island possessions in the Pacific and the Caribbean. These events enabled large numbers of

Filipinos and other Pacific Islanders to join the U.S. Navy. In the decades since, this group has traditionally made the Navy their service of choice.

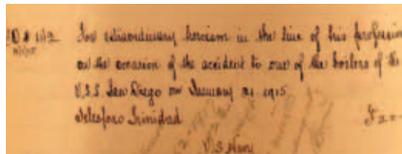
During World War II, Chinese and Japanese American men and women enlisted for military service in great numbers. More than 20,000 Chinese Americans—or one out of every five in the United States—served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Although barred from the naval service, Japanese Americans fought in some of the Army's most highly decorated units. Filipino Americans and Korean Americans also participated in the nation's war effort. Among the many Asian Pacific Americans who distinguished themselves during World War II was Commander Gordon Paiea Chung-Hoon of Chinese-Hawaiian parentage (see sidebar on page 3).

Asian Pacific American Navy men and women continued to serve honorably throughout the Cold War, a time when the U.S. Navy successfully faced down its Soviet adversary time and again. Starting in the 1950s, they also took advantage of expanded opportunities for advancement of minorities. One of the most outstanding to do so was native Hawaiian Vice Admiral Robert K. U. Kihune (see sidebar on page 5).



◀ Top: U.S. Sailors man the rails of the guided missile destroyer USS *Chung-Hoon* (DDG 93) as the ship pulls into Naval Station Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, July 2009. The ship is named in honor of Rear Adm. Gordon Chung-Hoon for his extraordinary naval service.

Bottom left to right: Armored cruiser USS *San Diego*; Medal of Honor citation for Navy Fireman 1st Class Telesforo de la Cruz Trinidad, a Filipino, who rescued two men after a boiler exploded on board *San Diego* on 21 January 1915.



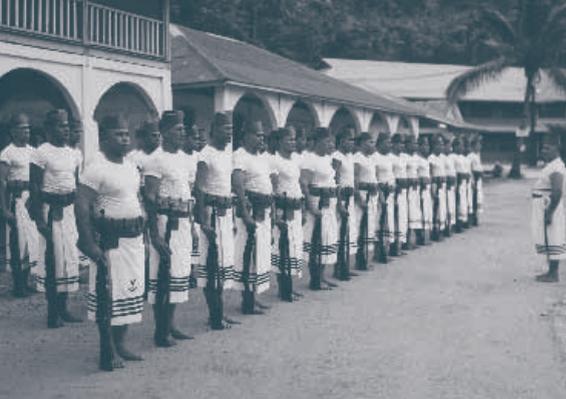


## ROBERT K. U. KIHUNE

Like many Asian Pacific Americans of his generation, Vice Admiral Robert K. U. Kihune drew inspiration from the heroics of the segregated Japanese American Army units of World War II. But he set his sights on a career in the Navy. The 1959 U.S. Naval Academy graduate distinguished himself during a 35-year career in which he commanded two carrier battle groups and took part in the Navy's response to the Lebanon crisis, the capture of terrorists in the *Achille Lauro* hijacking, and the antiterrorism air strikes against Libya. Promoted to vice admiral in 1988—the first native Hawaiian to wear three stars—he took charge of the Pacific Fleet Naval Surface Forces, commanding 200 ships, 10 naval stations, a combined military and civilian personnel force of 80,000, and a \$4 billion budget. Kihune's command provided half of the naval forces in support of the First Gulf War.

*“Let us not forget that it was [Japanese American veterans] that gave us the opportunity to compete on a level playing field with other Americans.”*

◀ As commander of the *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) Battle Group, Rear Adm. Robert Kihune sits in the cockpit of an E-2C Hawkeye surveillance aircraft on board the carrier, April 1987.



As demonstrated by Kihune's career, the 1960s and 1970s began a new, more favorable chapter for the advancement of Asian Pacific Americans in the Navy. The watershed 1965 Immigration Act lifted the heavy restrictions on Asian immigration that had prevailed for most of the 20th century. Other changes strengthened the Navy's antidiscrimination and affirmative action efforts. In 1971 the Navy formally lifted the restrictions that limited Philippine-born recruits in the service to the steward rating. As a result, many children of Filipino sailors carried on the family tradition of service in the Navy but could now advance far beyond the ranks that their fathers, mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers had attained. A notable example of a Filipino who followed in her father's footsteps in choosing a Navy career is the

▲  
*Left:* The native Samoan naval guard force stands at attention, March 1943. The U.S. Navy, which administered the Samoan Islands from 1900 to 1952, recruited these men into the Naval Reserve unit known as the Fita-Fita Guard to help maintain law and order.

*Top center:* The destroyer USS *Rizal*, newly commissioned in 1919, was donated to the U.S. Navy by the Philippine legislature and named in honor of the martyred Philippine patriot Dr. Jose Rizal (1861–1896). Her crew was predominantly Filipino American.

*Bottom center:* The three Ahn siblings, Ralph, Philip, and Susan, from one of California's first Korean immigrant families, enlisted in the U.S. military in 1942. Susan Ahn Cuddy was the first Korean American woman in the U.S. military and the first female Navy gunnery officer. For her service in the WAVES (the women's reserve component of the Navy), she reached the rank of lieutenant.

*Right:* As head of the White House medical unit, Dr. Eleanor Concepcion Mariano treated President Bill Clinton after his 1997 surgery.



## ELEANOR CONCEPCION MARIANO

Born at Clark Air Base in the Philippines in 1955, Dr. Eleanor Concepcion Mariano is the daughter of a Filipino master chief petty officer who served 29 years in the Navy's steward branch. She immigrated to the United States with her family at the age of two. After receiving a medical degree in 1981 from the Uniformed Services University in Bethesda, Maryland, Dr. Mariano joined the Navy, where she quickly rose from ship's surgeon to become attending physician to the President at the White House. She served in that billet for more than eight years during the George H. W. Bush and Clinton administrations. President Clinton promoted her to rear admiral in 2000, making her the first female Filipino to achieve flag rank. "I came from a family of Navy stewards," she said at her promotion ceremony. "The first Mariano who served in the United States Navy joined in the 1920s. . . . The Mariano men served with pride and accumulated a total of over 100 years of service among them."

*"The Navy meant the opportunity to succeed. . . . [and] all the good things America had to offer."*

◀ Rear Adm. Eleanor Concepcion "Connie" Mariano, MD., c. 2000.

former White House chief physician, Rear Admiral Eleanor Concepcion “Connie” Mariano, MD (see sidebar on page 7).

In the 21st century the Navy's leadership remains strongly committed to diversity. Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughead declared that the Navy “must embrace the demographic changes of tomorrow and build a Navy that always reflects our country’s makeup.”



*Top left:* Capt. David Yoshihara, Commander Destroyer Squadron 9, embarked on the nuclear-powered carrier USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70), escorts his parents on the carrier's flight deck in 2003. His father, retired Navy Captain Takeshi Yoshihara, was the first Japanese American to attend the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis.

*Top, lower left:* Deputy Commander, Navy Region Hawaii Rear Adm. James E. Beebe addresses Japanese sailors at a welcoming ceremony on board Naval Station Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, May 2005. The visitors were there to develop the seamanship and leadership skills of Japan's future leaders as well as to broaden the mutual understanding and friendship between the United States and Japan.

*Top right:* Capt. Tem E. Bugarin, the son of a retired senior chief radioman, was the first Filipino to command a surface combatant ship, USS *Saginaw* (LST 1188), in August 1989.

*Bottom:* Suni Williams takes one of her four walks in space.





## SUNITA L. WILLIAMS

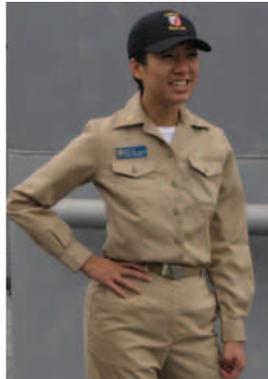
Navy Captain and astronaut Sunita L. Williams epitomizes the wide range of opportunities for all minorities in the Navy. Of Asian Indian parentage, Williams graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1987 and became a Navy helicopter pilot and test pilot. Selected as an astronaut, she traveled on the space shuttle in late 2006 to serve as flight engineer and science officer on the International Space Station. Her four spacewalks as an Expedition-14 crew member established a record for women at the time. She also set a record for women by spending more than six months in Earth orbit. Speaking of her space shuttle crew, she expressed appreciation of its diversity, referring to the “colorful crew” as “cool.” Her shipmates included an African American man and woman and a Swede from the European Union. “It’s a slice of America and the world,” Williams said.

*“I hope . . . that people see that anybody from any background, really, can do this job.”*

◀ Astronaut Sunita L. Williams, September 2004.



A person who is motivated and hardworking, and has the honor, courage, and commitment to serve, can achieve his or her dreams, regardless of gender, race, creed, color, or ethnic origin.



◀ *Far left:* Seaman Daniel Nguyen stands ready to chock and chain an incoming helicopter aboard the dock landing ship *USS Carter Hall* (LSD 50) during maritime security operations in the U.S. Fifth Fleet area of responsibility, December 2008.

*Left:* Lt. Cmdr. Elysia Ng, staff judge advocate for the commander of Logistics Group Western Pacific, observes maneuvers from the dock landing ship *USS Harpers Ferry* (LSD 49) during bilateral exercises in Southeast Asia, July 2009.

*Bottom:* Rear Adm. Peter Gumataotao, the first Guam native to achieve flag rank, receives his new flag officer combination cover from a family member in September 2009. A 1981 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Gumataotao became Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea after his promotion.





## HARRY B. HARRIS JR.

Vice Admiral Harry B. Harris Jr., a naval aviator who logged 4,400 flight hours and who became Commander, Sixth Fleet in 2009, is the Navy's highest-ranking Japanese American. The Sixth Fleet, one of the Navy's largest commands, consists of approximately 40 ships, 175 aircraft, and a diverse force of 21,000 officers and enlisted men and women. The Fleet's mission encompasses the full range of maritime and theaterwide operations with other U.S. forces and allies to advance security and stability in Europe, the Mediterranean, and Africa. Given such a diverse area of responsibility, sensitivity to many different cultures remains paramount. "When we recognize and capitalize on the strength that diversity brings to the Navy," Vice Admiral Harris declared, "we are better able to develop new ideas and reach out to partners around the world."

*"America's greatest asset is not our assembly lines or weapons systems, or even our great ships, submarines, and airplanes . . . it's our people."*

◀ Vice Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr., Commander, U.S. Sixth Fleet, February 2010.



◀ *Top left:* U.S. Seventh Fleet Command Master Chief Marcos Sibal hosts students and instructors from the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force on board the fleet's flagship USS *Blue Ridge* (LCC 19), January 2010.

*Top right:* Filipino American Rear Adm. Eleanor V. Valentin, commander of the Navy Medical Support Command, became the first female director of the U.S. Navy Medical Service Corps on 1 October 2009.

*Bottom left:* Navy Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Floro Sellona, a Guam native attached to the Medical Treatment Facility aboard the hospital ship USNS *Mercy* (T-AH 19), teaches English to patients waiting for medical and dental treatment, August 2008. *Mercy's* crew treated thousands of people during a 5-month humanitarian and civic assistance deployment to South and Southeast Asia.

*Bottom right:* U.S. Naval Academy Midshipman 3rd Class Melody Lee fires an M-16 down range from the flight deck of USS *Nassau* (LHA 4) as part of her summer training cruise, July 2009.



*Photo credits:* Susan Ahn Cuddy family, William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum, Vice Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr., Japanese American Veterans Association, Library of Congress, NASA, Naval History & Heritage Command, and NAVY.mil.

*Front cover:* Aviation Electronics Technician 2nd Class Rowel Delacruz waits for flight operations to begin aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) in the western Pacific, April 2008.

*Top left:* In 2009 Capt. Enrique “Rick” Sadsad, a Philippine-born American citizen, became the commanding officer of Naval Support Activity Bahrain, which supports our naval forces in the Middle East.



*Top right:* Cmdr. Michael V. Misiewicz, commanding officer of the guided missile destroyer USS *Mustin* (DDG 89), is greeted by family members as *Mustin* arrives in Sihanoukville, Cambodia, for training with the Royal Cambodian armed forces, December 2010. This was Misiewicz’s first visit to his native country since he immigrated to the United States in 1973.

*Bottom left:* Aviation Machinist’s Mate 2nd Class Charles Wang, assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron 41, performs maintenance on a Super Hornet engine aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68), February 2008.



*Bottom right:* Rear Admiral Brian L. Losey, left, assumed command of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, on 27 March 2010. Vice Admiral Harry B. Harris Jr., right, Commander, U.S. Sixth Fleet, attended the change-of-command ceremony. Both men are of Japanese American heritage. Admiral Losey is also the first Asian Pacific American flag officer from the SEAL community.”



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