VFW Commemorates Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

The VFW takes the opportunity to recognize and celebrate Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders for their contributions throughout American history

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WASHINGTON — The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is proud to celebrate our nation's Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander service members, veterans and their families throughout the month throughout May – Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

The month's designation encompasses more than 50 ethnic or linguistic groups, living in the United States and its territories. Since the first Japanese immigrants arrived to mainland America on May 7, 1843, people from Asian countries, islands throughout the Pacific Ocean and around the Pacific Rim have made significant and lasting contributions to the nation. History records even show that there were Asian people serving in the U.S. military as early as the War of 1812.

In 1978, Congress passed a joint resolution authorizing and requesting the president to proclaim the first 10 days of May 1979 as "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week." President Jimmy Carter signed the resolution Oct. 5, 1978, thus becoming Public Law 95-419 which calls upon the people of the United States to mark the observance with ceremonies and activities. Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week expanded to a monthlong observance in 1990, and finally to an annual observance in 1992. Every American president since President Carter, both Democrat and Republican, has issued proclamations for the commemoration. The 2023 White House proclamation on Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month can be found here.

The 1.5 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary salute all Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander service members, veterans and their families for their indelible contributions to our freedom and our way of life.