



*Remarks by Brigadier General Edwin J. Arnold, Jr.,
Commander, Mississippi Valley Division,
at the Kickoff for Asian/Pacific American Heritage
Month, Vicksburg District, 3 May 2001*

Colonel Crear, Mayor Walker, Mr. George, Dr. Pachure,
distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning. I'm delighted to have this opportunity to speak to
you on this occasion celebrating Asian/Pacific Americans.

Seeking America's bright promise of freedom and fairness,
millions of men and women of Asian and Pacific descent have
become integrated into our nation through the past two centuries
to participate in our great experiment in democracy.

Although many left behind their native lands and many of their
loved ones, they carried in their hearts a rich and ancient history
and a proud heritage.

Throughout the decades, the principles and cherished traditions of Asian and Pacific Americans have infused our way of life, and their diligence and determination have helped build and sustain our nation.

Asian immigrants and indigenous U.S. Pacific Islanders have made contributions to every facet of American life. Yet all too often, Asian immigrants and Pacific Islanders had to endure discrimination as our society struggled with its growing diversity.

Overcoming prejudice and other hardships, these determined men and women have strengthened our society, our economy, and our national character in the process.

Over the last two centuries, Asian and Pacific Americans have contributed immeasurably to the richness of our dynamic, multicultural society.

Whether recent immigrants or descendants of families who have been here for generations, Asian and Pacific Americans embody many of our Nation's core values, including devotion to family, commitment to hard work, and pride in their heritage.

The people of this diverse and rapidly growing community have contributed to every aspect of our national life -- from engineering and computer science to government, the arts, and sports. For example, Vinod Dahm helped to revolutionize computer technology through the invention of the Pentium chip. Governors Benjamin Cayetano of Hawaii and Gary Locke of Washington have devoted their lives to public service.

The talents of novelist Amy Tan have delighted readers across our Nation, while architect and sculptor Maya Lin's stirring memorials to the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement have uplifted and inspired all who have experienced them.

And diver Greg Louganis and football star Junior Seau have thrilled sports fans everywhere with their skill and athleticism.

We must remain dedicated to building an America that celebrates and draws strength from its diversity. Let us use this month to reflect on the many gifts Asian and Pacific Americans have brought to our nation and embrace the contributions that Americans of all backgrounds make to our increasingly multicultural society.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I look forward to hearing the other speakers today and encourage you to participate in the other events throughout the month celebrating Asian/Pacific American Heritage.