



ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

ERICA JEFFRIES • DIRECTOR

NEWS

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Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs Hosts Tribute to Asian American Pacific Islander Veterans Bicentennial Signature Event

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) hosted a tribute to Asian American Pacific Islander Veterans today at the Thompson Center in Chicago. The ceremony honored all Asian American Pacific Islander Veterans.

“We are here today to salute and honor all Asian American Pacific Islander Veterans. Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) have been serving honorably in the United States Military, since the War of 1812,” said IDVA Acting Director Elisabeth Pennix. The AAPI soldiers, sailors, airmen, coast guardsmen and Marines have participated in the Spanish American War, Philippine Insurrection, Mexican Expedition, WWI, WWII, the Korean War, Vietnam War, Persian Gulf War and our current war on terrorism. “They have served in peacetime and times of war. We thank them for their service to our country,” added Acting Director Pennix.

Major General James H. Mukoyama, Jr., US Army (retired) was the Keynote Speaker. On active duty, General Mukoyama served as a platoon leader in the demilitarized zone in the Republic of Korea and as an infantry company commander in the 9th Division in Vietnam. He was the Army's youngest General Officer and the youngest Major General three years later. In 1989, he became the first Asian-American in the history of the United States to command an Army division. Among General Mukoyama's decorations are the Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, Legion of Merit, 3 Bronze Stars, Purple Heart.

Illinois Deputy Governor Leslie Munger presented a Proclamation from Governor Bruce Rauner. Deputy Governor Munger also remarked about Honor 200. In partnership with the Department of Veteran's Affairs, and support from Walgreens and Boeing, we will honor 200 Veterans across Illinois who have gone above and beyond in serving their fellow Veterans and their communities. The 200 Award recipients will be recognized and included as part of the Official Bicentennial Celebration, and they (or their families) will be invited to attend – and will be saluted at – Illinois' 200th Birthday Party at the United Center in Chicago on December 3, 2018.

Remarks were given from the National Federation of Filipino American Associations. Abbey Eusebio, Constituent Advocate for Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (Illinois 9th District) presented a Veteran Proclamation. AFFI Honor Guard presented the colors and the National Anthem was led by vocalist Marisa Buchheit.

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The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs, a state agency is dedicated to empowering veterans, as well as their dependents and survivors, to thrive. We do this by helping veterans navigate the complex veteran support system and assisting them in obtaining benefits; by providing long term health care for eligible veterans at our four Veterans' Homes; and by working with other government agencies and non-profits to help veterans address education, mental health, housing, employment, and other challenges.