

These men and women are on the front-line of defending the United States of America, and in so doing, they're laying the foundation of peace for generations to come. And we are really proud of your service.

Fourteen million Americans can claim ancestry from the Asian-Pacific region. Through a commitment to educational excellence, you help raise standards and show that the American Dream is within reach for all who study hard and persevere. Through your love of family and community, you help unite us as a people. Through entrepreneurship and innovation, you have strengthened our economy, creating jobs for other—and thereby contributing to the opportunity of this Nation.

In 2004, I created the President's Advisory Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islanders to improve the opportunities for small-business development. And to keep this good work moving forward, I signed an Executive order this morning that renews the Commission for another year.

America has thrived as a nation because we've always welcomed newcomers who, in turn, embrace our values and our way of life. Every immigrant who lives by these values makes our country better and makes our future brighter as "one nation under God."

We're grateful to the many Asian Pacific Americans who serve our Nation in many ways. I just honored those who serve our Nation by wearing the uniform, but there are all kinds of ways to serve America. The President's Volunteer Service Award is the highest honor given in recognition of those who have contributed their time and their talents to those in need.

I created this award because I understand the great strength of the United States of America is not found in our military, and it's certainly not because of the size of our wallets. It's because the strength of America is found in the hearts and souls of generous citizens who answer to a universal call to love a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself.

Five folks here today have earned this award by volunteering to improve the communities in which they live and thereby helping our fellow citizens. They've heard that call to serve something greater than them-

selves. And by the way, by answering the call, they've inspired others to serve; you just don't know it.

Volunteers we recognize have brought care and outreach to veterans and men and women in uniform; they've helped children learn to read; they've extended food and shelter to hurricane victims in our gulf coast; they've helped underprivileged high school students prepare their SATs; and they've aided immigrants who have recently arrived in our country. They have served our Nation in distinct ways and, in so doing, have made America a better place to live.

I am proud of the achievements, the many achievements of our citizens of Asian and Pacific Island heritage. You really have enriched America by your contributions. You've made us a better land. And the five we honor today have done so in a unique way. And so I join all Americans in congratulating you and wishing you continued success of your work. I want to thank you for what you've done. I ask God's blessings on all who are here and their families as well as our great Nation.

And now I ask the commander to please read the citations that will enable me to award the volunteer awards to you.

[At this point, Lt. Cmdr. Geoff Gagnier, Coast Guard Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the awards.]

Now you can see why I love an event such as these. [Laughter] What a great country we have. And I want to thank you all for being active citizens in the greatest land on the face of the Earth.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:07 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rudy Pamintuan, Chairman, President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

## **Statement on the Death of G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery**

*May 12, 2006*

Laura and I and the entire Bush family are saddened by the death of a good friend

and patriot, Sonny Montgomery. Sonny Montgomery served during World War II and the Korean war, and he was a tireless advocate for America's veterans throughout his three decades in the House of Representatives. He sponsored the Montgomery GI Bill, which has helped make higher education and professional training accessible to millions of our veterans. In 2005, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civil award, in recognition of his lifetime of service to the United States. We send our condolences and prayers to the Montgomery family.

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### **Digest of Other White House Announcements**

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The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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#### **May 6**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Stillwater, OK, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer William O'Connor. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had separate telephone conversations with President Olusegun Obasango of Nigeria and President Dennis Sassou-Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo to discuss the peace process in Darfur, Sudan. Later, at Oklahoma State University, he met with family members of a soldier killed in Iraq.

Later in the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

#### **May 8**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Fort Lauderdale, FL, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer David Tompkins. Later, at a private residence, he made remarks at a Friends of Clay Shaw reception.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister John Howard of Australia to the White House on May 16.

The President announced his intention to nominate Troy R. Justesen to be Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eric Solomon to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Tax Policy.

The President announced his intention to nominate W. Stuart Symington IV to be Ambassador to Djibouti.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ellen C. Williams to be a Governor of the Board of Governors of the U.S. Postal Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate the following individuals to be members of the National Council on Disability: John R. Vaughn; Victoria Ray Carlson; Chad Colley; and Lisa Mattheiss.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sean M. Healey as a member of the President's Export Council.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to attend the Inauguration of President Rene Garcia Preval of Haiti on May 14: Jeb Bush (head of delegation); Janet Ann Sanderson; and M. Rony Francois.

#### **May 9**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Coconut Creek, FL.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Tampa, FL, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Julie Whitney. He then traveled to Sun City Center, FL.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Orlando, FL, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Dick Stipe.

#### **May 10**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, at Norman's Restaurant, he participated in an interview with representatives of Florida's print media.