

May 2008



EEO REVIEW

Produced monthly by the State Equal Employment Management Office (SEEM)...

MESSAGE FROM THE SEEM

The Cost of Discrimination

Many of us know that the cost of everything is increasing. Gas is almost 4 bucks a gallon and I can't get out of the grocery store for under \$50 anymore. Prices are rising everywhere and in every arena. I want to share with you this month that the cost of discrimination is increasing also. Organizations can no longer afford to lose good people because of illegal, inappropriate behavior. Discrimination has always been costly, just think about the energy you waste trying to come up with ways to discriminate. What about the man hours spent on trying to figure out what, when, where, why, who and how. The cost of litigation, award settlements and training new employees to backfill those who just couldn't take it anymore. Yes, discrimination is very costly and we can't afford any increase in this area. Today, we need every soldier and Airmen in this organization to be focused and ready to complete the mission. The cost of this not happening is much worse than the rising prices at the pump. In my opinion, a healthy work environment is priceless, but an unhealthy work environment is not worth a penny.



ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

LTC Lapthe C. Flora



Major General Robert B. Newman, (L) and LTC Lapthe Flora (R)

****Story provided by ITT industries****
 By the time he was 17 years old, Lapthe Flora had already lost his father to the Vietnam War, lived in a jungle for four years, and survived on a diet of snakes, rats and porcupines. Then came the hard part. In 1979, looking for a way to escape the totalitarianism that enveloped his native Vietnam after the war and the day-to-day "nightmare" that had become his life in the jungle, Flora – then known as Lap The Chau – had to choose between two equally perilous paths. To his west was Cambodia, where eight of out every 10 Vietnamese would die trying to escape through the "killing fields." To the east were the South China Sea and a treacherous trip in a small wooden boat with 500 other refugees through 100-degree weather without food or drink. Flora chose the sea, and today, safe in his office in Roanoke, Virginia, the manager of Night Vision's Specialty Products and Application Engineering Department believes that decision was the beginning of his "second life." "I

went from living a nightmare to living the American dream 10 times over," says Flora.

"Never Look Back"

The dream was delayed a number of times, but that never stopped Flora from losing hope or focus. The five-day boat ride left him and his companions dehydrated and hallucinating. He then spent a brutal year in a refugee camp in Indonesia. And finally, when it seemed that his luck had turned, the California church that sponsored his trip to the U.S. backed out, leaving him alone at the Los Angeles Airport, speaking not one word of English. "I just kept telling myself that no matter how bad it seemed, I was always better off than I had been even the day before," says Flora. "I always looked forward – never back." The setbacks gave Flora an inner strength. As he overcame each challenge, his self-determination and self-confidence grew. Today he has strength of conviction that comes from not only surviving, but thriving. He knows how to make his own luck and turn seemingly impossible situations into successes. It's what makes him an inspiring and effective leader. In Los Angeles, his positive attitude and resiliency was rewarded when a Roanoke family – John and Audrey Flora – sponsored him and eventually adopted him. Suddenly, Flora found himself in a secure and loving situation, and the incredible energy he had expended on simple survival could be channeled outward into the world. The path he has followed since – including his swift rise through the ranks of – has been as remarkable as the journey that preceded it.

“Overcoming the Odds Again”

Flora’s leadership qualities are on display every day as the head of Night Vision’s new specialty products department. He brings determination, enthusiasm and discipline to his job, and has won the respect of his team and co-workers in the process. Those same qualities have also earned him recognition outside the office.

Wanting to pay back the country that gave him his “second chance,” Flora joined the U.S. National Guard in 1988. Vietnamese Americans are rarities in the Guard, and while Lapthe doesn’t have any hard data, he believes there are fewer than one dozen Vietnamese in his 2,000-person light infantry brigade. With the odds against him again, Flora proceeded to become one of the few native born Vietnamese to win the General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award. The award recognizes company-grade officers in the Active Army, Reserve and National Guard who demonstrate the ideals of duty, honor and country, and for his outstanding efforts as a leader, Captain Flora was presented with a 23-pound bronze bust of MacArthur nine years ago. For many people, that award would be a crowning achievement. For Lapthe Flora, it was just another day in an amazing life.

Asian Pacific American Quiz

1. Which Chinese American designed the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.?

- a. Yo Yo Ma
- b. Vera Wang
- c. Maya Lin

2. Who is the U.S. Senator for Hawaii?

- a. Duke Kahanmoku
- b. Daniel Inouye
- c. Michael Chang

3. Who was the first Asian elected to Congress?

- a. Feng Shan Ho

- b. Salip Singh Saund
- c. Daniel Inouye

4. This descendent of a Chinese architect is known for designing wedding gowns:

- a. Maya Lin
- b. Yo Yo Ma
- c. Vera Wang

5. This conductor known for his sartorial style led Boston's Symphony Orchestra almost 30 years:

- a. Michael Chang
- b. Daniel Inouye
- c. Seiji Ozawa

6. Her award--winning novels have been made into box office successes:

- a. Dalip Singh Saund
- b. Amy Tan
- c. Michelle Kwan

History of Mother's Day

It started in Rome and became a United States national holiday less than 100 years ago. Mother's Day dates back to the ancient Romans and made its way to the United States in the early 1900's and finally became a national holiday in 1914. The earliest tributes to Mother's Day date back to the annual spring festival the Greeks dedicated to Rhea, the mother of many deities, and to the offerings ancient Romans made to their Great Mother of Gods, Cybele. Christians celebrated a Mother's Day of sorts during a festival on the fourth Sunday in Lent in honor of Mary, mother of Christ. In England the holiday was expanded to include all mothers. It was then called Mothering Sunday.

Finally on May 8, 1914 President Woodrow Wilson signed a Joint Resolution designating the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. That was the first official Mother's Day and the tradition carries on to this day. In fact, Mother's Day has flourished in the United States. The second Sunday in May has become the most popular day of the year to dine out, and telephone lines record their highest traffic, as sons and daughters everywhere take advantage of

this day to honor and to express appreciation of their mothers.

"Now, Therefore, I, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the said Joint Resolution, do hereby direct the government officials to display the United States flag on all government buildings and do invite the people of the United States to display the flag at their homes or other suitable places on the second Sunday in May as a public expression of our love and reverence for the mothers of our country."

In the United States it started with one woman named Anna Jarvis. Jarvis was an Appalachian homemaker and she organized a day to raise awareness of poor health conditions of her community. She thought the day would be best advocated by mothers and called the day "Mother's Work Day".

When Anna Jarvis died in 1905 her daughter, also named Anna, began a campaign to memorialize the life work of her mother. Anna remembered that her mother said there were many days dedicated to men but not for mothers. Anna then began to lobby the politicians of the time to support a day dedicated to mothers. Anna Jarvis talked to many politicians including Presidents Taft and Roosevelt hoping they would support her campaign.

Jarvis organized a church service to celebrate her mother in 1908 and Anna handed out white carnations to those in attendance because the white carnation was her mother's favorite flower. Anna Jarvis' hard work began to pay off five years after that service in 1913. The House of Representatives adopted a resolution calling for officials of the federal government to wear white carnations on the day many began calling Mother's Day, the second Sunday in May.



