

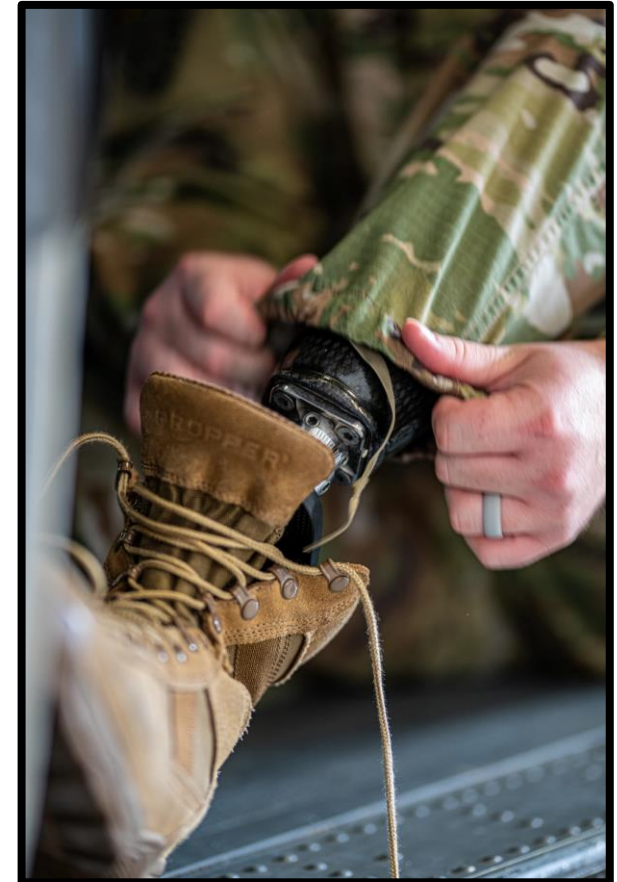
# National Disability Employment Awareness Month

*Advancing Access and Equity:  
Then, Now and Next*

# National Disability Employment Awareness Month

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) recognizes the contributions of America's workers with disabilities make each day across our Nation.

Led by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), NDEAM reaffirms the Department of Defense's commitment to recruit, retain, and advance individuals throughout our workforce.



# NDEAM's Origin

This important national observance dates to the end of World War II. In 1945, with the return of many injured Service members, the U.S. government pushed to educate the public about issues relating to disabilities and employment.

On August 11, 1945, the signing of Presidential Proclamation 2664 quantified, *“Whereas the people of this National [sic] are determined to foster and environment in which those of their fellow citizens who have become physically handicapped can continue to make their rightful contribution to of the world and can continue to enjoy the opportunities and rewards of that work.”*

# NDEAM's Origin

Congress enacted Public Law 176, declaring the first week of October each year as National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.

In 1962, the word 'physically' was removed to include contributions of people with other disabilities.

The federal legislature expanded the week-long observance to a month and changed the name to NDEAM in 1988.

# Theme/Presentation

ODEP has chosen the theme, “*Advancing Access and Equity: Then, Now and Next*” to recognize the importance of ensuring people with disabilities have equal opportunities to succeed in employment.

This presentation highlights the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Dana Washington, Esther Cing, and Senior Master Sgt. Jeremy Maddamma.

# The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

This year marks 50 years since the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Act was a major milestone in advancing access and equity for people with disabilities. It was the first legislative effort to secure an equal playing field for individuals with disabilities.

Additionally, it laid the foundation for the more extensive Americans with Disabilities Act signed in 1990. These laws continue to advance access and equity for workers from historically underserved communities and meet the goals in the Department of Defense's (DoD) Equity Action Plan.



# Dana Washington (1 of 2)



Dana Washington has always been motivated to succeed. *“I always had a strong support system,”* she said, noting the circle of friends and family who encouraged her to pursue challenging coursework and academic-related activities.

During her senior year at Columbia Southern University in Alabama, she applied for support from the university’s Office of Disability Services. It was there that she learned about the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP).

# Dana Washington (2 of 2)

Washington was excited by the program which provides those with disabilities a gateway to a position within the Federal Government.

She was hired by the U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as an Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist and Training Coordinator. Today, she helps measure the organizational culture and manages diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility training, and professional development opportunities for ICE staff across the nation.

She hopes her experiences encourage others to succeed, especially young people with disabilities.



# Esther Cing (1 of 2)



In 2013, when Esther Cing immigrated from Myanmar to America, she never imagined that she would work for the DoD. Thanks to instructors, mentors, the WRP, and her own determination, she now works for the Compact Fleet Human Resources Office.

After high school, she entered San Diego State University (SDSU) where she majored in public administration with a minor in communications.

## Esther Cing (2 of 2)

While in college, Cing enrolled in the Workability IV program, a partnership between SDSU and the State of California Department of Rehabilitation, that aids students with disabilities. When her counselor told her about the WRP program, she enrolled. The DoD then offered her an internship with the Fleet HRO.

Today, she supports a team of staffing specialists within the Fleet's recruitment and pre-hire process.

*Cing said, "My goal is to learn more about HR management, manage a team, and support several commands in the Defense Department."*

# Senior Master Sgt. Jeremy Maddamma (1 of 2)



In 2012, Alaska Air National Guard Senior Master Sgt. Maddamma, a pararescueman, sustained an injury that shattered the bones in his lower left leg.

He spent years in the hospital, undergoing multiple surgeries, and physical therapy to regain the full use of his leg. Eventually, he chose to have his leg surgically amputated, enabling his return to military service.

# Senior Master Sgt. Jeremy Maddamma (2 of 2)



When asked how NDEAM unites the community, he spoke about how people can be an “iceberg.” He explains that what a person knows about their own coworkers and see every day is just the tip of their total life experience.

*“These awareness months bring people together, opens doors, and draw attention to things,”* said Maddamma.



# Conclusion

Each person brings distinctive skills and capabilities to their employment. Ensuring equity, dignity, respect, and cooperation among all individuals are essential values in the DoD work environment.

In the theme, Advancing Access and Equity: Then, Now and Next, the Defense Department recognizes past achievements as it strives to build an inclusive future workforce to achieve total force readiness.



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