



## Ellsworth chef: It's my heritage

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28th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

5/27/2009 - **ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE, S.D.** -- For the past 17 years, Ellsworth has observed May as a time to acknowledge and celebrate the efforts and contributions of Asian-Pacific Americans, both past and present, to the country and the military.

Tech. Sgt. Rhodello Nuval, 28th Force Support Squadron Bandit Inn floor manager, was born and raised in the Philippines. After attending private schools in the Philippines, where he learned to speak English and to speak without a Philippine accent, he made the decision to immigrate to the United States in 1986. The decision to leave the Philippines was motivated by the opportunities he saw in America.

"I really wanted a better life, and by this time, I was already fluent in English," Sergeant Nuval said.

After his arrival, he attended Western High School in Las Vegas, where he became involved in the Air Force Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps. His dedication led him to graduate as Cadet Major in 1990. Sergeant Nuval's decision to join the Air Force Junior ROTC program was a decision motivated primarily by his family heritage.

"I had always felt inclined to the military because it's a big part of my heritage," Sergeant Nuval said. "Almost everyone in my family has been in the military including my grandfather who was in the U.S. Navy and stationed in the Philippines."

Sergeant Nuval's grandfather was also responsible for introducing him to the military lifestyle.

"My grandfather used to always take me with him when he went to various Navy functions," Sergeant Nuval said. "I really enjoyed being able to go with him."

After graduating high school, Sergeant Nuval began Air Force ROTC at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Arizona, but only completed one semester due to cost.

After completing this semester of college, Sergeant Nuval decided to join the Air Force as a food service apprentice in 1992. His decision to become a food service apprentice was propelled by his desire to perform customer service, Sergeant Nuval said.

Since beginning his Air Force career as a food service apprentice, Sergeant Nuval has embarked on a culinary career that has extended beyond his duty title. The culinary experience he acquired before joining the Air Force has benefited his success, Sergeant Nuval said.

"I already knew a lot about food because my family owned a restaurant in the Philippines," Sergeant Nuval said. "I quickly got the culinary bug after watching all the things you could do with the culinary arts."

His passion and skills for the culinary arts even led to an appearance on the Food Network's Emeril Live! television show in March 2007. During this show, the culinary skills of military chefs were judged. Sergeant Nuval was sous chef to Tech. Sgt. Wesley Williams, then the 28th Services Squadron dining facility manager.

"Sergeant Nuval was instrumental in helping me make that experience flawless and in helping me win the competition," Sergeant Williams said. "He was also a big contributor in making that whole experience noticeable Air Force wide, and many accolades were given from as far up as Chief of Services at the Pentagon."

The culinary knowledge that led to recognition from Sergeant Nuval's peers, have been broadened by his assignment to a variety of places including Naval Air Station Keflavik, Iceland, Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., Osan Air Base, South Korea, and Southwest Asia.



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Tech. Sgt. Rhodello Nuval, 28th Force Support Squadron floor manager, sets a pan of "country captain" chicken into an oven at the Bandit Inn dining facility here, May 21. Sergeant Nuval helps the Bandit Inn cook and serve for more than 700 Airmen that eat there each day. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Corey Hook)

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Along with providing him the chance to hone his culinary skills, the Air Force has allowed Sergeant Nuval and his family other opportunities.

"The Air Force has given me the chance to see the world," Sergeant Nuval said. "My kids have also had the chance to experience different cultures."

Along with bestowing the military lifestyle and his culinary skills, Sergeant Nuval has also passed-down the Philippine culture to his children.

"My eldest son, Richard, is trilingual, and can speak Tagalog fluently, the basic language in the Philippines," Sergeant Nuval said.

Sergeant Nuval continues to strive for excellence in his Air Force career, and he has even applied to be an Enlisted Aid. Although it is a very selective special duty, his former mentor, Sergeant Williams, believes Sergeant Nuval has all the skills required.

"Sergeant Nuval exhibits the Air Force core values by being a person who likes to excel with a high degree of excellence," Sergeant Williams said. "He wants only the best when it comes to his customers and he always thinks of what he can do to make his customer's happy before he considers his own self."

In keeping with his customer service and culinary skills, Sergeant Nuval is also in charge of planning an Asian meal for the Airmen, in honor of Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month, at the Bandit Inn Dining Facility, May 27. The menu for the meal will include:

- sweet and sour pork
- pot stickers
- egg rolls
- Cantonese ribs
- fried rice

Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month is just one part of several diversity programs supported by the federal government, Department of Defense and Air Force.

The month of May was chosen to acknowledge the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843. It also marks the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869, which was built by a large majority of Chinese immigrants.

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