



PUERTO RICO NATIONAL GUARD
JOINT FORCES HEADQUARTERS-PUERTO RICO
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE
100 GENERAL ESTEVES STREET
SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO 00901-2104

Dear Members of Congress,

It is with great pleasure that Puerto Rico Army National Guard supports the 65th Infantry Regiment, glory and pride of Puerto Rico in their quest to achieve the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest civilian honor.

After the 65th Infantry was deactivated in 1956, one of its battalions, 1st Battalion, was transferred to the Army National Guard where such battalion remains under our auspices to this very day.

The Congressional Gold Medal will be the highest award ever for the 65th Infantry Regiment and for ALL Latino Veterans. This distinction will catapult Hispanic veterans into the national spotlight and will honor all Hispanic veterans past, present and future.

As mandated by an Act of Congress on March 2, 1899, the 65th Infantry Regiment nicknamed the "Borinqueneers" was the only Hispanic-segregated active-duty unit ever in the U.S. Armed Forces that played a prominent role in three U.S. wars. Although comprised of a majority of Puerto Ricans, during the Korean War the 65th Infantry Regiment was arguably one of the most ethnically diverse U.S. combat fight units consisting of Mexican American, segregated African-American, Philippine, Virgin Islander Soldiers and various Soldiers of other ethnicities.

Of all the honors Congress can bestow, the awarding of a Congressional Gold Medal is the most distinguished.

The pinnacle military achievements of the 65th Infantry Regiment came during the Korean War where the unit participated in nine major campaigns and earned two Presidential Unit Citations, a Meritorious Unit Commendation and two Republic of Korea Unit Citations. More than three thousand 65th Infantry soldiers were wounded including over seven hundred killed. Over the span of WWI, WWII and the Korean War, individual members have earned ten Distinguished Service Crosses, 258 Silver Stars, 628 Bronze Stars, and over 2700 Purple Hearts.

Awarding the Congressional Gold Medal for the "Borinqueneers" is consistent with our organizational ethos of patriotism, public service excellence and personal sacrifice. This honor will enshrine this valiant unit in the halls of those who have left an indelible mark in society and the Latino culture. This is evident in the 10 memorials & monuments emplaced around the country.

We hope that the US Congress will recognize the sacrifices and obstacles the "Borinqueneers" valiantly overcame as a segregated unit in defending our Nation. They fought bravely even while enduring the hardships of segregation, discrimination, language, and cultural barriers.

Please turn this vision into a historic reality.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JUAN J. MEDINA-LAMELA".

JUAN J. MEDINA-LAMELA
Brigadier General (PR), PRNG
The Adjutant General