



Borinqueneers, The 65th Infantry Regiment

National Hispanic Heritage Month recognizes the contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans to the history, culture, and achievements of the United States. This spotlight focuses on their accomplishments in the United States military. Let's learn more about these brave men and women and their service, both past and present.

National Hispanic Heritage Month

A Civics in Real Life Series Honoring Hispanic American Representation Across America

Spotlight 4: Veterans



Sergeant First Class Modesto Cartagena

The Past



- Hispanic and Latino American soldiers have fought in every U.S. conflict since the Revolutionary War
- More than 20,000 Hispanic/Latino Americans participated on either side of the Civil War
- Approximately 200,000 Hispanic/Latino Americans were active personnel in WWI, with the most popular unit being the 65th Infantry Regiment from Puerto Rico
- The Borinqueneers (the 65th Infantry Regiment) was the only all-Hispanic unit in the history of the U.S. Army and fought in both World Wars and Korea
- WWII saw nearly a half a million Hispanic/Latino American soldiers
- The Arizona National Guard's 158th Infantry Regiment (Bushmasters) was known as "one of the greatest fighting combat teams ever deployed for battle" during WWII

The Present



- 1.3 million Hispanic/Latino veterans today
- 14% of the Space Force is Hispanic or Latino
- 17% of the Air Force is Hispanic or Latino
- 26% of the Marine Corps is Hispanic or Latino
- 18% of the Navy is Hispanic or Latino
- 18% of the Army is Hispanic or Latino

Awards & Honors



- First Hispanic recipient of the Medal of Honor was Joseph H. De Castro in 1864
- Sergeant First Class Modesto Cartagena was the most decorated Puerto Rican soldier in history and earned the nickname "One Man Army"
- Over 60 Medal of Honor winners have been of Hispanic or Latino American descent
- In 2014, President Obama presented 24 Hispanic/Latino Army veterans with a Medal of Honor for their service in WWII, Korea, & Vietnam. Previously, 19 of these men were overlooked for the Medal of Honor because of their racial/ethnic backgrounds

Civics Challenge: Search & Learn:

The Library of Congress hosts several stories and accounts from Hispanic and Latino veterans. Pick one of the veterans and learn more about their service to our country.