



HISPANICS in DEFENSE OF OUR NATION

Famous People

Private Marcelino Serna – first Hispanic awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (WWI)

Private First Class Guy Gabaldon – served as a Marine in WWII and set the record for capturing the most enemy soldiers

Lieutenant Junior Grade Everett Alvarez - first US pilot shot down in North Vietnam; spent 8 years as a POW (1964-1973)

Honorable Edward Hidalgo – first Hispanic Secretary of the Navy (1979)

Linda Garcia Cubero – the first Hispanic woman to graduate from a service academy (1980)

General Richard Cavazos – first Hispanic four-star General (1982)

Louis Caldera - first Hispanic Secretary of the Army (1998)

Hispanics have served with great honor and valor in defense of our nation since the founding. During the Revolutionary War, Spain was instrumental to defeating the British along the Gulf of Mexico. During the Spanish-American War Captain Maximiliano Luna and others comprised a portion of the 1st US Volunteer Cavalry - known as the "Rough Riders"- and fought in Cuba. Some 200,000 Hispanics were mobilized for World War I serving with great distinction from the battle of Chateau-Thierry to the Battle of the Marne. During World War II an estimated quarter-million to half-million Hispanics served in nearly every position available at sea, under the sea, in the air, and on land. In addition to their exemplary contributions in Vietnam and Korea, Hispanic men and women also assisted with important operations in Panama and Grenada. Whether their heritage can be traced to Spain, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Mexico or one of dozens of other Spanish-speaking countries or cultures, Hispanics have answered the "call to duty," serving America with unwavering courage and bravery.

FAMOUS MILITARY UNITS

158th Infantry Regiment – During World War II this Arizona National Guard unit was one of the first to see combat in the Pacific; they were nicknamed the "Bushmasters" and described by General MacArthur as "one of the greatest fighting combat teams ever deployed"

200th Coast Artillery – a New Mexico National Guard unit sent to bolster Philippine defenses during WWII; when Japan attacked the Philippines six hours after Pearl Harbor the 200th became among the "first to fire" in the Pacific theater; later captured, the 200th was forced on the 85-mile "Bataan Death March" to a Japanese prison camp where they remained for three and half years; only half of the unit survived

65th Infantry Regiment – the only all-Hispanic unit to serve during the Korean War; nicknamed the "Borinqueneers" in honor of a native Puerto Rican Indian tribe; earned numerous awards and citations



Above: Soldiers of the 65th Infantry Regiment north of the Han River, Korea

Right: Brigadier General Carmelita Vigil-Schimmenti served as a nurse and instructor during the Vietnam War



Captain Manuel John "Pete" Fernandez, was a leading American ace in the Korean War



Admiral Horacio Rivero, Jr. served in the Navy from World War II through the Vietnam War and became commander of NATO forces in Southern Europe



Left to Right: Lieutenant Jorge Farragut fought in the Navy during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812; his son, David G. Farragut, served during the Civil War and became the Navy's first full Admiral; Technician Fourth Grade Carmen Contreras-Bozak served in Algiers during World War II transmitting encoded messages; Lieutenant General Pedro Augusto del Valle led the First Marine Division through the Okinawa operation during World War II; Staff Sergeant Ernest Gallego served with the 340th Bomb Squadron in the Army Air Corps during World War II and the Korean War ; Captain Marion Ramierz de Arellano was the first Hispanic to command a submarine; Second Lieutenant Carmen Lozano Dumler was one of the first Puerto Rican women to become a US Army officer

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Hispanics continue to make vital contributions toward the protection of our nation in the 21st century. As of 2011, Hispanics constituted 11% of the active duty military force. They risk their lives daily in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan sometimes making the ultimate sacrifice to bring sustainable peace and security. Hispanics serving in the National Guard help fight wildfires in California and floodwaters in Texas. In addition, the language skills of Hispanic soldiers have aided with operations ranging from the drug war in Colombia to hurricane assistance in Guatemala. By 2020, projections indicate that one third of the US workforce will be minority and by 2050, one half. This shift in demographics will be reflected in the Department of Defense. Already immigrants who serve in the military can expedite their citizenship process. A strong dedication to service with honor is indicative of the extraordinary accomplishments made by the countless number of Hispanics who have defended our great nation throughout history.



11/04/2008 Specialist Jose Aguirre-Delgado receives an American flag from Lori Pietropaoli, deputy director, US Citizenship and Immigration Services, during a naturalization ceremony at Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory, Iraq



Ana Maria Salazar considers her Hispanic heritage to be the "single most important factor" that allowed her to be effective in stemming the flow of drugs from Latin America. Salazar was Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for drug enforcement policy and support from 1998 to 2001. "The fact that I can speak Spanish and that I have worked within these communities made me much more effective," Salazar says. "Any time someone is bilingual ... their ability to communicate is much higher. They have an advantage in working with people from countries they have a cultural affinity for."

Specialist Timothy Berlanga of the Texas National Guard hands out relief supplies in a neighborhood severely flooded by rain from Hurricane Dolly >



Lance Corporal Luzcelia Webber and Corporal Henry Figueroa serve at the Marine Corps Logistics Base in Albany, Georgia >



Lieutenant Colonel Carlos Noriega was born in Peru, served in the US Marine Corps, and was part of the NASA crew on the Space Shuttle Atlantis



Lieutenant Junior Grade Angelina Hidalgo became the second Hispanic-American female to command an afloat unit in the US Coast Guard and the second Hispanic female intelligence officer



< Airman John Medina secures a training ordnance onto an A-10 Thunderbolt II prior to training at Bezmer Air Base, Bulgaria



< Rear Admiral Albert Garcia, a first-generation college graduate, earned a Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, and PhD in Environmental Engineering while in the Navy

Chief Master Sergeant Ramón Colón-López, a pararescueman, was the first Hispanic to be awarded the newly created Air Force Combat Action Medal



Command Sergeant Major Delia Quintero is a Signal Communications Noncommissioned Officer in the US Army >



Commanders Miguel Cubano and Eliseo Bautista operate on a patient at the US Naval Hospital in Jacksonville, Florida >



Major General Angela Salinas became the first woman to command a Recruit Depot and the first Hispanic female to become a general officer in the US Marine Corps



< Technical Sergeant Manuel Herrera guided the recovery and destruction of 4,683 enemy IEDs, survived 4 attacks, and captured 36 terrorists while deployed to Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq



< Maurice Sanabria, originally from Puerto Rico, is a civilian employee at the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA)

Staff Sergeant Johanna Aviles, a network operations technician, monitored unmanned aircraft missions during the California wildfires where more than 72 fires were identified and contained



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