



District of Columbia National Guard - 10/10/2008

## DCNG Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month with the Borinqueneers

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JFHQ, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA NG



*From left to right: Mr. Felton Page, director of EEO and Civil Rights for the National Guard Bureau, Brig. Gen Linda McTague, assistant adjutant general (Air) JFHQ-DC, Dr. Alberto Cruz, 65th Infantry regiment Korean War veteran, Ms. Noemi Figueroa Soulet, writer, producer, and filmmaker, Maj. Gen Errol R. Schwartz, commanding general DCNG, and Mr. Marcelino Cruz, 65th Infantry regiment Korean War veteran, gathered September 25th, 2008 to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with the DC National Guard. Photo credit: SFC Rawle Munro NGB*

The DCNG celebrated National Hispanic Heritage month September 25, 2008, with two extraordinary Korean War heroes, and the dedicated filmmaker that helped bring their story to light.

WASHINGTON, DC - Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Martin, District of Columbia National Guard (DCNG) equal employment opportunity (EEO) manager, acted as master of ceremonies as the DCNG celebrated National Hispanic Heritage month September 25, 2008, with two extraordinary Korean War heroes, and the dedicated filmmaker that helped bring their story to light.

Brigadier General Linda McTague, assistant adjutant general (Air) JFHQ-DC, welcomed special guest, Ms. Noemi Figueroa Soulet, producer-director-writer and filmmaker, Mr. Felton Page, National Guard Bureau director of EEO and civil rights, and Dr. Alberto Garcia and Mr. Marceleno Cruz, 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Korean War veterans, with a laugh as she exclaimed "Hola, como estas? Mi Espanol es muy malo!" (Hello, how are you? My Spanish is very bad!)

Ms. Figueroa-Soulet volunteered her services for over nine years to bring her dream of sharing the story of the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, also affectionately known as The Borinqueneers, with the world to fruition. "It is my pleasure to be here to share with you an incredible story of valor and dedication; there is no greater contribution in our society than that of the soldiers of our soldiers," commented Soulet.

The 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was created in 1899 by the U.S. Congress as a segregated unit composed primarily of Puerto Ricans with mostly continental officers. It went on to serve meritoriously in three wars: World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. The unit was nicknamed after "Borinquen," the word given to Puerto Rico by its original inhabitants, the Taino Indians, meaning "land of the brave lord."

When the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was finally called to the front lines in the Korean War, the Borinqueneers performed impressively, earning praise from General MacArthur. They performed a critical role containing the Chinese advance and supporting the U.S. Marines in the aftermath of the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir. Sent to every corner of the peninsula, they showed outstanding resilience and a legendary fierceness as combatants, even as they faced discrimination within the Army. -excerpt from The Borinqueneers.

Ms. Figueroa Soulet created the film "The Borinqueneers," which is currently being aired on PBS, to chronicle the heroism and often tumultuous trials of the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. She showed the film to a packed house, as DC National Guardsmen gathered into the Commanding General's conference room to help celebrate their accomplishments, and share their in history.

When asked about his tenor in the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, Mr. Marcelino Cruz commented, "his Nation does not owe him anything, he still owes his Nation." This statement embodies the selfless service and pride shown by all service members of the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, and their legacy should rightfully be remembered and celebrated by all.

10/10/2008