



AWARD OF
EXCELLENCE
Accolade
Television
Awards



AWARD OF
EXCELLENCE
Insight Awards



HONORABLE
MENTION
Chris Awards



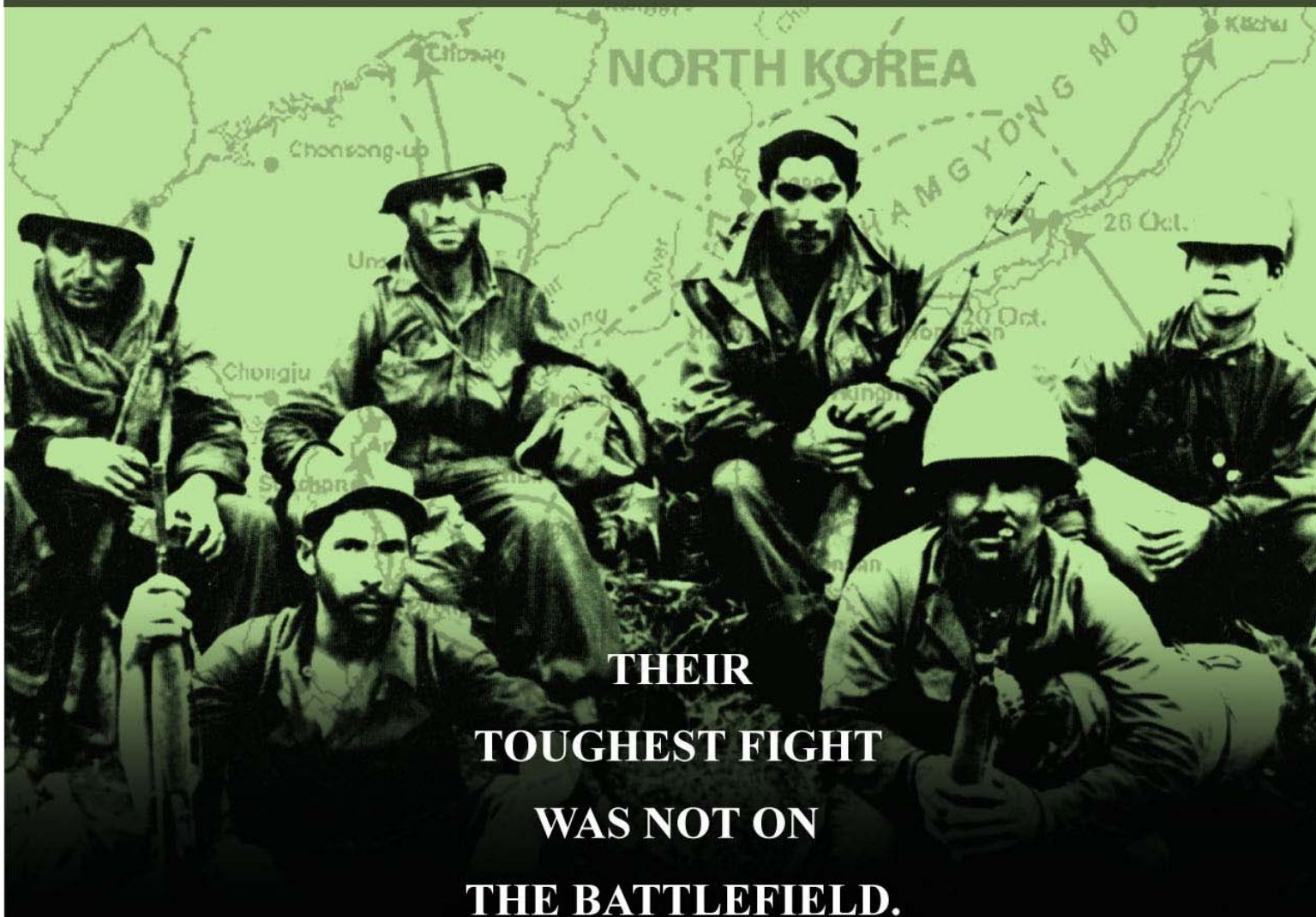
NOMINEE-
BEST DOCUMENTARY
FOR TELEVISION
Imagen Awards



BEST PUERTO RICAN
DOCUMENTARY
Rincon International
Film Festival
(Puerto Rico)



BEST PROFESSIONAL
DOCUMENTARY
Real To Reel Intl
Film Festival (NC)



**THEIR
TOUGHEST FIGHT
WAS NOT ON
THE BATTLEFIELD.**

THE BORINQUENEERS

**A DOCUMENTARY ON THE ALL-PUERTO RICAN
65TH INFANTRY REGIMENT**

Narrated by **Hector Elizondo**
Narrado en español por **David Ortiz Angleró**

A FILM BY
NOEMI FIGUEROA SOULET

PRESS KIT

THE BORINQUENEERS

FILM SYNOPSIS

Tag Line

Their toughest fight was not on the battlefield.

78 Word

The Borinqueneers is the first major documentary to chronicle the story of the Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment, the only all-Hispanic unit in U.S. Army history - exploring stories of courage, triumph and struggle through rare archival materials and compelling interviews with veterans, commanding officers and historians. Narrated by Hector Elizondo, it reveals how the 65th Infantry Regiment served meritoriously in World War I, World War II and the Korean War, even as they faced discrimination within the Army.

63 Word - SPANISH VERSION

Esta conmovedora película relata la historia del Regimiento 65 de Infantería, la única unidad segregada de hispanos del Ejército estadounidense compuesta por puertorriqueños, a través de entrevistas con los veteranos y extraordinarias imágenes de archivo. Los Borinqueños se destacaron durante la Guerra de Corea, pero en el otoño de 1952 su destino cambió repentinamente cuando más de 100 de sus soldados fueron arrestados.

125 Word

The Borinqueneers chronicles the untold story of the Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment, the only all-Hispanic unit in U.S. Army history - exploring stories of courage, triumph and struggle through rare archival materials and compelling interviews with veterans, commanding officers and historians. Narrated by Hector Elizondo, the film reveals how the 65th Infantry Regiment served meritoriously in World War I, World War II and the Korean War, even as they faced discrimination within the Army. Finally given the chance to be full participants in a military conflict, they excelled during the first years of the Korean War, earning praise from General MacArthur. But in the fall of 1952, the 65th would face its toughest challenge when dozens of its soldiers were arrested for abandoning their positions.

300 Word

The Borinqueneers chronicles the never-before told story of the Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment, the only all-Hispanic unit in U.S. Army history. Narrated by Hector Elizondo, the documentary relies on the vivid testimony of the regiment's veterans and rare archival footage to trace the unique experience of the 65th, culminating in the Korean War and the dramatic events that would threaten its very existence.

The 65th Infantry Regiment was nicknamed "The Borinqueneers" after "Borinquen", the word given to Puerto Rico by its original inhabitants, the Taino Indians. Bound by a common language and a strong cultural identity, the men of the 65th were determined to prove their mettle against a backdrop of discrimination within the Army and curtailed rights in their own land, where to this day they can be drafted but cannot vote in U.S. elections.

Finally given the chance to be full participants in a military conflict, they excelled during the first years of the Korean War, earning praise from General MacArthur. But in the fall of 1952 the regiment would be at the center of a series of dramatic events, when dozens of its soldiers abandoned their positions and were tried in one of the largest courts martial of the war. "It was the first case in this war in which men from a unit that won international recognition for bravery unexplainedly seemed to have changed their character under fire," said *The New York Times*.

For more than fifty years, the events that led to the regiment's darkest hour have been shrouded in mystery and controversy. Were these men cowards or casualties of discrimination and ill-conceived tactics? *The Borinqueneers* sheds light on this compelling story, revealing the real story of what happened that fall through the dramatic testimony of the men who were there.

RUNNING TIME: 78 minutes

LANGUAGES AND SUBTITLES
English and Spanish

Written, Produced and Directed by
Noemí Figueroa Soulet
Co-Producer/Director

Raquel Ortiz
Editor/Post-Production and Original Score
Miguel Picker

Consulting Producer
Patricia Garcia-Rios

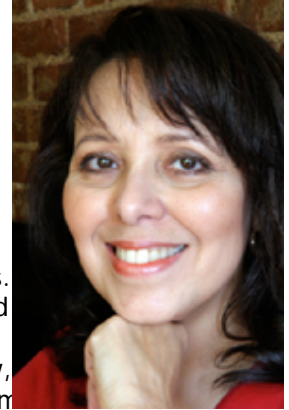
Narrated by
Hector Elizondo
Spanish Version Narrated by
David Ortiz Angleró



CREATIVE TEAM

NOEMI FIGUEROA SOULET, *PRODUCER / DIRECTOR / WRITER*, began her 9-year journey with the 65th Infantry Regiment when she produced, wrote and directed the short *The Borinqueneers: The 65th Infantry Regiment* which was selected to participate in the 2000 Westchester Film Festival and 1999 New York Latino Film & Video Festival. Before that, she was a freelance advertising consultant and producer to major advertising agencies for the Hispanic commercial market. A former professional actress, she has extensive experience in theater, television, industrial films and commercials for both the English and Spanish markets. Noemi has conducted numerous presentations on the 65th Infantry at various corporations and community organizations and has been honored by the National Guard, Comité Noviembre of New York, NJ Statewide Parade Committee and the Latina Women's Council of Mercer County, New Jersey. Born in Sabana Grande, Puerto Rico, she was raised in New York's Spanish Harlem and has a degree in Education from New York University.

(Photo credit: Maria Fernanda Hubeaut)



RAQUEL ORTIZ, *CO-PRODUCER / DIRECTOR*, has 30 years of experience with the public broadcasting system in production, program development and management, beginning in 1968 at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. She has worked at 3 public television stations; WNET-13 in New York; WETA-26 in Washington DC; and WGBH-TV, Boston, where she spent 2 years as a producer/host of her own series, *La Plaza*, and a decade as Executive Producer for Community and Cultural Programming. In 1990, she formed Ortiz/Simon Productions focusing on multi-cultural projects, including an outstanding documentary on Puerto Rico/US relations, *Mi Puerto Rico*, which premiered on PBS in 1996. Raquel later became Senior Producer for VPG, Inc., a multi-media production house of educational textbook publishers. She is a graduate of the National Hispana Leadership Institute and is currently working as a freelance creative director, producer and multi-media consultant. She has been honored with numerous awards, including regional and national Emmys, Silver and Golden Apples and CPB Programming citations.

MIGUEL PICKER, *EDITOR AND ORIGINAL SCORE*, founder of ArtMedia, is a director, composer and award-winning editor. His projects have been showcased in dances, concerts, multimedia productions, films, documentaries and several PBS programs. His credits among others include *Frontline*, *La Plaza* and *Greater Boston Arts*, as well as a 52-part educational series entitled *Destinos* which was broadcast nationally. He has composed the music for *Español en Vivo*, a bilingual children's project published by Simon and Shuster and *Lenguaje* and *Alfamigos* published by Houghton Mifflin. Most recently he produced, directed and edited *Mickey Mouse Monopoly: Disney, Childhood and Corporate Power* and *Beyond Good & Evil: Children, Media and Violent Times*, both distributed by Media Education Foundation. He is Chilean.



PATRICIA GARCIA-RIOS, *CONSULTING PRODUCER*, is a documentary filmmaker with fifteen years experience in national public television programs. Recently she wrote and co-produced *The Latino Paradox*, a documentary on Latino health for a new series on health disparities in the U.S. As a producer and co-producer at WGBH-Boston she has worked on the historical documentary series *They Made America* (PBS, 2004), *Reconstruction: The Second Civil War* (PBS, 2004) and *Chicago: City of the Century* (PBS, 2003). She was nominated for a Writers Guild award in 2005 and in 1999 received an Emmy for research. Her work has also been recognized by the Organization of American Historians (Erik Barnouw award for outstanding historical program). Recently, Patricia has acted as writing and story consultant on several documentaries for film and television, among them *Traces of the Trade* (2007), *Buddy* (2005), and *Damrell's Fire* (2005). She is a native of Spain.



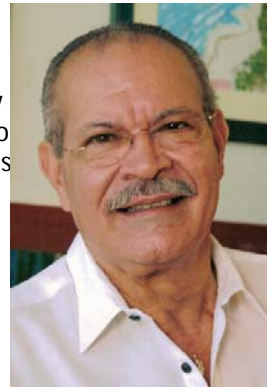
NARRATORS



HECTOR ELIZONDO, *NARRATOR*, is an accomplished film, theater and television actor, as well as a director and producer with a career spanning 40 years. He is a five-time Emmy Award nominee and won the award in 1997 for his portrayal of Dr. Phillip Watters in "Chicago Hope," on CBS. He also received three Screen Actors Guild Award nominations for the role. He was nominated for both a Golden Globe and an American Comedy Award for his portrayal of a hotel manager in "Pretty Woman." Elizondo has been nominated and won multiple other awards for his work on small and big screens, including seven ALMA Award nominations and two wins ("Chicago Hope," 1994, and "Borrowed Hearts," 1997). He recently received the Diversity Awards' Integrity Award as well as Nosotros' Lifetime Achievement Award for the quality of roles he has chosen during his career.

Elizondo's film credits include "Pretty Woman," "Runaway Bride," "American Gigolo," "The Flamingo Kid," "Nothing in Common," "Young Doctors in Love," "The Taking of Pelham One Two Three," "Tortilla Soup," "Georgia Rule," "The Princess Diaries," "The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement" and the upcoming "Love in the Time of Cholera."

DAVID ORTIZ ANGLERÓ, *NARRATOR FOR SPANISH VERSION*, is an accomplished actor, director, poet, author and radio personality of renown in Puerto Rico. During his long and respected career, he has performed to sold-out poetry recitals throughout Puerto Rico, recorded 8 poetry records and published 3 books of poetry. For the past six years, he has been heard on the radio stations, *La Cadena Radio Reloj*, and on *Radio Isla 1320* where every Friday at 7:00 PM) he hosts a music and poetry program called *Tiempo de amar* (A Time to Love). He has directed several films and television specials, amongst them: *Un abajito y queriendo* with the group Haciendo Punto en Otro Son, *La juguetería encantada* and *La sombra de una huella*, a filmic poem about Old San Juan. He is the voice-over announcer in many commercials of several important large corporations. David passed away on July 19, 2014.



PRESS REVIEWS

"A passionate rejoinder to Ken Burns, whose World War II documentary drew sharp criticism from Latino and American Indian groups for initially ignoring their contributions during that war.... *The Borinqueneers* gives a once-storied Puerto Rican regiment its due." – *The New York Times*

"*The Borinqueneers*, is both informative and heartbreaking. The film is a necessary step in revealing the complex history of these Puerto Rican soldiers — brave, proud men — and their contributions should be celebrated, especially given how they're glaringly absent from history books... the film is dense and well-researched, and it does its best to remain objective, instead largely allowing viewers to interpret these historical events according to their own belief systems." - *Si TV*

"An excellent choice for libraries.... The strength of the film is the commentary provided by former members; they are exceptionally candid about their military experiences, reasons for serving, and relationships formed under fire. Historians' and former military officers' commentary provide an outside view of the regiment, praising their heroism and bravery... A number of relevant topics are covered: racism in the military, America's relationship with Puerto Rico, and the Korean conflict. But what makes the film most compelling is its examination of friendship and camaraderie under fire." - *School Library Journal*

"Highly recommended for libraries serving Puerto Ricans or with collections of Puerto Rican studies... In a very effective interview technique, veterans of the 65th Infantry comment on its performance and express their pride in having served as American citizens despite the limits imposed upon them as a "colored" battalion. Issues pertaining to Puerto Rican culture are also presented, such as their strong adherence to religious customs, praying the rosary before fighting, and their playing music, even in the war camps." - *Criticas*



ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

The history of the all-Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment is a fascinating and little-known chapter in American military history, one that has never been tackled in a documentary film. Our goal was to tell the story of these unique soldiers from their previously unheard point of view.

After 9 years of historical research into military records, personal collections and dozens of oral histories, we identified our interview subjects and went to work. The production of **THE BORINQUEENERS** began in the early 2000. The film was shot with various local crews in New York City, Washington, DC, Orlando, Florida, Little Rock, Arkansas and in several towns in Puerto Rico. We shot on digital video and BETA SP. Our equipment included a SONY 150 digital camcorder and a SONY DX-30 Betacam. Additional re-shoots were necessary in 2003 and the last interviews were filmed in the summer of 2005.



PRODUCER RAQUEL ORTIZ WITH PUERTO RICO CREW, JORGE GARRIDO (VIDEOGRAPHER) AND HERIBERTO ROSA (SOUND TECHNICIAN).

Credit: El Pozo Productions

Meantime, we located extensive archival footage and photographs pertaining to the history of the regiment. Editing finally began in January 2006. By the end of March, we had an almost 2-hour long fine cut. A break from the editing process allowed us to have screenings, get feedback from advisors and make some changes and cuts. In the fall of 2006 and winter of 2007, we returned to the editing suite to finalize the 60-minute and 90-minute versions of the film. During this time, our editor/composer worked on the original score and we traveled to California to record the narration with Hector Elizondo. The Spanish voiceover was recorded by David Ortiz Angleró in April 2007 in Puerto Rico.

A one-hour version of **THE BORINQUEENERS** premiered on June 7th on WMFE, PBS' Orlando, Florida station, with a nationwide broadcast release in August 2007 during pledge drives. The expanded version premiered in October 2007 on the Armed Forces Network to more than 850,000 U.S. troops overseas. In November 2007, the feature length Spanish version premiered on *TU TV*, Puerto Rico's public broadcasting station. In October 2011, the documentary was broadcast on the Virgin Islands PBS station WTJX (Channel 12).

Beginning with a well-attended world premiere at the Newark Museum in New Jersey, numerous screenings continue to take place in major cities throughout the U.S. and in Puerto Rico. The film has been selected in a number of film festivals winning various awards, including the *Military Channel Award* at the 2012 GI Film Festival. In May 2012, the film had its international premiere at the CASA DE AMERICA museum, set in the beautiful Palacio de Linares in the heart of Madrid, Spain. In December 2012, the film was presented at the world-renowned 34th Annual *Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano* in Havana, Cuba as part of a special program of "100 Years of Puerto Rican Cinema". In July 2014, *Puerto Rico TV*, Puerto Rico's public broadcasting station renewed the licensing rights to air the film for two years in honor of the awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment. In November 2017, NJN, New Jersey's public broadcasting station aired the film in honor of Veteran's Day.



CREW SETTING UP IN LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS
Credit: El Pozo Productions



PRODUCERS RAQUEL ORTIZ AND NOEMI FIGUEROA-SOULET WITH NARRATOR HECTOR ELIZONDO.
Credit: El Pozo Productions



PRODUCTION STILLS

available by request



THE BORINQUEÑEERS IN KOREA
Credit: SFC Ramon Villafañe Torres (Ret.)



DIRECTOR NOEMI FIGUEROA SOULET (right) PREPARING TO INTERVIEW COL. DUKE WOLF (RET.)



RECORDING THE SPANISH NARRATION WITH DAVID ORTIZ ANGLERÓ
Credit: El Pozo Productions



BATTLE WEARY SOLDIERS OF THE 65TH INFANTRY NORTH OF THE HAN RIVER. JUNE 1951, KOREA.
Credit: U.S. Army Photo.



SOLDIERS OF THE 65TH INFANTRY REGIMENT ON MANEUVERS TESTING GAS MASKS. 1935, PUERTO RICO.
Credit: National Park Service, San Juan Military Archive



TWO NORTH KOREAN GUERRILLAS CAPTURED BY MEN OF THE 65TH INFANTRY NEAR YONGHUNG, KOREA. 1950



FILM CREDITS

Written, Produced and Directed by
Noemí Figueroa Soulet

Co-Producer/Director
Raquel Ortiz

Editor / Original Music
Miguel Picker

Motion Graphics/Post Production
Miguel Picker

Consulting Producer
Patricia Garcia-Rios

Narrator
Héctor Elizondo

Spanish Narrator
David Ortiz Angleró

Associate Producer
William Cruz

Script Consultants
Patricia Garcia-Rios
Raquel Ortiz
Mort Silverstein

Story Consultant
Fernanda Rossi

Assistant Directors
Doris Eugenio
Frank Borres

Camera
Eric Breitbart
Branan Edgens
Jorge Garrido
Bryan Hobbs
Ericq La Salle
Timothy A. Lyter
Seth D. Stein
Rick Suddeth
Arte Tedesco
Dennis Ward

Field Audio
Siiri Thompson
Andrew Brennan
Heriberto Rosas Rossy
Dan Hampton

Sound Editor
Pablo Picker
Alejandro Peralta

Grip
Neal Damiano

Video Technical Support
Juan A. Soulet

Researchers
Noemí Figueroa Soulet
Ernest Acosta
LTC Bart Soto (Ret.), USA Reserve
Col. Gilberto Villahermosa, USA

Archival Research
Bonnie Rowan

Production Assistants
Joseph Hernández
Brenda Barat
Lydia Serrano
Sonia González
Welby R. Alcantara
Arlene Rodríguez

Advisors
SFC Ángel Cordero (Ret.) USA Reserve
Maj. Sam Delgado (Ret.), US Marines
Willis "Tripper" Cronkhite, III, Esq.
Col. George MacGarrigle (Ret.)
Dr. Felix Matos Rodríguez
Dr. Luis González Vales

Spanish Translation
Doris Eugenio
Patricia Garcia-Rios
CW4 Mario Gabriel, Jr. (Ret.), USA

Art Designer & Graphic Designer
Jesús García

Illustrator
Jeffrey Rodríguez

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Puerto Rico Humanities Council
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Puerto Rico Self-Determination
Lucius & Eva Eastman Foundation
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Aetna Foundation
North Fork Bank
Verizon Hispanic Support Group
Metrovest Equities, Inc.
Carlos del Salto
William Cruz
Mariano Vega, Jr.
and
donations from hundreds of individuals,
organizations and corporations
Thank you for your support!

Fiscal Sponsor
Women Make Movies

65th Infantry Veterans Interviewed
LTC Carlos Betances (Ret.)
SFC Germán Bravo (Ret.)
LTC Rick Bucknell (Ret.)

SFC Modesto Cartagena (Ret.)
Raúl E. Reyes Castañeira
COL Willis Cronkhite, Jr. (Ret.)
MSG Ramón Figueroa (Ret.)
LTC William A. Friedman (Ret.)
LTC Tomás Guffain (Ret.)
LTC George Jackson (Ret.)
Elpidio Jiménez
Leonardo Justiniano
Eugenio Martínez
MAJ Luis R. Rodríguez (Ret.)
Carlos Ruíz Gaudín
Pedro Santana
Sixto Sepúlveda
Ángel L. Soler Flores
SSG Gabriel Soto (Ret.)
Wendell Vega
COL Duquesne Wolf (Ret.)

Historians Interviewed
COL Gilberto Villahermosa, USA
Silvia Álvarez Curbelo

Music
"Tema #4" and "Tema #12"
Composed by Nicanor Zayas
Performed by Nicanor Zayas, Nicanor
Zayas Serrano and Otoniel Zayas Serrano

"Sara"
Composed by Ángel Mislán
Performed by Miguel Picker

"Despedida"
Composed by Pedro Flores
Performed by Daniel Santos
Courtesy of SONY BMG Music
Entertainment, (México), S.A. de C.V.
By arrangement with
SONY BMG MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

"Mi Despedida"
Composed by Plácido Acevedo
Performed by Cuarteto Mayarí
Interstate Music, Ltd.

"Campanas que vais repicando"
Unknown Composer
Performed by Elpidio Jiménez

"Nuestro Regimiento"
Composed by Alexis Brau
Performed by Bobby Capó

CONTACT INFO
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Kissimmee, FL 34759
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ARTISTIC STATEMENT

This project has been the greatest challenge of my life.

In a way, the story of the Borinqueneers found me rather than me finding it. As a Puerto Rican I've always been troubled by the lack of Latino stories and Latino heroes in the media, but it wasn't until about a decade ago that I felt the impulse to do something about it. *Saving Private Ryan*, one of the most powerful and realistic depictions of war ever made, had just come out... and, as usual, Latino soldiers were "missing in action". Around the same time, I met a relative of my husband's who was a veteran of World War II. As I listened to his dramatic story I was reminded of the many other Puerto Rican veterans I had known and heard about. Why weren't their experiences being honored and shared?

Growing up in New York I never heard about the 65th. Like so many Puerto Ricans, even those living on the island, I didn't know we had heroes of our own. The relationship of Puerto Ricans to the U.S. Army is unlike that of other Latinos in the country. We are U.S. citizens, and yet - because of Puerto Rico's commonwealth status - we can't vote in U.S. elections. As a result, Puerto Ricans can be drafted but they can't vote for the commander-in-chief who sends them to war.

It was only after I began to research the Puerto Rican experience in the different wars that I learned about the 65th Infantry Regiment. The so-called Borinqueneers were an elite unit that made its mark particularly in the Korean War and came to represent the pride and fighting spirit of Puerto Ricans - a spirit that to this day drives thousands of them to volunteer, despite their unequal rights. In a military culture that often discriminated against them, the men of the 65th drew strength from their common roots, determined to prove their mettle.

As a Latina actress with 17 years of experience I knew a lot about obstacles, but nothing had prepared me for the challenge of bringing a project like this to fruition. Gathering the funding for it was a true labor of love. I knocked on every door and learned to do just about everything to keep moving the project forward. More than that, though, the process of making this film showed me the power of community. Once word got out I was doing this, the outpouring of stories, support and good will was overwhelming. I began contacting and being contacted by veterans of the 65th and their families. They were eager to share their stories and bring recognition to the regiment. Some of them were talking about it for the first time in 50 years. No one had ever asked them about their experience before. Their own sons and daughters knew nothing about it. I was touched, honored, and deeply moved by their honesty and generosity.

It took about nine years to finish the film. Whenever I wavered, I'd get a \$10 check from one of the veterans and that gave me the strength to keep going. Unfortunately, many of the veterans passed away before the film was completed. Watching their heartwarming interviews over and over again in the edit room, I took comfort in knowing that people would fall in love with these dignified, brave and humble men.

I've just been a medium for their stories. And now, at long last, my work is done.



AWARDS & FESTIVALS

Award of Excellence - Accolade Competition, 2008

Award of Excellence - Insight Awards by National Association of Film & Digital Media Artists (NAFDMA), 2008

Award of Excellence for Hector Elizondo - Voice-over Narration - Insight Awards by NAFDMA, 2008

Honorable Mention - Chris Awards, 2008

Nominee for *Best Documentary for Television* - Imagen Awards, 2008

Finalist - *Outstanding Made-for-Television Documentary* - ALMA Awards, 2008

Finalist - *Estela Award* - National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP), 2008

Winner - *Military Channel Award* - GI Film Festival (Washington, DC), 2012

Best Professional Documentary - Real to Reel International Film Festival (NC), 2008

Best Puerto Rican Documentary - Rincon International Film Festival (Puerto Rico), 2008

Winner - *Audience Award* - Orlando Hispanic Film Festival (FL), 2009

Among The Best: 1st Ten Years - Latino & Native American Film Festival (CT), 2016 & 2021

Special Screening of 100 Years of Puerto Rican Cinema - Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano (Havana, Cuba), 2012

Special Screening - Casa de America (Madrid, Spain), 2012

Official Selection - Puerto Rican Film Series, Puerto Rico Institute of Arts & Culture (IL), 2007

Official Selection - Cinesol Film Festival (TX), 2008

Official Selection - Tulipanes Latino Art & Film Festival (MI), 2008

Official Selection - Saginaw Film Festival (MI), 2009

Official Selection - Lancaster Latino Film Festival (PA), 2012

Official Selection - Rochester Latino Film Festival (NY), 2012

Official Selection - Buffalo International Film Festival (NY), 2012

Official Selection - International Puerto Rican Heritage Film Festival (NY), 2012

Official Selection - Georgia Latino Film Festival (GA), 2013

NOTABLE SCREENINGS OR PRESENTATIONS:

Dept. of Defense 60th Anniversary of Korean War Commemoration Committee Tribute to 65th Veterans (San Juan, PR)

National Guard Equal Opportunity Annual Conference, 2008

Organization of American Historians Annual Conference, 2009

National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs Conference, 2012

National Hispanic Caucus for State Legislators (NHCSL) (Orlando, FL) - Keynote speaker

American Legion Conference (Puerto Rico Chapter) - Keynote speaker

Federal Bureau of Investigation (Washington, DC)

Army National Guard Readiness Center (Arlington, VA)

6th Cavalry Brigade (South Korea)

U.S. Coast Guard Academy (CT)

Fort Hood (Killeen, TX)

Fort McCoy (LaCrosse, WI)

Fort Dix (NJ)

US Army Garrison Rock Island Arsenal (Rock Island, IL)

District of Columbia National Guard (Washington, DC)

Florida National Guard (St. Augustine, FL)

Indiana National Guard (Indianapolis, IN)

Virginia National Guard (Blackstone, VA)

Yale University

Fordham University

New York University

University of Wisconsin

Federal Inter-Agency Celebration National Hispanic Heritage History Month (New York, NY)

Arena Grand Theater (Columbus, OH) Sponsored by Nationwide Insurance

AARP Connecticut (Hartford, CT) for Veteran's Day

Equitable Financial Life Insurance Co. (Virtual Presentation for Hispanic Heritage Month)

New York Power Authority Online Film Screening (for employees on Veteran's Day)

Newark Public Library's Hispanic Research & Information Center

Yonkers Riverfront Library (NY)

Hartford Public Library (CT)



NOTES OF INTEREST

The production of **THE BORINQUENEERS** took about 9 years to be completed as the producers struggled to raise the necessary funds. Sadly, during that time, many of the 65th veterans interviewed in the film passed away. Although these veterans were not able to see the completed film before they died, their words and experiences will live forever through this film.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Our production company, El Pozo Productions was named after “El Pozo de la Virgen” (The Virgin’s Well) which is a chapel located in Sabana Grande, Puerto Rico, the hometown of Producer Noemi Figueroa Soulet. In 1953, the Virgin of the Rosary was said to have appeared to three school children near a natural spring well for 33 consecutive days. Thousands of people came from around the world to see this miracle and many healing miracles took place for those who drank from the well. Today there remains a chapel and a museum containing the crutches, wheelchairs and “*promesas*” (religious promises) which were discarded after the cures. Aware of the challenges and obstacles that would be encountered in trying to film and document the complicated and century-old history of **THE BORINQUENEERS**, Noemi figured she could use a miracle so she named the production company El Pozo Productions.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

65th Infantry veteran, LTC Carlos Betánces Ramírez (Ret.), who appears in the film passed away on October 28, 2001 - forty-nine years later and on the exact day as the Jackson Heights incident which took place on October 28, 1952.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Both historians interviewed in the film have family members who served in the 65th Infantry Regiment. Col Gilberto Villahermosa’s father, CW2 Jesús María Villahermosa (Ret). fought with the 65th Infantry Regiment in Korea from 1951 to 1952. And Silvia Alvarez Curbelo’s grandfather, Eduardo Curbelo, served with the 65th Infantry Regiment during World War I.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Three of the musical compositions used in the film were composed by members of the 65th Infantry Regiment. *Sara*, was composed by Angel Mislan, a famous composer of Puerto Rican danzas. In 1886, when Mislan was 24 years old, he joined the Military Band of the Third Battalion of Volunteers (the precursor to the 65th); eventually, he became the director of that band. During this period he wrote one of his best known danza compositions, *Sara*. Another well-known composer and one of the most respected expert cuatristas of the island (a cuatro player is a guitar-like instrument native to Puerto Rico) is SFC Nicanor Zayas Berrios (Ret.) who composed two of the Puerto Rican danzas used in the film, *Track #4* and *Track #12*. Retired from the Army, Zayas Berrios served in the Anti-Tank Company of the 65th Infantry Regiment during the Korean War.



VIEWER RESPONSES

I was touched by this incredible documentary and went through a whirlwind of emotions... I left that day a changed person. Today, I feel I've learned more about my identity as a Puerto Rican and as a Latino in the U.S. This film is an excellent learning tool for teachers and professors who want to teach about the U.S. history and Puerto Rican history. It is awesome, a historical gem, and a MUST HAVE for your personal library.

William Cruz, President
TCB Consulting

My children watched the program with us. They knew he was a Veteran but they too were impacted by your documentary. To my surprise, my young sons, his grandchildren, who are 9 and 8, stood in front of him, saluted their Papi and hugged him. This is a moment I will carry with me forever. Thank you.

Ivey Arce Wolfe
Daughter of 65th veteran Luciano Arce Diaz

As a Vietnam veteran of Puerto Rican descent, I was deeply moved... THE BORINQUENEERS is a work to be proud of – not only because it tells the untold story of the United States Army's only all-Puerto Rican regiment, the 65th Infantry Regiment, but because it tells it with admirable and unflinching honesty.

Félix López, Former Director
Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration

In these times of renewed patriotism where our nation seeks to redefine its own essence, we consider it extremely valuable to expose the untold stories of sacrifice and heroism of our servicemembers, both of which the Puerto Rican Borinqueneers were widely recognized for.

Raúl Duany, Former Chairman
Puerto Rican Professionals of South Florida

As a teacher, I know the importance of sophisticated and accurate documentaries, such as the one you have proposed, as a classroom tool. As a historian, I know how powerful telling a good story can be. In the history of the Puerto Rican men who fought in the 65th Infantry Regiment, you will be able to capture many of the elements that have defined the Island's character throughout the century.

Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, Ph.D., Former Director
Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College

The documentary was superb... It was a true representation with what really happened during the Korean War, with the 65th Infantry.

Mrs. Esther Betances
Widow of LTC Carlos Betances who appears in the film

Your work will very quickly become a classic and a mainstay in the remembrance of these brave soldiers. Every time I view the DVD, I am reaffirmed in the conviction that the court-martial segment is an essential part of the fabric of this history, without which the story is fatally flawed and incomplete. The serious, accurate, and respectful treatment you gave it puts the entire episode into its correct perspective in a caring way that avoids clichés and banality. Thank you for giving expression to the sentiments of so many who carry the memory of an incident that is burdened with so much misunderstanding.

David W. Roman, Esq.
Brown & Ubarri



VETERAN QUOTES

The forgotten men of THE BORINQUENEERS share their stories and their memories.



SFC MODESTO CARTAGENA (RET.), the most decorated soldier of the 65th.

I would catch their grenades in the air and throw them back... And I blew up their 5 automatic rifles. When they discovered me, they threw so many grenades that 3 hit me. I took the hill from them. I took 16 wounded, 1 dead, and me, 17. But when we arrived there, the one in worst shape was me because I had lost all my blood.

COL. WILLIS "BUD" CRONKHITE (RET.), "F" Company Commander. A continental officer who believed in his men.

The 65th had an excellent reputation with the Chinese. They did not like to fight the 65th. They were too mean. I was glad that the Puerto Ricans were on my side. (Laughs!!) I would not want them to come after me with a bayonet.

MAJ. LUIS RAUL RODRIGUEZ (RET.), awarded a Silver Star for his bravery, but not without a price.

Almost 95% casualties. Everybody was wounded once or twice... We soldiers of the 65th, we fought for... freedom. And people died for the same reason.

LTC CARLOS BETANCES RAMIREZ (RET.). A 65th battalion commander described by the continental West Point officers under his command as "brilliant", Betances would be the only officer relieved of command as a result of the courts martial. Some believe he was scapegoated.

I tried to convince them to return to Jackson Heights, and I used all kinds of arguments, among them their pride as Puerto Ricans soldiers. Because Puerto Ricans are very proud as soldiers, that's why they excel as soldiers. But they were in a state of shock.

PROF. SILVIA ALVAREZ CURBELO, Author and Professor of Humanities from the University of Puerto Rico. Her grandfather, Eduardo Curbelo, served with the 65th Infantry Regiment during World War I.

At Kelly there had been a massacre. Rivers of blood flowed through Kelly Hill. The great tragedy of Kelly was the Puerto Ricans helplessly seeing their buddies die. Surrounded by relentless enemy fire.

COL. GILBERTO VILLAHERMOSA, a former Senior Military Historian from the Center of Military History, has written the unit history of the 65th which was published in 2009. Villahermosa is a West Point graduate. His father, CW2 Jesús María Villahermosa (Ret.), fought with the 65th Infantry Regiment in Korea from 1951 to 1952.

This regiment is a cultural icon. And whether Puerto Rico remains a commonwealth, whether it becomes a state, whether it becomes independent, the history of this regiment is closely intertwined with that of Puerto Ricans.



SCREENINGS & EVENTS

July 13, 2007	Newark Museum World Premiere (Newark, NJ)
July 28, 2007	Institute of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture's – The Puerto Rican Outdoor Film Festival (Chicago, IL)
August 1, 2007	Clark University and the Committee of the Korean War Memorial of Central Massachusetts (Worcester, MA)
August 3, 2007	Hispanic Professional Network and the Hispanic Veterans Association of CT (Hartford, CT)
August 11, 2007	Instituto de Mexico (San Antonio, TX) Sponsored by Club Damas de Puerto Rico.
August 24, 2007	Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture Main Theater (Bronx, NY) Sponsored by H.O.G.A.R., Inc.
August 28, 2007	Sociedad Cultural Borincana and Passaic County Community College (Paterson, NJ)
September 13, 2007	Army National Guard Readiness Center (Arlington, VA)
September 22, 2007	Asociación Boricua de Dallas, Inc. and the Hispanic American Students of the Southern Methodist University (SMU) (Dallas, TX)
October 4, 2007	Fordham University (Bronx, NY)
October 11, 2007	Trinity College (Hartford, CT)
October 12, 2007	Veterans Administration Medical Center (Castle Point, NY)
November 7, 2007	El Museo del Barrio - Heckscher Theater (New York, NY)
November 11, 2007	The Borinqueneers Motorcycle Club of Florida and the Asociacion Borinqueña (Orlando, FL)
November 13, 2007	Veterans Administration – Houston St. (New York, NY)
November 15-16, 2007	Killeen LULAC Council 4535 Foundation and Gladys Casteleiro (sponsors) at Central Texas College Planetarium (Killeen, TX) Fort Hood and III Corps HQS, Remagen (Fort Hood, TX) Vive Les Arts Theater (Killeen, TX)
November 17, 2007	Sociedad de Puertorriqueños en Houston, Inc. in conjunction with Rice University – Hispanic Studies Department and The Institute of Hispanic Culture in Houston (Houston, TX)
<u>Puerto Rico screenings from Nov. 27-Dec 2, 2007 were co-sponsored by the P.R. Veterans Public Advocate Office:</u>	
November 27, 2007	Museo de Arte (San Juan, PR) Sponsored by Puerto Rico Nacional Guard Universidad Interamericana – Metro Campus (San Juan, PR)
November 28, 2007	Luis M. Arcelay Theater (Caguas, PR) Sponsored by The Municipality of Caguas. Universidad Interamericana – Fajardo Campus (Fajardo, PR)
December 2, 2007	Adalberto Rodriguez Theater (Sabana Grande, PR) Sponsored by El Heraldo Publications.
April 25, 2008	Rincon International Film Festival (Rincon, PR) <i>Winner: Best Puerto Rican Documentary</i>
May 18, 2008	Burke Theatre Peddie School (Hightstown, NJ) Sponsored by the Latina Women's Council of Mercer County in NJ, Community Arts Partnership at the Peddie School - CAPPS and the Puerto Rican Parade of Trenton, NJ.
May 21, 2008	NATIONAL GUARD EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CONFERENCE (Phoenix, AZ)
July 24, 2008	Real to Reel International Film Festival (Shelby, NC) <i>Winner: Best Professional Documentary</i>
September 10, 2008	US Army Garrison Rock Island Arsenal (Rock Island, IL)
September 13, 2008	Cinesol Film Festival (McAllen, TX) Tulipanes Latino Art & Film Festival (Holland, MI)
September 17, 2008	III CORPS Equal Opportunity Office (Fort Hood, Texas)
September 22, 2008	NYU School of Law (New York, NY) Sponsored by the Association of Hispanic Latino & Black Business Students (AHBBS), Latino Law Students Association (LaLSA), Alliance of Latin American Students (ALAS) and NYU's Center for Multicultural Education & Programs (CMEP).
September 25, 2008	District of Columbia National Guard (Washington, DC)
September 26, 2008	Florida National Guard (Saint Augustine, FL)
October 1, 2008	Teatro Yaguez (Mayaguez, PR) in Spanish. Co-sponsored by the City of Mayagüez, the Veterans Public Advocate Office, the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration (PRFAA)-NY Office).
October 6, 2008	Indiana National Guard (Indianapolis, IN)
October 9, 2008	Ocean County College (Toms River, NJ) Sponsored by Educational Opportunity Fund, Office of Multicultural Svces.
October 21, 2008	Club Rotario de Rio Piedras (Rio Piedras, PR)
May 17, 2009	The Field Library (Peekskill, NY)
May 22, 2009	Multicultural Music Group at Pregones Theater (Bronx, NY) Panel Discussion and Original Musical Composition and Concert by Ray Santos, the MMG Orchestra and the Bronx Arts Ensemble inspired by THE BORINQUENEERS.
August 22, 2009	Saginaw Film Festival (Saginaw, MI)
Sept. 18-19, 2009	Orlando Hispanic Film Festival <i>Winner: Audience Award</i>
September 24, 2009	Yale University – Office of Diversity & Inclusion (New Haven, CT)
October 2, 2009	Yonkers Riverfront Library (Yonkers, NY)
October 15, 2009	Arena Grand Theater (Columbus, OH) Sponsored by Nationwide Insurance
September 14, 2010	Virginia National Guard (Blackstone, VA)
September 30, 2010	VA Hudson Valley Health Care System (Montrose, NY)



SCREENINGS & EVENTS

March 30, 2011	University of Wisconsin (Madison, WI) Sponsored by the Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity, Inc.
March 9, 2012	Lancaster Latino Film Festival (Lancaster, PA)
May 14, 2012	Casa de America (Madrid, Spain)
May 17, 2012	GI Film Festival (Washington, DC) Winner: Military Channel Award
June 9, 2012	Multicultural Music Group at Pregones Theater (Bronx, NY) Panel Discussion and Original Musical Composition and Concert by Ray Santos, the MMG Orchestra and the Bronx Arts Ensemble inspired by THE BORINQUENEERS.
September 9, 2012	Dept. of Defense 60th Anniversary of Korean War Commemoration Committee Tribute to 65th Veterans (San Juan, PR)
September 15, 2012	Latino Film Festival at the Puerto Rican Festival (Rochester, NY)
September 21, 2012	Buffalo International Film Festival - sponsored by the Western New York Hispanic American Veterans Memorial Committee in cooperation with the Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York (Buffalo, NY)
November 17, 2012	International Puerto Rican Heritage Film Festival (New York, NY)
December 9, 2012	Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano (Havana, Cuba)
May 15, 2013	Bronx Tourism Council Screening, in conjunction with the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation and the Bronx Borough President's office (Bronx, NY)
Sept. 25, 2013	NY State Comptroller's Office (Albany, NY) October 1, 2013
October 1, 2013	Korean War Veterans Assoc (New Rochelle, NY)
October 5, 2013	Perth Amboy High School, sponsored by the Puerto Rican Association for Human Development (Perth Amboy, NJ)
October 12, 2013	Georgia Latino Film Festival (Atlanta, GA) Winner Best Documentary
November 9, 2013	"Movies Under the Stars" at the 65th Infantry Park Boulevard - sponsored by the Community Business Initiative Council (CBIC) in collaboration with the Hispanic-American Professional and Business Women's Association (HAPBWA) and other community organizations (Kissimmee, FL)
November 15, 2013	National Hispanic Caucus for State Legislators (NHCSL) Honors the 65th (Orlando, FL)
November 22, 2013	Bronx Music Heritage Center (Bronx, NY)
April 17, 2014	Center for the Digital Arts of Westchester Community College (Peekskill, NY)
September 20, 2014	La Casita Cultural (Syracuse, NY) - sponsored by Cultural Engagement for the Hispanic Community College of Arts & Sciences, Syracuse University
September 25, 2014	Fort McCoy (LaCrosse, WI)
September 30, 2014	Community College of Philadelphia (Philadelphia, PA) - sponsored by the Philadelphia Unemployment Project, SAG/AFTRA, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Philadelphia AFL-CIO, Coalition of Labor Union Women, Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha, Unitarian Universalist Church of the Reformation, Fight for Philly, AFSCME DC 47, UFCW Local 1776, AFT Local 2026
October 16, 2014	2nd Annual Federal Inter-Agency Celebration National Hispanic Heritage History Month (New York, NY)
June 5-7, 2015	American Legion Conference (Puerto Rico Chapter) – Keynote speaker: Noemi Figueroa Soulet
October 24, 2015	Central Library of Rochester & Monroe Co. (Rochester, NY)
November 9, 2015	Hartford Public Library (Hartford, CT)
November 12, 2015	Westfield State University Screening (Westfield, MA)
April 22, 2016	Latino & Native American Film Festival (New Haven, CT)
July 15, 2016	MNN El Barrio Firehouse Community Media Center (New York, NY)
October 5, 2016	Gateway Community College (New Haven, CT)
November 10, 2016	Northampton Community College (Bethlehem, PA) February 11, 2017
February 11, 2017	Multi-Ethnic Observance Day at Fort Dix (Fort Dix, NJ)
July 31, 2017	Federal Bureau of Investigation (Washington, DC)
October 28, 2017	Newark Public Library (Newark, NJ) sponsored by Verizon November 8-9, 2017
November 8-9, 2017	"A Walk In Their Shoes" School & Community Program (Edgar, WI)
November 11, 2017	NJTV Public Television Broadcast (Newark, NJ) for Veteran's Day
March 7, 2018	Lutz Senior Center (Lutz, FL) September 28, 2018
September 28, 2018	Maranatha Church (Rome, NY)
June 20, 2019 & March 18, 2021	Solivita Retirement Community (Poinciana, FL)
November 7, 2019	AARP Connecticut (Hartford, CT) for Veteran's Day
October 8, 2020	Equitable Financial Life Insurance Co. (Virtual Presentation for Hispanic Heritage Month)
November 13, 2020	New York Power Authority Online Film Screening (for Veteran's Day)
April 22, 2021	11th Annual Latino & Native American Film Festival
October 7, 2021	Wilmington VA Medical Center Screening
October 2, 2021	Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York Screening for Hispanic Heritage Month (Buffalo, NY)



SCREENINGS & EVENTS

April 22, 2022	Office of Public Defender Screening (Kissimmee, FL)
April 16, 2022	Old Sturbridge Village Screening (Sturbridge, MA)
October 5, 2022	Connecticut National Guard Screening (Middletown, CT)
October 11, 2022	Raytheon Technologies Screening
April 13, 2023	Hostos Community College / VA Bronx Hospital Screening (Bronx, NY)
April 15, 2023	Old Sturbridge Village Screening (Sturbridge, MA)
May 20, 2023	Aspira Inc. of Illinois Screening (Chicago, IL)
July, 2023	CUNY TV Broadcasts for 70th Anniversary of Korean War Armistice (New York, NY)



PRESS AND MEDIA

Print Articles - English:

- The Star Ledger (NJ) - November 4, 2013
- The Lawton Constitution (Lawton, OK) – Sept. 21, 2013
- Westchester Journal News (NY) – July 2, 2013
- The Morning Journal (Columbus, OH) – Oct. 15, 2009
- Quad-City Times (Davenport, IA) – Sept. 11, 2008
- New York Times (New York , NY) – October 2, 2007
- Si TV Entertainment – “Home of the Brave” – Sept. 10, 2007
- Latina.com – “Latina Filmmaker Sheds Light on All-Hispanic Army Unit” - Jan. 2008
- Poder Magazine – November 2007
- Freedom Team Salute Newsletter – September, 2007
- New York Daily News (New York , NY) – Aug. 8, 2007
- Worcester Telegram Gazette (Worcester , MA) – Aug. 2, 2007
- Orlando Sentinel (Florida) – Jan. 26, 2007, Nov. 12, 2007 and Feb. 1, 2002
- The Yankee Courier (CT National Guard) Nov. 2006
- The Day (New London , CT) – October 9, 2005
- The Morning Calm Weekly (U.S. military publication in Korea) – Oct. 17, 2003
- MIG Alley Flyer (U.S. military publication Korea) – Sept. 26, 2003
- New Britain News & Hartford Courant (CT) – Nov. 22, 2002
- Reading Eagle (Reading , PA) – August 4, 2002
- The Miami Herald (Miami , FL) – May 10, 2002
- New York Post (New York , NY) – November 9, 2001
- San Juan Star (Puerto Rico) – April 23, 2000
- New Jersey Record – May 25, 2000
- The Journal News (Westchester County , NY) – Feb. 23, 2000

Print Articles - Spanish:

- El Heraldito (Sabana Grande, PR) – February, 2008
- Freedom Team Salute Newsletter – Sep. 2007
- El Nuevo Día (San Juan, PR) – Aug. 12, 2007
- La Raza (Chicago, IL) – July 27, 2007
- Vocero Hispano (Worcester, MA) July 27, 2007
- HOY Nueva York (New York , NY) – June 29, 2007
- El Sentinel (Orlando, FL) June 2, 2007
- El Diario La Prensa (New York , NY) – June 5, 2003
- El Diario La Prensa (New York , NY) – Sept. 28, 2001

On-Camera Interviews:

- CUNY's Independent Sources (cable) - May 20, 2015 & June 9, 2016
- Living Arts in Westchester (cable) – Oct. 10, 2015
- News 24/7 of Puerto Rico TV - July 4, 2014
- One on One with Steve Aduato – 2-Part Special (PBS – East Coast) – December 26 & 27, 2013
- Fusion (ABC/Univision) – Oct. 28, 2013
- Puerto Rican Panorama (6ABC-TV & WPVI - Philadelphia, PA) Jan. 16, 2010
- One on One with Steve Aduato (Comcast-East Coast) – Mar. 2008
- Telemundo (WNJU – Ft. Lee, NJ) – July 12, 2007
- Images/Imagenes (NJN - Trenton , NJ) – Aug. 5, 2007
- Visiones (NBC – New York , NY) – September 1, 2007
- Boston Latino TV - Interview of Producer Raquel Ortiz – Sept. 13, 2007
- Comcast Newsmakers (NJ & PA) – Sept. 20, 2007
- CNN en Español (national)– Oct. 4, 2007
- Univision “Aquí y Ahora” (national) – Oct. 11, 2007
- CFNEWS 13 (Orlando, FL) Article and Video – Nov. 11, 2007
- V-me Viva Voz – “Honor Hispano” – Nov., 2007
- Urban Latino TV (CBS-TV National broadcast - May 8, 2004)
- Cablevision Neighborhood Journal (Newark, So. Orange & Elizabeth , NJ) – Sept. 2003
- Cablevision Channel 12 (Westchester County, NY) Mar. 21, 2000

Radio

- National Public Radio interview – Weekend Edition – Aug. 4, 2007
- WNYC – News Public Radio (New York, NY) - Aug. 24, 2007
- 93.1 AMOR Spanish Radio (New York, NY) July 13, 2007
- Let's Get Real With Reuben Torres at www.blogtalkradio.com – Mar. 4, 2007
- The Latin Jubilee Radio Show with Judy Battista (FM 99.1 & on AM 1110 In The Hudson Valley, NY) - Apr. 19, 2008
- Wisconsin Public Radio (Edgar, WI) – Nov. 2017

Online Blogs and Websites:

- VOXXI.com – Oct. 4, 2013
- MyCentralJersey.com – Oct. 3, 2013
- NBCLatino.com - Nov. 14, 2012, Nov. 30, 2012, Nov. 11, 2013
- Casa de America Coloquio (Madrid, Spain) - May 14, 2012
- Democrat and Chronicle.com – ConXion – Sept. 18, 2012
- Latina.com – Jan. 2008
- Cinemovida.com – 2008
- Serious Consideration! Blog – Dec. 14, 2008
- Educational Media Reviews Online – Dec. 23, 2008
- MYSA.com (San Antonio, TX) – July 30, 2007



The New York Times - 10/2/2007

The New York Times

Tuesday, October 2, 2007

Bloodied in Battle, Now Getting Their Due



Ángel Franco/The New York Times

Virginia Quevedo adjusts the cap her husband, Eugenio, 81, wore in Korea. Mr. Quevedo served in the 65th Infantry Regiment, a mostly Puerto Rican unit.

By [DAVID GONZALEZ](#)

Published: October 2, 2007

Among the lamps, the religious cards and the knickknacks in Eugenio Quevedo's Upper West Side apartment is a worn and creased Banco Popular envelope. Tucked neatly inside, tiny black-and-white photos taken more than half a century ago show a rifle-toting soldier against a backdrop of hills and mountains.

"Korea was an ocean of mountains," Mr. Quevedo said. "We'd push forward and the enemy pushed us back. It was that kind of war."

He sounded tranquil, which in many ways he is at 81, though his eyes betrayed his emotions. In one corner of his living room, a poster shows the Puerto Rican flag, a nod to where he was born.

"We lost so many," he said. "The American people don't know the sacrifices of so many Puerto Ricans who died in Korea. It was the bloodiest war for Puerto Rico."

It is also a forgotten war for many Americans. Yet in recent months, veterans of a once-storied Puerto Rican regiment, the 65th Infantry Regiment — including Mr. Quevedo — have gotten their due in a documentary called "The Borinqueneers," which was first televised in New York over the summer and continues to be broadcast on public television nationally.

In a way, it is a passionate rejoinder to [Ken Burns](#), whose World War II documentary drew sharp criticism from Latino and American Indian groups for initially ignoring their contributions during that war.

Noemi Figueroa Soulet, a New York actress who produced "The Borinqueneers," understands why people were upset with Mr. Burns. But she set her sights on a different battle, in more ways than one.

"Why should we be begging Ken Burns for a few minutes in his series?" she said. "We have other guys we can cover ourselves. I really felt there was enough there to tell our story in a full program."

The idea came to Ms. Figueroa Soulet in the late 1990s, after she saw the film "Saving Private Ryan" and around the time she learned that her husband's uncle had been wounded in Korea.

"I started thinking, what about the Puerto Rican experience?" she said. "I would see a war movie or documentary and I would look for the Latino faces. I always want to see how we are represented. Historically, I knew we served in the military, but you wouldn't know it."

Though she had never made a documentary before, she set out to chronicle the Puerto Rican military experience. In time, she zeroed in on the 65th Infantry's campaigns in Korea.

The regiment, she said, was founded in 1899 as an essentially Puerto Rican unit, including a fair share of island-born officers, led by mainland, or “continental,” officers. The group also served in both world wars, though it was in Korea where it was hardest hit.

The regiment’s bravery earned the admiration of no less than Gen. Douglas MacArthur, as well as a disproportionate share of casualties when compared with mainland regiments. One of its continental officers said the unit “got every dirty job that came up,” while another said it was so feared by the enemy that “I was very glad the Puerto Ricans were on my side.”

But in 1952, scores of soldiers in the regiment were arrested and court-martialed after refusing to fight in battles where untested and poorly led replacement troops were sent to take hills without artillery or medical support. The refusals came after a battle that left hundreds wounded or dead. In another case, they would not follow an officer they knew had no clue where he was trying to lead them.

Some of the men were sentenced to 10 or more years in prison. Outcry over the trials eventually resulted in the Army pardoning them and commuting sentences.

Ms. Figueroa Soulet set out to tell a story that placed the regiment’s history in context, rather than let it either be forgotten or reduced to the ignominy of the trials. She said that some Latino organizations that she had thought would be natural allies in her quest to finance and make the film were turned off by the inclusion of the trials and did not support her, while some veterans groups declined to back a project about Puerto Ricans.

She persisted, and was joined by Raquel Ortiz, a producer with many years working in public broadcasting who had produced “Mi Puerto Rico,” a well-received documentary on Puerto Rican cultural and political identity.

“Not very many people would have given a first-time producer the amount of time I gave her,” Ms. Ortiz said. “I did it because the subject was important to me. She was so committed, too. When I saw the interviews, stock footage and photos, I said ‘Wow!’”

The film took nine years to complete and involved interviewing 275 veterans. Ms. Figueroa Soulet has had special showings in various cities, often sponsored by local Puerto Rican and veterans organizations, which have helped spread the word despite the lack of an advertising budget.

It has struck a deep chord in men like Jose Cintron, a retired longshoreman and a Vietnam veteran, who was moved to tears when saw it. “I was so proud,” he said. “For the first time, I did not have to hear about [John Wayne](#). My people took part in this. For once, we get recognized.”



Ángel Franco/The New York Times
Jaime Lopez, 77, left, and Eugenio Quevedo
at Mr. Quevedo’s Upper West Side apartment.
“Korea was not easy,” Mr. Lopez said.

Members of the regiment hold on to vivid memories of those who served with them on freezing hillsides, dodging bullets and mortars. Mr. Quevedo still talks about Master Sgt. Angel Ocasio. At the start of an enemy offensive, the sergeant was killed after he had gone around distributing ammunition to Mr. Quevedo and his comrades. Another sergeant — Iglesias was all he could recall — was shot dead when he went searching for Sergeant Ocasio.

“Those two were sent by God,” Mr. Quevedo said. “You think of him and the others. They died young. They never had the chance to get married. To be grandfathers. To get to my age. We are the ones who are left.”

His friend, Jaime Lopez, sat with him in the living room. He, too, served in the regiment, though they became friends stateside. Mr. Lopez is trim at 77, with a swagger to his step and an unfiltered cigarette in his hand. Mr. Quevedo jokingly calls him “[Lee Marvin](#),” which only fuels Mr. Lopez’s eagerness to banter.

Mr. Lopez enlisted after high school, saying the military was one of the few options he had as a small-town boy with no money. In Korea, he earned two Bronze Stars, including one for risking his life to wade into a river and rescue wounded comrades while under fire.

He recalled one fierce encounter, when they took a hill, only to find themselves under attack for 12 hours.

“There were dead and wounded everywhere,” he said. “Everything was destroyed. Everything. Boy.”

He bolted up from his chair, turned away and sobbed. He steadied himself against the dinner table. The only other sound was a clock chiming “Twinkle, Twinkle” at the hour.

“Korea was not easy,” was all he said, slowly composing himself.

Since the documentary’s completion, the two men have made public appearances together, talking to audiences about their experiences. After years of being footnotes to a forgotten war, they are glad to let others know they were there when they were needed.

“This documentary is something historic,” Mr. Lopez said. “You see it from beginning to end and learn that Puerto Ricans fought in World War I, World War II and Korea. The truth is there.”

The support of the old veterans, men who came home and settled into uneventful, but blessed, lives is what helped Ms. Figueroa Soulet stick with her project when others would not even return her calls.

“Those guys are my troops,” she said. “I look at the long list of organizations who protested the Ken Burns thing and say, ‘Gee, none of them contributed to my project.’ Some of them would not give me the time of day.”

She paused. Being an actress, she knows a thing or two about timing. “Now,” she said, “they’re all calling.”



Film celebrates achievements of only all-Hispanic military unit

Jeannette Rivera-Lyles | Sentinel Staff Writer



U.S. Army Col. Edwin Marrero (left) honors Igrail Morales and other members of the 65th Infantry Regiment, the only all-Hispanic unit in Army history, during a tribute by Asociacion Borinquena de Florida Central Inc. in Orlando. (JACOB LANGSTON, ORLANDO SENTINEL / November 12, 2007)

The horror of sleeping among 17 dead men is still ingrained in retired Sgt. Raul Reyes Castañeira's memory more than a half-century later. One night in 1952, as a young soldier in Korea, he arrived to camp from the battlefield too exhausted to pitch his own tent. He sneaked into a large tent and, in the dark, searched for a spot on the ground amid several men he thought were asleep. The next morning, he woke up to a scene Alfred Hitchcock couldn't have imagined. "Some of the bodies were missing the head, others had no legs," Castañeira, 76, said Sunday. "It was a terrible experience."

Castañeira and the dead soldiers in a makeshift morgue were members of the 65th Infantry Regiment, the only all-Hispanic unit in military history. The Army organized the regiment in 1899, a year after Spain ceded Puerto Rico to the United States. Later it was nicknamed the "Borinqueneers," after the Indian name of the island.

On Sunday, Asociacion Borinquena, a Central Florida Puerto Rican group, honored Castañeira and 100 other veterans -- 20 of whom belonged to the 65th -- by showing the theatrical premiere of *The Borinqueneers*, a documentary about the regiment. The event took place at the group's headquarters on north Econolockhatchee Trail. The film's director, Noemi Figueroa Soulet, introduced her work and later moderated a panel discussion with the 65th Infantry's veterans.

Figueroa, a Puerto Rican-born actress who grew up in New York, said the 65th Infantry has been absent from films and history books. She felt compelled to change that. "I guess it was naiveté," Figueroa said. "I pretty much woke up one day and said, 'I'm going to do a documentary about them.'" What she thought would be a two-year project turned into a nine-year odyssey. Money was scarce and many of the subjects had died. Figueroa's research brought her to Orlando, where a few of the men who figure prominently in the film now live.

Retired Col. Tomás Guffain, 91, is one of them. A 65th Infantry veteran of World War II and Korea, Guffain joined the Army as a volunteer at 16 and served for 25 years. He was awarded silver and bronze medals. On Sunday, he showed the audience an old canteen that he credited with saving his life. "I was crawling on the ground during battle and did not notice I had been hit until I reached for my canteen to take a drink and it spilled," Guffain said, referring to the bullet that pierced the canteen.

The men of the 65th were among the first to meet the enemy on the battlefields of Korea. The regiment also was part of a task force that enabled the Marines to withdraw from the Chosin Reservoir in Korea in December 1950. When the Marines were encircled by Chinese communist troops close to the Manchurian border, the 65th rushed to their defense. The Marines got back safely to their ships.

In 1951, Gen. Douglas MacArthur said of the regiment: "The Puerto Ricans forming the ranks of the gallant 65th Infantry on the battlefields of Korea . . . are writing a brilliant record of achievement in battle and I am proud indeed to have them in this command. I wish that we might have many more like them."

Jeannette Rivera-Lyles can be reached at jrivera@orlandosentinel.com or 407-420-5471. Copyright © 2007, [Orlando Sentinel](http://www.orlandosentinel.com) <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/services/newspaper/printedition/monday/localandstate/orl-veterans1207nov12,0,2065890.story>



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"They were just as good soldiers as anybody."

Noemi Figueroa Soulet, producer of the documentary "The Borinqueniers"

Finally taking their place in U.S. history



ANDREW MILLER FOR THE STAR-LEDGER

Ervin Machado, at his Perth Amboy home last month, was a member of a segregated unit of soldiers from Puerto Rico, known as the Borinqueniers. Machado, at top during his service days, and his unit saw combat during the Korean War but have been forgotten.

Barry
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The phone rang for months, but Ervin Machado wouldn't answer.

It was Noemi Figueroa Soulet, a persistent filmmaker, leaving another message at his home in Perth Amboy. She was after him to share his story, one he never talked about and wanted to leave on the battlefield in Korea.

Machado, 81, was a member of the Borinqueniers, the segregated 65th Infantry Regiment of Puerto Rican soldiers that fought bravely and longer than some combat units in the Korean War.

That didn't matter to Machado.

"It was so sad to talk about things that I saw with

my own people dying next to me," he said.

The Borinqueniers are still a little-known story in military history, their valor not widely recognized until Soulet's 2007 documentary.

"They were just as good soldiers as anybody else," said Figueroa Soulet. "They made their mark. They didn't need to be segregated."

The regiment, its members cultural icons in Puerto Rico, was started in 1920, serving as support in World War I and World War II. In Korea, it played a role in nine major campaigns and received many commendations, including praise from Gen.

SEE CARTER, PAGE 3

Carter

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Douglas MacArthur.

But for all it achieved, retired Col. Gilberto Villahermosa said, the 65th did not get the number of medals it deserved.

"Officers were giving more awards to themselves than the soldiers," said Villahermosa, author of "Honor and Fidelity, The 65th Infantry in Korea." "They have more days in combat, but they get significantly fewer awards."

He said the 65th's contributions got lost for several embarrassing reasons. Among them, he said, is that the United States didn't win a war it was unprepared to fight and that military leaders faced pressure to overturn unfair court-martial convictions of 86 Borinqueneer soldiers. The men had refused to fight at Jackson Heights, a mountainous area in North Korea where they had no artillery or air support and suffered high casualties. When a white platoon refused to fight for the same reasons, nothing happened to those soldiers.

"The military didn't want the story known," Villahermosa said. "They wanted this covered up."

After the war, some Latino soldiers continued to make the military a career. But others, like Machado, went back home to restart their lives. He taught bookkeeping and accounting and worked in Customs until retirement after moving to New York, then Perth Amboy.

Machado said he wanted no part of the presentations honoring the regiment, but Figueroa Soulet wouldn't go away. It took her nine years to complete the film, and

she is now part of a movement to get the 65th regiment honored with the Congressional Gold Medal, one of the nation's two highest civilian awards. And with this year being the 60th anniversary of the conclusion of the Korean War, Figueroa Soulet said these veterans need their just due, beyond the accolades they've already received.

Machado listened as she explained this when he finally picked up the phone. She was going to be showing the film at Perth Amboy High School, and since he lived in town, she wanted him to be there last month. He let go of the pain and allowed praise to fall his way, along with other members of the regiment, during the program to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.

Taking in the standing ovation with him were Command Sgt. Maj. Guillermo Lanzo of Pemberton, Sgt. Alberto Lugo of West Hampton, Sgt. First Class William Van Derdys of Beverly, and Eugenio Quevedo and Patsy Scarpato, both of New York.

Machado didn't know about the film, but he watched it for the first time with his son, Edward, and daughter, Ana, who had no idea their father was part of a fighting unit, whose name comes from the Taino Indian word for Puerto Rico, which means "land of the brave lord."

Machado said he chose to bury the past that he and three brothers endured, telling only his late wife, Ana, to whom he was married 54 years.

But the film brought all the memories back in a flood of tears.

"It put me right back there in Korea," he said.

Figueroa Soulet said the 65th died in greater proportion than citizens in most states. Many of them had never been on a boat or to a foreign land with frigid temperatures. They faced discrimination from officers who didn't think they could fight, often referring to them as the "rum and Coca-Cola" outfit.

When experienced Borinqueneers were rotated out from the war, Figueroa Soulet said they were replaced with their fellow Puerto Ricans, who proved themselves worthy even though they weren't well-trained and assigned to officers who didn't speak Spanish.

"Sometimes it makes you really sad," Van Derdys said. "We were just beginning life and to be put into something like that."

Machado doesn't get as emotional talking about his service now. He has met with North Brunswick High School students and was honored by the Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey. The U.S. Department of Defense sent him a certificate recognizing his service.

The only thing missing is the Congressional Gold Medal — which has been given to the Tuskegee Airmen, Navajo Code Talkers, Montford Point Marines and the Nisei soldiers.

"Why not them?" Figueroa Soulet said of the Borinqueneers. "They are the only ones missing."

To get the medal, she said two bills need two-thirds approval in the House and Senate.

Machado hopes it happens in his lifetime. Until then, he doesn't mind fading into history we all should know about.



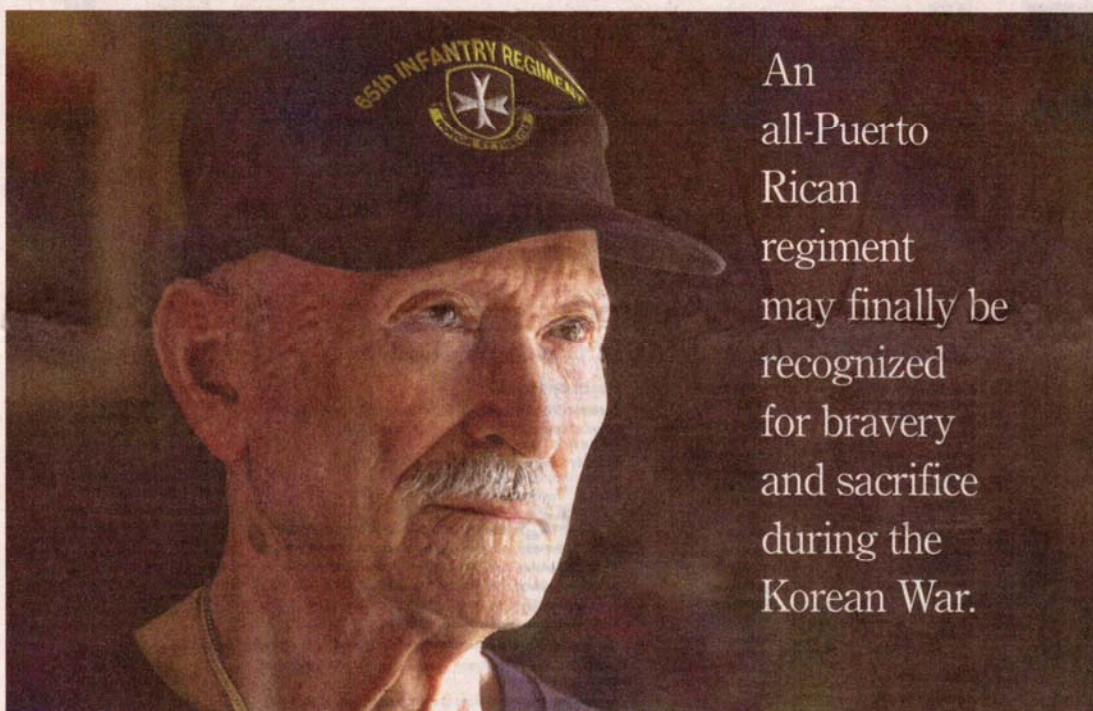
The Journal News

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TUESDAY, JULY 2, 2013

A GANNETT COMPANY

A SALUTE TO THE 65TH



An
all-Puerto
Rican
regiment
may finally be
recognized
for bravery
and sacrifice
during the
Korean War.

Juan O'Neill, 82, of Cortlandt served in the Korean War as a member of the all-Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment, the only all-Hispanic unit in Army history. » Photo gallery and video report on lohud.com. SETH HARRISON/THE JOURNAL NEWS

By Rob Ryser :: rroyser@lohud.com

Juan O'Neill doesn't need a Congressional Gold Medal to validate the patriotism that he showed for the United States while he was fighting in Korea as a member of an all-Puerto Rican infantry regiment.

The 82-year-old says his experience confirms that he and his fellow soldiers in the segregated 65th Infantry were valiant, sacrificing for a country that would not allow them to shower with whites, much less vote in its elections.

But a Congressional Gold Medal may help those who are not familiar with the "Pride of Puerto Rico" recognize the contri-



A photo of Juan O'Neill, taken when he served in the Korean War. SUBMITTED

See 65TH, Page 4A



A photo of Juan O'Neill of Cortlandt, now 82, center, with other members of his unit, taken when he served in the Korean War as a member of the all-Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment. There is momentum for the unit to receive the Congressional Gold Medal, which is the nation's highest civilian honor. SUBMITTED

65TH: Gold Medal sought for soldiers

Continued from Page 1A

bution the soldiers made fighting for the American way.

"(They) fought for America and put their lives on the line for America, even when America didn't see them as fully equal," says U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, who is backing a bill to honor the unit with the nation's highest civilian award.

The story of the 65th Infantry and its fighting name — the Borinqueneers — dates to the start of Puerto Rico as an American territory in 1898. But the story has come alive in recent years thanks to a documentary produced by a Cortlandt filmmaker and a group that is lobbying Washington to recognize the soldiers' dedication and bravery.

"Sometimes I get very emotional," says O'Neill from the home in Cortlandt he has shared with his wife, Heloise, for 60 years. "There was a lot of prejudice. A lot of prejudice."

A national expression of appreciation could help soothe wounds by putting O'Neill's 65th Infantry in a celebrated class of Congressional Gold Medal recipients ranging from Olympian Jesse Owens to Mother Teresa of Calcutta to Nelson Mandela of South Africa.

"Puerto Rico has never had an army of its own," says Miguel Hernandez, a Puerto Rican-born former mayor of Ossining. "The 65th Infantry is America's foreign legion."

Little was discussed about the 65th Infantry before 2007, when Noemi Figueroa Soulet released



Juan O'Neill with his medals. A Congressional honor may help those unfamiliar with 65th Infantry recognize the contribution of its members. SETH HARRISON/THE JOURNAL NEWS

a 78-minute documentary she produced about the Borinqueneers, nicknamed after the native Indian name for Puerto Rico, "Borinquen," or "land of the brave lord."

Soulet's film not only documents the bravery the unit displayed by charging a Chinese position with bayonets and by rescuing Marines who were pinned down, but also the struggle the Puerto Rican unit faced to overcome stereotypes that it was a "rum and coke" regiment that was not battle worthy.

The 65th Infantry's darkest moment came in 1952 when 84 members were convicted in a mass court martial on charges of desertion and disobeying orders, mostly stemming from bloody battles for two hills in what is now the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea.

"It was a massacre," says O'Neill, who was injured at Kelly Hill, where his unit was outnumbered and overwhelmed by enemy artillery on high ground. "My Jeep was hit and I was under the Jeep

bleeding from my nose and my ears."

O'Neill was not one of the soldiers accused of refusing to obey orders, but the court martial is a sore spot, he says, because a unit of white soldiers also refused orders at the same hill and were not arrested.

Like many of his military buddies, O'Neill's brothers and father also served with the 65th. Unlike many of them who remained on the island and mostly volunteered for military service, O'Neill had moved to the Bronx with his family by the time he was drafted in 1951.

After the war he supported his four children as a General Motors assembly line worker in what is now Sleepy Hollow.

As he cried recalling the fighting in Korea, his wife cried too.

"It has been very rough sometimes," she said. "He says he's alive because he prayed the rosary every night over there."

The court martial happened three years after the Army had been deseg-

regated, and the same year that Puerto Rico was given self-governing status as a commonwealth.

There was such objection in Puerto Rico over the imprisoned soldiers that they were released after six months.

Today the 65th remains the Pride of Puerto Rico, says Frank Medina, a former Army captain and Iraq War veteran who founded a national group that is lobbying Washington for Congressional Gold Medal recognition.

"We're focused on getting the two-thirds majority in Congress we need to get this passed," Medina said. "In the House of Representatives we have 52 co-sponsors and we need 290. The requirement in the Senate is 67 and we have eight."

There is recent precedent for honoring a military unit in this way.

In 2008 the Congressional Gold Medal was awarded to the American Indian Code Talkers, who enlisted as wartime communications specialists even though they were not citizens.

In 2009 the Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II were given the honor.

And in 2011 the honor went to segregated units of black Marines who trained at Montford Point in North Carolina.

"I predict that the gold medal will be approved for the 65th," said Soulet, who was born in Puerto Rico. "They have given this award to all the other units that were segregated. The 65th is the last one."



NBC Latino.com (online) - 11/14/2012

NBCLATINO.com

People



[VIDEO] First-time filmmaker devotes herself to Puerto Rican veterans, “The Borinqueneers”

by [Kristina Puga](#), [@kristinapuga](#)
9:15 am on 11/14/2012

Noemi Figueroa Soulet had a background in Hispanic commercials and acting and was planning on becoming a dance therapist, but somehow the story of the Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment, the only Hispanic-segregated unit in Army history during World Wars I and II and the Korean War, lured all of her attention. So much so,

that the Nuyorican, without any filmmaking experience, dedicated nearly a decade of her life to creating her first and only documentary, “The Borinqueneers” in order to tell their story.

“The Borinqueneers” is the first major documentary to chronicle the story of these forgotten soldiers. The one-hour version premiered nationally for the first time on PBS in 2007, and the Armed Forces Network aired the film to more than 850,000 U.S. troops overseas. Having won many awards in the past five years, throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico, it’s screening again on Saturday, November 17, at the 2012 International Puerto Rican Heritage Film Festival in New York City.

“I’ve always been interested in Latino issues and trying to show positive role models and show that we are the fabric of society,” says Soulet, producer, director and writer of “The Borinqueneers.” “If anything proves that, it is the service of our soldiers – that’s the ultimate sacrifice.”

Throughout the nine years it took Soulet to make the film, she interviewed approximately 275 Puerto Rican veterans over the phone and in person. Soulet says the majority of the 65th veterans live in Puerto Rico and Florida, but she has even interviewed a Mormon in Utah. “The hardest part was selecting them...24 appear in the film,” says Soulet, who explains the most time-consuming part was the fundraising needed to fund the film and do the research. “There was very little information out there...I remember contacting the Center for Military History in Washington DC...I began forming relationships with people through the internet.”

The more she talked with veterans, the more committed to the project she got. “There was a point that I had gone in so deep there was a point of no return,” says Soulet, who says she bonded deeply with the “viejitos,” as Soulet calls them, and found the subject matter of a lifetime. “They’re dying — you then feel, ‘If I give up, and all these years are wasted for nothing and their stories don’t get out,’ I would feel a tremendous guilt.”

Soulet, now 55, slowly had become the voice of the Puerto Rican soldiers that no one ever heard about. “In my film a veteran says at the end, ‘I just want the American people to know we did our share,’” says the filmmaker, adding, “They would ask me, ‘Noemi, when are you going to finish?’ They wanted their story told.”

And she says years after the film has been completed, the veterans continue to call her. Soulet recalls a story of a veteran who was wearing one of the 65th Regiment caps, which she sells on her Web site. “He went to pay for the meal, and the cashier recognized the cap and said, ‘Are you a Borinqueneer? I can’t charge you. You’re one of our heroes.’ He called me, so proud, and I thought, ‘That’s why I did this.’”

Soulet says by taking nine years to complete her film, she’s formed relationships so strong that some of the men are like adoptive fathers to her. “It really affects me and breaks my heart, because now they are going fast,” says Soulet about the passing of many of the veterans year by year. “I’ll get an e-mail from the veteran’s family saying they passed away, and that I meant so much to him.”

Soulet says in some cases, she only spoke to a veteran only one or two hours, but they never forgot those few minutes in which someone was truly listening. “When they’re gone, and when I’m gone, this film will always be there,” says Soulet, who dedicates her days now doing national presentations about the 65th Regiment. “That’s my legacy, because I don’t have children...This is my baby.”

<http://nbclatino.com/2012/11/14/video-a-one-time-filmmaker-devotes-herself-to-puerto-rican-veterans-the-borinqueneers/#s:borinqueneers1>



Documentary pays homage to Puerto Rican military unit



Left, Miguel Berlingeri served in the Army from 1951 to 1952 in Korea, France and Panama, and in Vietnam in 1964 before being discharged in 1966. Right, Carlos Montes is a Korean War veteran who served with the 65th Infantry Regiment from 1951 to 1955. They, and other veterans of Puerto Rican descent, will be honored with a documentary film to be shown in Columbus today. *Photos: Nate Parsons*

Thursday, October 15, 2009

By SCOT ALLYN

sallyn@MorningJournal.com

Two Lorain veterans of the only all-Hispanic unit in the U.S. military recalled the horrors of the Korean War yesterday before traveling to Columbus to speak at a showing today of a documentary film about the unit.

Carlos Montes, 76, and Miguel Berlingeri, 82, said the film, "The Borinqueneers," is an accurate portrayal of the hardships Puerto Rican soldiers faced in wartime during the 20th century. The film, a 2007 documentary by Noemi Figueroa Soulet, was screened in Columbus today as part of Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations, and was sponsored by Nationwide Insurance.

Montes and Berlingeri served in the 65th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. Army, which began as a volunteer unit in 1899 and saw action in World War I, World War II, the Korean War and other conflicts.

Berlingeri said he arrived in Korea in September 1950 after a month-long crossing of the Pacific. He also fought in World War II, but not as a member of the 65th Infantry Regiment, he said. "In Korea, we fought in the south, and in the north to free the Marines from the Yalu River," he said. In the 65th Infantry, he was assigned to a heavy mortar company as a forward observer. "I'm no hero," he said. "I observed the enemy and gave the directions to our mortar guys to send shells over our troops to hit the enemy." Berlingeri said he has seen the film twice. "When I started watching the movie, I saw my uncle who got killed in February 1951 in Korea," he said. "I had to stop watching it, because it brought back too many memories."

Montes trained recruits for the Korean War and had other duties at Losey Field, in Ponce, Puerto Rico, where he stayed until 1955. "The Puerto Ricans who went (to Korea) never saw snow before, and in Korea it was below zero," he said. "In the summertime, the rain caused lots of mud. I got emotional when I saw the movie." His duties in Puerto Rico included escorting the bodies of fallen soldiers to their families' homes. He also had to bury the casualties from Korea, he said. After the war, Montes came to Lorain when he left the Army and worked at the Lorain Ford Assembly Plant, where he retired in 1994.

Berlingeri came to Lorain in 1966, after retiring from the Army as a staff sergeant. His service included duty as a military policeman, including guarding the gold at Fort Knox, Ky. While Berlingeri's unit was fighting in North Korea, they had to sleep in the snow for about two months, he said. "We got a little frostbite but we didn't get sick," he said. "There were over 2,000 Puerto Ricans in the 65th. I lost a lot of friends there."



Korean War film depicts Puerto Rican regiment

By Mary Louise Speer | Thursday, September 11, 2008

Producer Noemi Figueroa Soulet shared the story of creating "The Borinqueneers" documentary, Wednesday, during the Army Sustainment Command and U.S. Army Garrison's recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month at Rock Island Arsenal.

The documentary depicts the contributions made by the 65th Infantry Regiment and the importance of vital leadership during the Korean War. The 65th was a segregated unit of men from Puerto Rico who could not vote for their commander-in-chief but were subject to the draft and discrimination.

"I spent nine years of my life producing this film for no salary," Soulet, who was born in Puerto Rico and raised in New York, said. "I do not have any direct connections to the 65th. I felt I needed to make this film."

Her impetus came from listening to a relative, a World War II veteran, talk about his experiences.

Soulet also wrote the movie, which debuted on PBS last year and appears on the Armed Forces Network.

The work involved researching military records and oral histories and interviewing the people featured in The Borinqueneers.

Ramon Torres Villafane, a veteran of the 65th, shared his story with the audience. An original member of the 65th Infantry Regiment, he joined the Army in 1943.

He served with an anti-aircraft artillery battalion in Panama before becoming part of the 65th at age 24. "What came first? Duty," he said.

"Our first job there was to clean up the hills and pockets the enemy left," he said. "I was assigned to a unit. Our job was to contact the enemy. Our job was more like spies."

Major General Robert Radin, commander of the Army Sustainment Command, recalled the contributions made by local men.

"How many of you know the town of Silvis? There is a block up there known as Heroes Street," he said. "The contributions in our local area of the Hispanic are very great."

The Hero Street USA monument, in Silvis, Ill., honors eight Hispanic soldiers who gave their lives while fighting in World War II and the Korean War.

"Hispanics have distinguished themselves in all of America's war efforts," Soulet said. "Unfortunately, this is a part of U.S. history that is normally not taught to us or to our children."

The city desk can be contacted at (563) 383-2450 or newsroom@qctimes.com.



New York Daily News - VIVA Section - 8/8/2007

Unknown soldiers

Film vindicates forgotten World War II Boricua fighters

BY ELISSA STRAUSS

elissaavery@gmail.com

During the summer of 1998, filmmaker Noemí Figueroa went to visit an uncle of her husband's who was a World War II veteran.

She had recently seen Steven Spielberg's "Saving Private Ryan" and, after noticing the absence of Latinos in the popular film, decided to ask him a few questions about Latinos in the military.

Figueroa's curiosity was sparked and she quickly realized she had found a story that had to be told.

Eight years later, Figueroa's documentary, "The Borinqueneers," airs locally tomorrow at 8 p.m. on Ch. 13 (WNET) and Sunday on Ch. 21 (WLIW) also at 8 p.m. The film tells the little-known story of the Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment, the only all-Hispanic unit in the history of the U.S. Army.

Created in 1899 by the U.S. Congress, the 65th was a segregated unit made up of mostly Puerto Rican officers, and served in World War I, World War II and the Korean War. Due to Puerto Rico's unique status as a U.S. commonwealth, the soldiers could serve and be drafted although the island is not a state of the union. "I was born in Puerto Rico, raised in New York, and I had never heard of the 65th," Figueroa, 50, said.



A scene from "The Borinqueneers."
Photo: Marcelino Cruz

"Latinos are absent in war films," she said. "So I figured, if they are not going to tell our stories we have to step up to the plate."

Relying on testimony from vets and rare archival footage, the film covers the history of the 65th with a focus on their dramatic experience during the Korean War.

After two years of outstanding conduct in Korea, the Borinqueneers — as the members of the 65th were nicknamed — were caught up in a military scandal when approximately 150 soldiers abandoned their posts and were eventually arrested and tried in the largest court-martial of the war. The movie explores how discrimination played a role in this case, as well as others.

Figueroa said that many soldiers she interviewed on camera were speaking about these events for the first time in more than 50 years.

"They got so emotional," she said. "But they all had such a great sense of pride for having represented not only the United States, but also Puerto Rico." Many of the vets would even send in checks to help her finish the film.

Eugenio Quevedo, 81, a member of the 65th, believes the film is a saving grace for the legacy of the Borinqueneers.

"The new generation of Puerto Ricans doesn't know anything about it. They don't know about the sacrifice we made," said Quevedo, who lives in Manhattan. "It was about time someone did something about that."

The film (www.borinqueneers.com), which is narrated by New York actor Héctor Elizondo, will be shown on PBS stations throughout the country this month and released on DVD Aug. 15. There will also be a screening at Hostos Community College on Friday, Aug. 24, at 7 p.m.

But the film has already had an impact on one man in Florida.

Figueroa said she got a call recently from a vet in Orlando. He had been out to dinner at a Red Lobster with his family and happened to be wearing his 65th Regiment baseball cap. When he went to pay for the meal he was told that one of the employees had recently seen the documentary and everything would be on the house. "They are finally getting the recognition they deserve," Figueroa said. "They are heroes."



ED COLLIER

Retired Sgt. 1st Class Luis A. Colon, from left, a member of the 65th Infantry Regiment, talks with filmmaker Noemi Figueroa Soulet and Col. Gilberto Villahermosa, inspector general of the Massachusetts National Guard, during a showing of the documentary, "The Borinqueneers," at Clark University last night.

Documentary honors soldiers

Pride swells at premiere at Clark

By Kelly Glista

SPECIAL TO THE TELEGRAM & GAZETTE

WORCESTER — As the first words of their anthem rang through the auditorium, the audience began to sing.

Not "The Star-Spangled Banner" — that had already been sung and the room had listened with quiet respect. Now, they were singing proudly to "La Borinquena," the anthem of Puerto Rico.

The songs were part of the opening ceremonies last night for the premiere of the documentary, "The Borinqueneers" about the U.S. Army's 65th Infantry Regiment. Held at Clark University, the premiere was the only showing of the film in Massachusetts.

The regiment, nicknamed

WORCESTER

The Borinqueneers, began as the Puerto Rico Battalion of Volunteer Infantry in 1899. It 1908, the unit became part of the U.S. Army. Its soldiers, who made up one of very few ethnically based regiments in the Army, have fought in World War I, World War II and the Korean War. For their service in Korea, soldiers in the regiment received four Distinguished Service crosses, 125 Silver Stars, Presidential and Meritorious Unit commendations, two Korean Presidential Unit Citations and the Greek Gold Medal for Bravery.

The film documents the story of this regiment through interviews with soldiers and archived footage, with narration by the award-winning actor Hector Elizondo. The DVD also features Spanish narration.

Film writer, director and producer Noemi Figueroa Soulet said that the film is an

important legacy.

"These men are dying," she said. "And as they die, so do their stories."

Six of the 24 men interviewed in the documentary have since died, said Ms. Figueroa Soulet, and there are still many people that have never even heard of the 65th regiment.

Col. Gilberto Villahermosa, inspector general of the Massachusetts National Guard, was the guest speaker last night. He said it is important to pass along the Borinqueneers' story.

"I still think there are aspects of some historical truth that aren't known," he said.

The story of the soldiers is more than just their service in war; it is also the story of a unit facing an era of segregation and prejudice. Ms. Figueroa Soulet said people don't realize the long history of Puerto Rican service in the military, and how much it affects the entire country.

"This is bigger than me, and

it's bigger than them," she said.

The most important part of the film was the visuals, said Ms. Figueroa Soulet, describing a scene in which a Puerto Rican soldier quickly and skillfully climbs a palm tree.

"Now that's a Caribbean soldier," she said with a smile.

Co-producer and director Raquel Ortiz said the pictures of the young soldiers were the most touching.

"They were all so full of pride, and so handsome, and so ready," she said.

Before the premiere, a brief reception was held, attended by Ms. Figueroa Soulet and Ms. Ortiz as well as the members of the 65th Infantry Regiment in Korea Commemoration Group in Worcester and political figures from all over Massachusetts, including Worcester Mayor Konstantina B. Lukes. The ceremonies were conducted in both English and Spanish.

The documentary will be shown on PBS in September.



Hoy Nueva York (New York) - 7/29/2007

28/HOY NUEVA YORK
VIERNES 29 DE JUNIO 2007

CINE

Documental en tributo al Batallón 65

Será transmitido el 9 de agosto en Nueva York

Por Maricarmen Amado
Diario HOY • 917.339.0823
mcamado@hoyllc.com

NUEVA YORK

La lucha de los soldados puertorriqueños que defendieron a Estados Unidos en varias guerras, pero que fueron mantenidos por años en la sombra, será reconocida a través de un documental a ser transmitido en Nueva York el 9 de agosto próximo, por Canal 13 WNET.

“Los Borinqueños”, el filme sobre el Regimiento 65 de Infantería, conformado íntegramente por boricuas hasta el fin de la guerra con Corea, se hace realidad luego de ocho años.

“Es un logro grande documentar la historia de un regimiento tan famoso en Puerto Rico, y siento que los años de sacrificio han valido la pena. He tenido obstáculos pero me motivaban los veteranos al llamarme para apoyar el proyecto”, dijo Noemí Figueroa Soulet, productora y directora del filme. El regimiento fue creado a principios de 1899 cuando Estados Unidos invadió Puerto Rico y su primera función



SIC RAMÓN VILLAFANE TORRES (RET.)

► Los Borinqueños en Corea.

fue “defender a la isla”, agregó la cineasta. La cinta cuyo título viene de ‘borinquen’, que significa ‘tierra de dioses bravos’, es un legado no sólo para los puertorriqueños sino para todos los soldados latinos, dijo. La narración corre a cargo del actor Héctor Elizondo.

En el filme, los veteranos comparten experiencias dramáticas sobre sus intervenciones en la primera y segunda guerra mundial y en la de Corea, en donde corrieron peligro de morir.

La cinta detalla cómo los puer-

torriqueños que jugaron un rol importante en la historia del ejército de Estados Unidos, en ese entonces no podían votar en las elecciones presidenciales de Estados Unidos, debido al estatus de la isla.

En la Primera Y Segunda Guerra, sus misiones sólo eran de seguridad, y fue en la guerra de Corea cuando Estados Unidos decide asignarlos a la línea de batalla, tanto porque este regimiento estaba bien preparado como porque los soldados americanos no estaban listos. ■



El Nuevo Día (San Juan, PR) - 8/12/2007

EL NUEVO DÍA
DOMINGO 12 DE AGOSTO DE 2007

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EL DOCUMENTAL narra las hazañas y conflictos del primer regimiento hispano de Estados Unidos. Arriba, el monumento al 65 de Infantería, en Río Piedras

Al aire el 65 de Infantería

Canales de Estados Unidos presentan un documental sobre la historia del regimiento

POR JOSÉ A. DELGADO
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WASHINGTON – La historia del Regimiento 65 de Infantería, incluidas sus míticas batallas y las controversias que aún genera, ha comenzado a presentarse en canales públicos de Estados Unidos a través del documental "The Borinqueneers".

El filme, realizado por Producciones El Pozo, narra por voz de veteranos de guerra e historiadores las hazañas y conflictos del primer regimiento hispano, inicialmente formado casi en su totalidad por puertorriqueños, de las Fuerzas Armadas de Estados Unidos.

"Es la historia del regimiento desde sus comienzos en 1899, un recorrido a través de la Primera y Segunda Guerra Mundial, y en especial de la guerra de Corea", explicó Noemí Figueroa Soulet, productora, directora y escritora del documental, que espera pueda exhibirse pronto en Puerto Rico a través de la Corporación para la Difusión Pública (WIPR).

Para el documental fueron entrevis-

tados cerca de 275 soldados y dos docenas de ellos son protagonistas del mismo. El documental, coproducido por Raquel Ortiz, es narrado en inglés por el actor de origen boricua Héctor Elizondo y, en español, por el locutor puertorriqueño David Ortiz Angleró.

En entrevista telefónica desde Nueva York, Figueroa Soulet afirmó que su producción trata también, sin llegar a conclusiones, las denuncias de que el consejo de guerra en Corea en contra de 93 soldados del 65 de Infantería estuvo salpicado de un ambiente de prejuicios étnicos. El consejo de guerra fue ordenado después de que soldados del regimiento, en el otoño de 1952, se negaron a ejecutar nuevas misiones en las colinas Kelly y Jackson Heights, en momentos en que las unidades chinas, numéricamente más grandes, atormentaban a las tropas estadounidenses.

En Kelly y Jackson Heights cayó casi la mitad de los 743 soldados boricuas que perdieron la vida en la guerra de Corea.

Un grupo de los soldados sometidos a consejos de guerra obtuvo clemencia,

pero una organización cívica, Puerto Rican American Research Institute, ha intentado sin éxito, a pesar del apoyo de las autoridades de la Isla, que el gobierno de George W. Bush les otorgue una exoneración total. "Tratamos de ser neutral, cada persona decide qué hubiese hecho en la posición en que se encontraron esos soldados", indicó Figueroa Soulet.

Ya se han efectuado o programado presentaciones especiales del documental en algunas comunidades boricuas. Pero, este mes comenzó a difundirse con fuerza en canales públicos de televisión de Florida, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, California, Texas y New Hampshire. Figueroa Soulet espera que WIPR lo difunda en la Isla.

Además de haberse realizado en español e inglés, el documental tiene dos versiones. La versión larga es de 78 minutos, la corta, que suele ser preferida por los canales de televisión, es de 60 minutos.

La reacción de la comunidad boricua al documental ha sido extraordinaria, según la productora. "Nunca me imaginé las emociones que genera (el 65 de Infantería) en muchas personas que recuerdan a sus familiares que formaron parte del regimiento", indicó Figueroa.

Nunca me imaginé las emociones que genera (el 65 de Infantería) en muchas personas que recuerdan a sus familiares que formaron parte del regimiento"

NOEMI FIGUEROA SOULET
productora



New York Post - 11/09/2001

Hell froze over in Korea for Puerto Rican troops

Sunday is Nov. 11, Veterans Day. Americans will salute everyone who has served in our armed forces, including the 1 million soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who gave their lives to help preserve our freedom.

To honor our veterans, the New York Post will profile local heroes who served our nation during its times of need in World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm.

By NEIL GRAVES

No war has ever been fought in Antarctica. The closest we've come so far is Korea.

Temperatures there routinely plunged to 20 and 30 degrees below zero. Among those shedding blood in that war was the 65th Infantry Regiment, an all-Puerto Rican unit.

"Every morning, they cut legs and hands because of the frostbite," said Israel Montalvo, 73, a former machine-gunner who recalled his spit turning to ice before it would hit the ground. You had to keep moving. If you don't, you're dead."

About 99 percent of the soldiers in the 65th came from Puerto Rico and their home base, Camp Tortuguero, just outside San Juan. Which is why one New Yorker had an awakening.

"I'd never heard of the 65th," admitted Eugene Quevedo, 75, who was drafted upon graduating high school here, handed a rifle and assigned to the Puerto Rican regiment. "But I'm glad I served. It was a good outfit."

President Harry Truman's executive order of 1948 desegregated the military. This led to the 65th having one of the rarest footnotes in all of America's 225 years worth of battalions, regiments and



FIGHTING 65th: Veterans of the 65th Regiment — proudly calling themselves the "Borinqueneers" — include (from left) Jaime Lopez, Eugenio Quevedo, Israel Montalvo and José Antonio de la Rosa-Melendez.

N.Y. Post: Tamara Beckwith

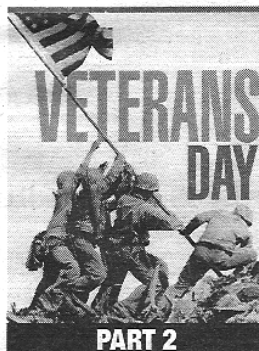
divisions.

"By May 1952, most of the African-American units had been integrated — but not the 65th," said Westchester filmmaker Noemi Figueroa Soulet, who is shooting a documentary on the unit.

"It was possibly the last unit to be integrated. They began slowly around January 1953, but over the next three months, they began assigning 'continental' soldiers and transferring out Puerto Ricans."

Korea was the first war in which the armed forces began using a rotation system — placing one year as a ceiling on combat duty and shipping men out. As the war dragged on, the unit's Hispanic influence waned: Spanish-speaking officers were transferred out and mainland officers and enlisted men filled the ranks.

"It eventually ended up about 10 percent Puerto



Rican," Figueroa Soulet said. "There were more 'continental' officers at the end of the war than the beginning."

Although the African-Americans, Japanese-Americans and Native Americans have been belatedly getting their just military due, the Puerto Rican soldiers' legacy has been strictly low-profile, the vets complain.

"I watch the History

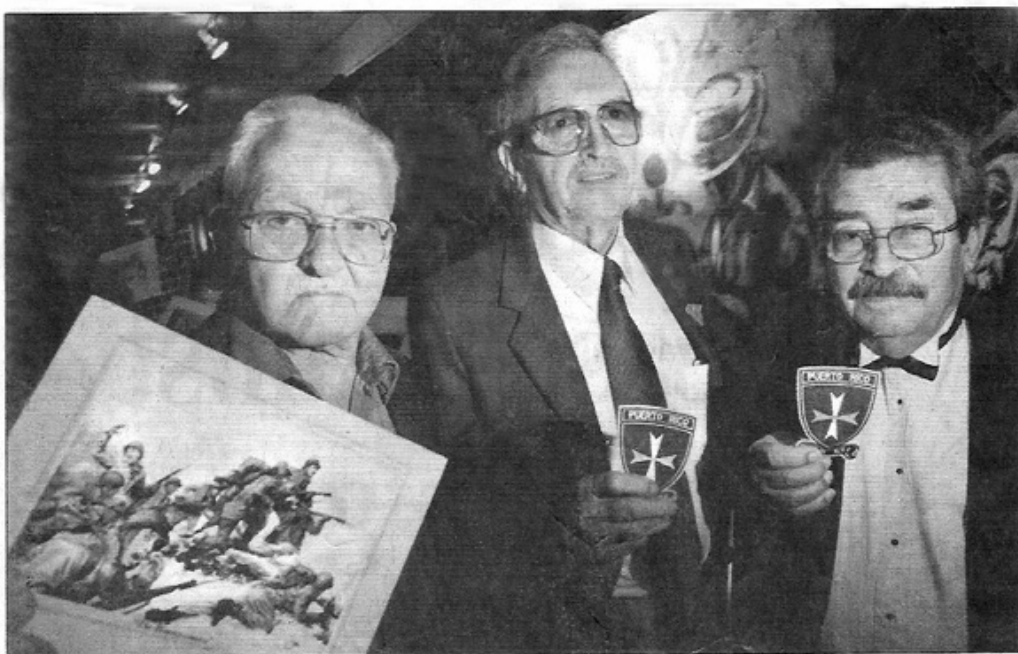
Channel and I see the Nisei and I see Buffalo Soldiers, but nothing about the 65th," Quevedo said.

"The American people must learn about a regiment that sacrificed their lives."

Today, the next generation of "Borinqueneers" — as the Puerto Rican soldiers called themselves — are itching to get some trigger time in Afghanistan and make their own history.

"My son [Staff Sgt. Jaime Lopez Jr.] — we call him Jimmy — is stationed at Fort Bragg, he's a Ranger," said Jaime Lopez, 70, a rifleman who fought in Korea from 1951 to 1952.

"He wants to be where the action is. He phoned me and I told him, 'You're so lucky you are not there.' He got so mad. He said, 'No, Popi, I want to fight, I want to fight, I want to fight!'"



AL DIAZ/HERALD STAFF

VETERANS: Former members of the 65th Infantry Regiment, from left, Ramon Torres of Tampa, Pedro Santana of Miami and Jose Mercado of Kissimmee were honored at Friday's reception.

Filmmaker offers preview of upcoming documentary

BY ADRIANA CORDOVI
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Through the power of film, Noemí Figueroa Soulet hopes to tell the story of a group of soldiers from her native land — Puerto Rico.

For three years she has been documenting soldiers' lives from the 65th Infantry Regiment, the only all-Hispanic unit in U.S. military history. It was made up of Puerto Rican soldiers and fought in World Wars I and II and the Korean War before the squadron was integrated.

Although the documentary, *The Puerto Rican Soldier: The Borinqueneers of the 65th Infantry Regiment*, is still in the works, she gave a 12-minute sneak preview Friday during a

Film examines group of Puerto Rican soldiers.

reception at the Hyatt Regency Miami. Hosted by the Puerto Rican Professional Association of South Florida, the event honored the regiment's soldiers and raised money to produce her film.

"I'm very excited that I have been able to help," said former soldier Ramon Torres of Tampa. His father, also named Ramon, had also been one of the group's first soldiers.

Torres was one of three soldiers at the reception, which featured an art exhibit by six Puerto Rican artists, a concert by the Puerto Rico Handbells Choir, and the documentary's preview.

"I appreciate the initiative to pay homage to our regiment," said former soldier Pedro Santana of Miami. "It brings back many memories for us."

Luia A. Torres, vice chairman of PROFESA, says it hosted the event because the soldiers needed to be honored for their bravery and their contributions. "We feel it's an untold story, and it's necessary to bring out," he said.

Soulet, who is based in New York and is co-producing the film with Raquel Ortiz, has interviewed 175 war veterans from the regiment. "I think it's important for the Puerto Rican community to know about its heroes," she said. Catalina Rullan, who attended Friday's reception, called it "a family affair." She took her 8-year-old daughter, Gabriela, with her. "It's a way for her to get in touch with her roots," she said.



Puerto Rican veterans gain respect with film

By WALTER PACHECO
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

A Puerto Rican regiment is being recognized in a documentary for its heroic efforts during the Korean War after more than a half-century of near obscurity.

Noemi Figueroa Soulet, who is producing the film in New York, is in the Orlando area to interview veterans of the 65th Infantry, which is well-known on the island but not in the States.

She came to Orlando because the

region is known for its burgeoning Puerto Rican population.

"The unique experience of the only all-Hispanic unit in [U.S.] military history was my inspiration for this film. These men were second-class citizens who could not vote but still had to go to war. Many did not even speak English," Soulet said. "They were thrust to serve a country they knew little about, yet fought to the end to defend it."

Islanders, although U.S. citizens

PLEASE SEE VETERANS, B2

Soldiers faced courts-martial during Korean War

VETERANS FROM B1

cannot vote for the president.

Carlos Ruiz Gaudin, 70, a Company B rifleman with the 65th Infantry, tells stories of bone-chilling weather and "chinitis" — a word the troops coined to describe their fear of the Chinese division in Korea.

"There were moments when you were just too scared to raise your head for fear you'd be killed by the Chinese," Gaudin said. "Only our families know these stories, and they are the ones that keep them alive for us."

The U.S. Army organized the 65th Infantry Regiment in 1899, a year after Spain ceded Puerto Rico to the United States.

In the 1950s it was dubbed "Borinqueneers" after the Indian tribe of Puerto Rico. The military brass also referred to the unit as the "rum and Coke" outfit.

Although the soldiers initially were drafted solely for the defense of the island, they later would serve in World War I and II.

However, it was during the Korean War that the soldiers of the 65th Infantry proved that they were no fizzy cocktail, but a heroic and worthy regiment.

Gaudin remembers suffering a nasty spell of frostbite that nearly killed him while defending his post.

"I had lost my glove while I was standing guard at my post. Suddenly, I couldn't feel my hand, arms and, later, my entire body. All I could do was move my eyes — I was frozen," Gaudin said.

He remained in a makeshift hospital recovering for two

On the Web

For more information on the 65th Infantry Regiment, visit www.prsoldier.com.

weeks before he was sent back to the battlefield.

Other soldiers faced deadlier enemies than frostbite.

In one battle in Seoul, the soldiers fought for three days, then charged into the fray with fixed bayonets and forced out a Chinese division.

They also were instrumental in protecting the U.S. Marines after a failed attack in North Korea.

That battle was captured in a 1992 painting commissioned by the National Guard Founda-



GAUDIN

tion.

A lesser-known and controversial incident resulted in the courts-martial of several men of the regiment after they were accused of abandoning their posts.

"These men considered this battle a suicide mission and refused to fight. After the court-martial, all the sentences were remitted, and they were honorably discharged," Figueroa Soulet said.

'Amazing stories'

However, much of this history remains unrecorded.

"Many of these veterans have amazing stories about how they survived before and



U.S. ARMY

Untold story. The 65th Infantry Regiment, the only all-Hispanic company in U.S. military history, has been rarely studied in the United States. Many in the regiment were recognized for bravery.

after the war, yet you can't find any of that in our history books," said Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, an assistant journalism professor at the University of Texas at Austin who is researching the social and cultural impact of Hispanic military men from the 1920s to post-Korean War America.

"The lack of Latino scholars accounts for the little research done on Hispanics in the military," Rivas-Rodriguez added. "There is a real urgency to capture the history of these veterans."

Many of the surviving

veterans from the regiment are in advancing years, and few remain to tell their stories.

Gaudin himself is ailing from diabetes and cirrhosis of the liver.

"I may not be in the best of health, but I get around. It is very important to me that other people will know what happened to us during the Korean War," Gaudin said. "We have much to tell."

Honor at Arlington

A few years ago, the regiment was honored with a plaque at Arlington National

Cemetery.

"Many of the members of the 65th Infantry Regiment received Silver Stars and Purple Hearts for their bravery and service in the U.S. military," said Rep. Jose Serrano, D-N.Y., during the Arlington ceremony. "It is so important that we recognize their contributions and include them in the history that is taught in our schools so that young people can learn about their accomplishments."

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el diario *vivir*

'El Soldado Puertorriqueño'

Noemí Figueroa Soulet lucha por terminar este documental que relata la historia de la única unidad hispana segregada en la historia militar de los Estados Unidos.

MARÍA VEGA

Nueva York

¿Cuándo estará listo el documental de Noemí Figueroa Soulet sobre el regimiento 65 de Infantería?

"Eso es lo que todo el mundo me pregunta", responde Figueroa Soulet. "Yo mantengo una lista de gente que me manda notas por correo electrónico, y cartas, preguntando".

"Ya he trabajado en esto por cuatro años, y me gustaría terminarlo mañana mismo", agrega. "Pero si no consigo el dinero para terminarlo, no va a ver nunca la luz del día. Esa es la triste realidad".

Es la triste realidad de mucha de la gente que trabaja en documentales. Las emisoras comerciales usualmente no muestran interés, y en el mundo de las emisoras no-comerciales hay mucha competencia y poco dinero.

Figueroa Soulet dice que el 90 por ciento de las personas que comienzan proyectos documentales no llegan a terminarlos, por los innumerables obstáculos.

Pero ella está resuelta a terminar el suyo.

El documental, 'El Soldado Puertorriqueño', relatará la historia de la única unidad hispana segregada en la historia militar de los Estados Unidos.

El regimiento 65 de Infantería comenzó como una unidad voluntaria en 1899.

Relata Figueroa Soulet que a pesar de las barreras del crimen racial y el idioma, los

miembros del regimiento se ganaron el respeto de autoridades militares, como el general Douglas MacArthur. Combatieron en el frente brutal de la Guerra de Corea, y recibieron numerosas condecoraciones.

Pero en los Estados Unidos, indica la creadora del documental, el 65 de Infantería ha sido un regimiento olvidado.

Figueroa Soulet ha rescatado historias como la del sargento José A. Negrón, recomendado en 1951 para una Estrella de Plata que nunca recibió.

Figueroa Soulet busca corregir ese tipo de injusticias de la historia con su documental.

Ya todo el documental ha sido filmado, con entrevistas a numerosos veteranos. Pero hace falta editar el material y prepararlo profesionalmente. Figueroa Soulet calcula que todavía le falta recaudar \$70 mil para completar el proceso.

Para recaudar fondos, Figueroa Soulet presenta porciones de su documental en actividades públicas, en las que frecuentemente también participan veteranos del 65 de Infantería.

Este sábado se realizará una de esas presentaciones en la Biblioteca Pública de Newark, en una actividad co-espiciada por el Centro Hispano de Investigación e Información de Nueva Jersey (NJHRC).

Este otoño, bajo el auspicio de las fuerzas armadas, porciones del documental también



Fotos: U.S. ARMY PHOTOS

AL FRAGOR DE LA BATALLA - El tercer batallón protegiendo un valle al norte de Chorwan, Korea, el 15 de junio de 1951. Abajo, los soldados fatigados regresan a la seguridad después de dos días atrapados en un sitio al norte del río Han. Junio de 1951, Korea.



serán mostradas a miembros del ejército estadounidense en Corea del Sur.

Figueroa Soulet espera que al continuar mostrando parte del proyecto, consiga eventualmente el resto de los fondos que necesita para completar el documental.

Señaló que siente la pre-

sión del paso del tiempo. "Tres de los veteranos, de las entrevistas principales, han muerto en los últimos años", dijo. "Murieron sin ver el documental terminado, y eso me rompe el corazón".

Presentación de 'El Soldado Puertorriqueño', charla con Figueroa Soulet y vetera-

nos del 65 de Infantería, este sábado a las 2 p.m. en la Biblioteca de Newark, 5 de Washington Street, Newark, Nueva Jersey. Entrada gratuita. Datos: (973) 733-7772 o www.npl.org Más información sobre 'El Soldado Puertorriqueño' en www.prsoldier.com