

# **U.S. Latino Patriots: From the American Revolution to Afghanistan, An Overview**

## **By Refugio I. Rochin and Lionel Fernandez**

### **Background**

The mission of the Smithsonian Center for Latino Initiatives is to disseminate and advance understanding and knowledge of the contributions of Latinas and Latinos to the culture, society, history, arts, and sciences of the United States (U.S.). Since its inaugural opening on August 10, 1998, the Center has taken an active role in developing knowledge of the accomplishments of Latinas/os, "Latino Patriots" and their role in U.S. military history. Under the direction of Refugio I. Rochin, research has been conducted, data collected, and text prepared at the Smithsonian Institution by Lionel Fernandez, a volunteer at the Center for Latino Initiatives. Jose Alonzo Oliveros, a former fellow at the Center under the auspices of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (FY 2000), initially prepared the groundwork for this project.

This research has explored the feasibility of developing an exhibition at the Smithsonian to document the contributions of Hispanic Americans in military conflicts since the American Revolution where the U.S. has played an active role. This history dates back to the colonial era with the onset of the American Revolution and spans more than 200 years to include contemporary military conflicts. The Smithsonian's collections include more than 140 million objects and archival materials. These include military memorabilia of U.S. war periods. The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History is the primary repository of materials that involve the participation of Latinas/os in U.S. military engagements. The National Air and Space Museum has a few relevant objects to add to our knowledge. Several of these wars have placed U.S. Hispanics in the roles of both allies and enemies with Hispanics from other nations.

There are several museums in the U.S. and other countries that trace U.S. involvement in military engagements. However, our research indicates the contribution of Latino patriots is relatively unknown. In addition, there exists a vast body of data, in print, film, and on the internet that is available about the U.S. role in warfare by historians and in personal accounts.

The infamous surprise attack on the people and government of the U.S. on September 11, 2001, underlines the need to honor the contribution of American heroes, both civilian as well as military, who are ready to come to the defense of this great nation and give their lives if necessary. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty! An international war against terrorism has begun against an elusive and deadly enemy, the Al Queda network.

The project titled, "U.S. Latino Patriots," was developed by the Center for Latino Initiatives after discussion with Hispanic veterans, current and former colleagues, and educators in Latino Studies. They have all identified the need to recognize and document the military record of Hispanics and/or Latinos in U.S. history, noting the relative absence of this record in state and national museums and archives.

### **The Context**

The history of the U.S. has been marked by periods of coalition warfare, joining with other nations to enlist their aid or alternately, to help pursue common political and other goals with military intervention. In other periods, American foreign policy shifted to a relatively conservative position that the U.S. should avoid foreign domestic entanglements. Coalition warfare, a concept discussed by William J. Coughlin and Theodore C. Mataxis, illustrates precisely how the U.S. made such arrangements in the period from the American Revolution, with the Declaration of Independence from England, to the present day. There were also periods when the U.S. conducted war on its own against another foreign power as it expanded westward to the Pacific Ocean and to its northern and southern borders with Canada and Mexico, respectively. These conflicts involved Spain, England, France and Mexico on this continent.

W. Granville Hough and N.C. Hough have prepared a series of studies on the extensive history of Spanish soldiers who served during the American Revolution and fought against England. They systematically reviewed the record of Spain's patriots in Arizona, California, Louisiana, and Texas. Spain declared war against England on June 21, 1779 and continued operations against England until peace was declared on September 3, 1783.

Hough and Hough observed in a preface to their volume on *Spain's California Patriots in its 1779-1783 War With England During the American Revolution* (Part 2): "Our final thought is the same as that expressed by the historian, Herbert E. Bolton, who suggested that The American Revolution can be considered a rather limited affair between a European country and her colonies on the American east coast, or it can be considered alternately as THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, which freed a whole continent from European domination by 1821, and whose ideas are still being used today."

The Center for Latino Initiatives takes the broad view that to understand the entire contribution of Latino patriots one must look at the complete history of the Spanish and their descendants in this hemisphere, beginning before the Conquest and continuing to the present time.

### Definition of "Hispanic" & "Latino"

A continuing ideological battle has existed among members of the Hispanic-American population regarding the use of the term "LATINO" over the often-preferred term, "HISPANIC." The U.S. Census Bureau uses the term "Hispanic" and "Latino" interchangeably to classify the origin of various self-reported Spanish-speaking groups (Mexican, Puerto Rican, Central or South American, or "other") into one ethnic group. Many people from 'Hispanic ethnic groups' prefer to use the term "Latino" for personal, political and social reasons. However, *Hispanic Magazine* recently conducted an analysis based on a survey of 1,200 Latino registered voters, which concluded that the term "Hispanic" was the preferred term in areas with high Hispanic populations. However, this data also indicated that second- and third-generation Hispanic-Americans prefer the term "Hispanic" to "Latino," while first-generation and recent immigrants prefer the term Latino when describing their ethnic background.

A key corollary question is, how has the U.S. Military defined the term "Hispanic?" Accurate documentation of the participation of Hispanic servicemen and women began after the Vietnam War. Did they base their findings on 'self-identified' Hispanics or Hispanics that military officials defined as persons with Spanish surnames? Undoubtedly both were used. This is an important question because it may explain how some patriots of *Hispanic* descent have been overlooked by U.S. military agencies maintaining statistical records.

The ideological debate about how exactly to use the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" to describe people of Spanish origin may never be resolved. However, regardless of the term these patriots have chosen to identify themselves, their remarkable contributions to the military history of this nation has been profound. American military history would undoubtedly have developed differently without the participation of these patriots, many who were natives of the U.S. or from predominantly Spanish-speaking Latin American countries and Spain. Some may consider themselves 'patriots' first above all else, while others may still strongly identify with the term "Latinos." Others may incorporate the two elements in their personal outlook. In any case, they deserve recognition for their heroic deeds in trying to preserve democracy during times of war. It is therefore essential and appropriate to honor our Latino patriots.

### The Center for Latino Initiatives' View

The Smithsonian's Center for Latino Initiatives has adopted the term *Latino* as used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. However, the term *Hispanic* is also used in the Center's programs, exhibitions, and educational literature whenever possible. In practice, both terms *Latino* and *Hispanic*, are used interchangeably by the Center. However, for the purposes of this project the Center will use the term *Latino* to denote the inclusion of the non-Spanish cultures of Latin America that have contributed immensely to the development and structure of present-day Latino cultural groups. These groups may include people of Latin American descent whose cultural heritage may be African, Asian, American Indian or indigenous, Middle Eastern and/or European.

We have tried to set the record straight in this analysis. The data may cause unease among some readers and historians who believe the term "Latino" is restrictive to Spanish-speaking, excluding the full range of unique and distinct experiences and histories of various Hispanic/Latino cultural groups. The Center for Latino Initiatives believes strongly that as a national organization, it has a responsibility to represent all U.S. Latinos within the Smithsonian Institution, including those who may have different racial and cultural backgrounds.

## Definition of a U.S. Patriot

Although the word, *patriot*, implies a soldier who serves his/her country heroically during military service it can also take other forms. Latino and Latina patriots have also participated as civilians by assisting in U.S. wartime efforts. These have included the contributions by Latina women who worked in munitions factories and Latinos/as in the *Bracero* (foreign farm worker) program who harvested American agricultural products replacing U.S. farmers who joined the armed forces. In addition, U.S. intelligence agencies have documented many examples of valor by Latino patriots in military conflicts.

Throughout the history of the U.S., an American was called a patriot when it was shown that he/she had demonstrated significant valor under fire during a war-related event or period. This "title" was granted to the men or women that had participated in battle to defend the highest principles of U.S. military service. However, patriotism is not limited to acts of heroism during military service, but may also encompass other noteworthy contributions. Many patriots have participated, fought, and died in military conflicts that involved this nation. These same patriots have also fought in battles that determined the outcome of wars between the U.S. and its enemies.

In the Latino community in the U.S., the word patriot has a very precise and significant meaning. In this country that has rarely associated Latinos with the term "patriots," the Latino community has consistently demonstrated that when the U.S. is engaged in a military conflict, they have been the "first ones in and the last ones out." The Latino community has a long history of immigration to this country. Latino sons and daughters have not hesitated to defend their family's honor and have shown their allegiance to this nation through military service. Many have achieved special recognition, including the Medal of Honor, the highest military honor awarded by the U.S. President on behalf of the American government.

The focus of this project is to identify those Latino patriots that have contributed to the military history of the U.S. It is not limited to participants of military service but also to other wartime efforts and may include those Latinos that have participated in critical civilian roles, a group not often recognized for their efforts. These may include patriots that have contributed their services in various war periods in such roles as teachers, farm workers, health providers, and other professionals, while the U.S. was engaged in military conflicts.

Latino patriots have also been instrumental in helping to determine the outcome of major battles between the U.S. and its enemies. Without their contributions, the military as well as the political, economic, and cultural history of the U.S. might very well have been different. The significant contributions of Latinos have not been properly recognized and thus the American public needs to know more about their sacrifices and contributions to ensure the freedom of this nation.

## Recognized Military Conflicts

Recognized military conflicts include several events where the U.S. Congress never officially declared war, as required by the Constitution. However, such "police actions" also involved military engagements with countries that resulted in the deaths and capture of many Hispanic-American soldiers.

Recognized conflicts include:

*American Revolution*

*War of 1812*

*U.S.-Mexican War*

*Civil War*

*Indian War Campaigns*

*Interim 1866-1870*

*1871 Korean Campaign*

*Interim 1871-1898*

*Spanish-American War*

*Philippine Insurrection*

*China Relief Expedition (Boxer Rebellion)*

*Interim 1901-1911*

*Action Against Outlaws—Philippines 1911*

*Mexican Campaign (Vera Cruz) 1914*

*Haiti 1915*

*Interim 1915-16*

*Dominican Campaign*

*World War I*

*Haiti Campaign 1919-1920*

*Second Nicaraguan Campaign*

*Interim 1920-1940*

*World War II*

*Korean War*

*Vietnam*

*Somalia*

*Operation Desert Shield/Storm (Iraq)*

## **The Historical Record**

This project will focus on the contributions of Latino patriots in military conflicts and their significance to their outcomes. Unfortunately, for many years the U.S. government and the U.S. military did not keep separate records of the participation of Hispanic-American soldiers. There were areas in the U.S. still under the control of the Spanish and Mexican governments. More recently, around the Korean War (early 1950s), the U.S. Department of Defense asked new recruits to self-identify to help maintain accurate records of Hispanic-American soldiers in military service. Puerto Rican units served with distinction, in this war. However, we know that some Latinos were overlooked, as in the recent case of Rocky Versace (Vietnam War) who was formerly thought to be an Italian-American. Prior to this period, Hispanic-American soldiers were categorized along with white Americans in the same racial classification. Accurate data was obtained for Hispanics in the armed forces after WWII with creation of the Department of Defense (former War Department).

The time periods that will be discussed reflect the limited information that is available due to limited systematic documentation. A significant amount of work completed in this project is based on the U.S. military's own efforts to document Hispanic-American participation in all the armed services branches. The early time periods, such as the American Revolution, only identify the exploits of individual Hispanic soldiers who gained fame because of political and other appointments and/or courageous acts of valor that elevated them to regional or national recognition by the American people. In subsequent time periods, there is more information available about Hispanic-American participation, especially about individual Hispanic regiments and acts of valor by Hispanic Medal of Honor recipients. As this study progresses, information will be disclosed that documents the extraordinary contribution that Latinos and Latinas, have made to the defense of the U.S.

## **The American Revolution**

The American Revolution, (1775-1782), a.k.a. the War of Independence, was initially a civil war against the British Empire. Later, France (1778), Spain (1779), and the Netherlands (1780), joined our cause with a common enemy, creating an international war. Sea power was important to both sides, providing flexibility in the conduct of the war.

Spain had earlier established an empire that confirmed it was a world power to be reckoned with. Spain had colonies in almost every section of North America, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. England had defeated Spain in the Seven Years War (1754-1763) and subsequently Spain was forced to relinquish its colony in Florida to England. However, Hispanics in the U.S. were eager to assist the American colonists in their struggle against England, even though Spain was not, as yet, officially engaged in the conflict. Spain's military contribution to the early development of the U.S. began the process of demonstrating Hispanic's loyalty, commitment and patriotism.

A very important Hispanic figure during the American colonists' war against Great Britain was Governor and General Bernardo de Galvez. He was the Spanish governor of the Louisiana territories during the time of the American Revolution and was instrumental in assisting then General George Washington to fight the British soldiers who were advancing into the southwestern part of the U.S. Governor de Galvez helped the revolutionists by blockading vital British ships although Spain had not declared war with Britain. In addition, from 1775-1777, Governor de Galvez provided rations and weapons to the Continental Army. In 1777, he arranged safe passage for James Willing, an American agent of the Continental Congress, who led a successful campaign along the Mississippi river harassing British shipping, plantation owners, and military outposts.

It was not until Spain had officially declared war with Great Britain in 1779 that de Galvez organized a militia of Native- Americans, freed African-Americans and his own Spanish regular soldiers to attack British held forts at Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Natchez, Mississippi. A year later, he engaged the British at Mobile, Alabama and a year after that at Pensacola, in western Florida. In each case, de Galvez was able to force the British from their entrenchments and freed these cities. His statue resides in Washington, D.C.

General de Galvez also trained and mentored other Hispanics who would one day contribute significantly to the defense of the U.S. One of de Galvez's officers was Francisco de Miranda, who was born in Caracas, Venezuela on March 28, 1750. Subsequently, de Miranda fought in the siege and surrender of Pensacola, and

later in the Spanish capture of the Bahamas, which he negotiated as the official representative of the governor of Cuba. While in Cuba, de Miranda played a role in obtaining supplies for the French Admiral de Grasse who then sailed to the Chesapeake Bay to assist the Americans to capture Yorktown, Virginia. As a result of these contributions to the American Revolution, statues in Washington, DC and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a park in Pensacola, Florida, and a commuter bus in Chicago, Illinois were dedicated in honor of de Miranda who was also instrumental in helping Venezuela gain its independence from Spain.

Another Hispanic patriot was Captain Jorge Farragut, who came to the U.S. from the Spanish island of Minorca to help the American colonists fight the British during the American Revolutionary War. He is the father of another famous Latino patriot, David Farragut.

The contributions of Hispanics such as Bernardo de Galvez, Jorge Farragut, and Francisco de Miranda were not uncommon. Hispanic persons participated in the Revolutionary War. In addition to the significant contributions of Bernardo de Galvez, there were Hispanic women who participated in the American Revolution. In 1781, the French and American forces were about to abandon their siege of Yorktown, Virginia for lack of funds. Cuban women collected money and jewelry so the French Expedition could continue the siege. The financial support from these Hispanic women redefined the term *patriots*. While not soldiers in combat, their contribution to the war effort was significant.

### War of 1812

Anglo-American relations deteriorated in the years following the American Revolution as the British attacked American shipping as trade expanded. The war of 1812-1815 was sparked by the sinking of U.S. ships and by a U.S. Congress determined to punish the British. Expansionist sentiments prompted attacks into Canada that were firmly repelled. Naval and land engagements took place against a superior British military. The war with England ended in a stalemate with a penniless and divided U.S., revealing a nation militarily unprepared. Captain Jorge Farragut also fought in the War of 1812 as a member of the U.S. Navy. Further research is needed to identify the Latino patriot's role in this conflict.

### U.S.-Mexican War

The U.S. annexed Texas from Mexico in 1845, an event complicated by a border dispute. Mexico retaliated and the Mexican-American War, 1846-1848, began. Many Hispanics living on the Texas frontier opposed the Mexican government's treatment of Texans. They fought in crucial battles such as the Battle of the Alamo. In this historic battle, a force of 8,000 Mexican soldiers killed 183 Texans. U.S. casualties included seven Mexicans: Juan Abamillo, Juan Antonio Badillo, Carlos Espalier, Gregorio Esparza, Antonio Fuentes, Calba Fugua, and Jose Maria Guerrero. A survivor was Lieutenant Colonel Juan Nepomucene Seguin, who was sent for reinforcements. After the Battle of the Alamo, he fought in the Battles of San Antonio and San Jacinto. He later was mayor of San Antonio but fled to Mexico in 1842 due to Anglo/Texan hostilities. He later returned to Texas, but was forced to return to Mexico where he lived until his death in 1890.

During the U.S.-Mexican War, Hispanic Americans such as Juan Seguin devoted their lives to help spread democracy into the new territories acquired by the U.S. Those Hispanics who fought on the U.S. side performed gallantly because they had a clear sense of belonging to the U.S. cause and a strong loyalty to their adopted country. Their actions provide an example for Hispanics to guide and inspire them to serve in the U.S. armed forces in the future.

### U.S. Civil War

The 1860 U.S. Census reported there were approximately 27,500 Mexican-Americans living in the U.S. When the Civil War (1861 - 1865) broke out between the states in 1861, the Mexican-American community was suddenly divided. At the outset, approximately 2,550 Mexican-Americans joined Confederate military units and another 1,000 joined the Union forces. In all, as many as 9,900 Mexican-Americans fought during the war. Most volunteers served in integrated regular army or volunteer units. Others served in Mexican units with their own officers. Of the more than 40,000 books and pamphlets written about the U.S. Civil War, only one, *Vaqueros in Blue and Gray*, has been published about the role of Mexican-Americans in the Civil War. These all-Mexican units tended to be volunteer militia units.

In 1863, the U.S. Government authorized the military commander in California to raise four companies of native Mexican-American Californians in order to take advantage of their "extraordinary horsemanship." As a result, the First Battalion of Native Cavalry was created with Major Salvador Vallejo in command. Some 469 Mexican-Americans served in the four companies of the First Battalion of Native Cavalry. These men were stationed at locations throughout the states of California and Arizona. They guarded supply trains, chased bandits, fought Confederate raiders, and helped to defeat a Confederate invasion of New Mexico.

In the state of New Mexico, the Second Regiment of New Mexico volunteers was commanded by Colonel Miguel E. Pino. In addition, six other independent militia companies were formed. Most unit members were Mexican-Americans, as were their commanders. They served in roles similar to the California units, primarily as border guards and fought in numerous small engagements. There were an estimated 4,000 Mexican-Americans among the New Mexico volunteers. Patriots like Lt. Colonel Chavez also commanded a New Mexican militia unit and General Stanilus Montoya commanded the Socorro County, New Mexico militia. Another non-Texan unit with a number of Spanish-speaking soldiers was the 55<sup>th</sup> New York militia, "The Garde Lafayette."



Admiral David G. Farragut. Courtesy: National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

In the State of Texas, the Union raised 12 companies of Mexican-American cavalry, consolidated into the First Regiment of Texas Cavalry (Union). Most of the officers were non-Hispanic, although several Mexican Texans (Tejanos) served as captains, such as George Trevino, Clemente Zapata, Cesario Falcon, and Jose Maria Martines and lieutenants, such as Ramon Garcia Falcon, Antonio Abad Dias, Santos Cadena and Cecilio Vela.

These Latino patriots contributed in many ways to the preservation of the Union during the U.S. Civil War. Perhaps the most famous Hispanic patriot during this period was Admiral David G. Farragut. He was the first Admiral of the U.S. Navy (1866) a rank awarded to him by the U.S. Congress after his famous victory at the Battle of Mobile Bay on August 5, 1864. He was instrumental in achieving victory for Union Naval Forces against the Confederate Navy during some of its bloodiest conflicts. The rallying cry, "Damn the torpedoes-full speed ahead!" is a heroic charge made by Admiral David G. Farragut, to his officers, and seamen.



Loretta J. Vskasuez, alias Harry Buford. Loretta J. Velasquez, The Woman in Battle: Davis Library, UNC, Chapel Hill

In addition to the accomplishments of major patriots such as Admiral David G. Farragut, there were other Latino patriots that contributed notably to the military history of the U.S. One of these patriots was a woman named Loreta Janeta Velasquez who was of Cuban descent. During the Civil War, she masqueraded as a Confederate soldier enlisting in 1860 without her soldier-husband's knowledge. She fought at the Battles of Bull Run, Ball's Bluff and Fort Donelson, but was detected in New Orleans and discharged. She re-enlisted and fought at the Battle of Shiloh until rediscovered. She fearlessly spied in both male and female disguises and her bravery in the Civil War showed great courage and commitment.

Santos Benavides a former Texas Ranger commanded the Confederate 33<sup>rd</sup> Texas Cavalry. This Mexican-American unit defeated Union forces in the 1864 Battle of Laredo, Texas. He was the only Mexican colonel who fought with the Confederate Army during the Civil War.

Luis Fenellosa Emilio, born in Salem Massachusetts of Spanish immigrant parents, was a company commander in the famous 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts ("Colored") Regiment. One of the few officers that survived the charge on Fort Wagner, South Carolina he later became the Regiment's commander. His memoirs called "A Brave Black Regiment," were the basis for the Academy Award-winning film, "Glory".

Federico Fernández Cavada, a Cuban, served the Union army with distinction at Gettysburg, and later wrote his famous book *Libby Life*, describing his imprisonment in a Confederate prison. After the Civil War, he led soldiers during the Cuban revolution, until his capture and execution by the Cuban government.

## The Spanish-American War

During the brief Spanish-American War (1898), Latino patriots participated in military engagements that involved the U.S. Armed Forces. The main conflict was between the U. S. and Spain. However, U.S. victories forced us reluctantly on the road to imperialism as it acquired Cuba and Puerto Rico where U.S. intervention was welcomed. However, in the Philippines, insurgents bitterly opposed the U.S.

Latino patriots sided with the U. S. to gain their independence from Spain in the island colonies of Puerto Rico and Cuba. In 1826 and 1835, Cubans initiated at least two unsuccessful armed revolts. Later attempts in the 1840's to gain their freedom were supported by Cuban refugees in the U.S. Unfortunately, these attempts were also unsuccessful. In the years prior to the Spanish-American War, several U.S. groups comprised of former Cuban refugees, attempted unsuccessfully to free Cuba from Spain. However, success was achieved when the U.S. fought in Cuba after the sinking of the U.S.S. Maine on February 15, 1898 that killed 260 Americans. On April 11, 1898, the U.S. declared war on Spain in retaliation and to free the oppressed Cubans. Among the U.S. forces that landed in Cuba was the 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Volunteer Cavalry under Colonel Leonard Wood and Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt. The "Rough Riders" reflected American diversity with about five percent recent immigrants, and another 20 percent from Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and other states and U.S. territories.

Many Hispanic patriots also served in the "Rough Riders" with Theodore Roosevelt. Among them were private John B. Alamia, Sergeant George W. Armijo, Private G.W. Aringo, Private Jose M. Baca, Private Frank C. Brito, Private Jose Brito, Private Abel B. Duran, Private Joseph L. Duran, Captain Maximiliano Luna, and Saddler Joe T. Sandoval. Of all these Latino patriots, perhaps Captain Maximiliano Luna was the most distinguished Latino member of the "Rough Riders." He was descended directly from the conquistadors who settled New Mexico in 1650 and his family had lived along the Rio Grande River since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. At the time that he joined the Rough Riders, he was 38 years and was educated at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Prior to joining the group, he had served as a sheriff in Valencia County, New Mexico.

The numerous contributions of these Latino patriots serves as a reminder that Latino patriots have also fought against aggressors in Latin America and the Caribbean. They fought gallantly on the side of the U.S. in order to preserve the principles of democracy first established at the time of the American Revolution. Years after the war, George Armijo became a member of U.S. Congress while a military camp at Las Vegas, New Mexico was named after Captain Maximiliano Luna. These patriots not only served the U.S. with distinction through their military service, but they have also, by their example, paved the way for participation by other Latino patriots in future wars.

## The Boxer Rebellion

In 1900, the U.S. acquired the Philippines in the Spanish-American War of 1898. Subsequently, the U.S. joined in the allied expedition that came to the aid of the foreign legations that were under siege in Peking, China during the Boxer Rebellion. However, the decision to take part in this international coalition led to formulation of the U.S. Open Door Policy. In that instance, this nation and Great Britain, for economic reasons, supported Chinese sovereignty in opposition to the territorial ambitions of the other powers, including Germany, Russia, and Japan, who had participated in the Boxer campaign.



American Expeditionary Forces at the gates of Peking.  
Courtesy: National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

Latino patriots participated in the Boxer Rebellion in which patriots such as France Silva was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery and heroic actions. In Peking, China, Private Silva helped to protect the foreign legations against the fanatical followers of the "Boxers," societies, that developed in China to protect its culture against foreign aggression, influence, and ideas. From June 28 to August 17, 1900, Private Silva was instrumental in securing order during events that would have jeopardized the safety of his fellow soldiers. He, along with his fellow marines and sailors, helped to preserve and maintain peace for weeks until the Allied Army relieved them in August 1900.

## World War I

When the U.S. finally entered WW I in April 1917, three years after the war began in Europe, it was not in the role of ally but as an "associated power." These semantics reflect U.S. national hesitation as it temporarily abandoned its isolationist policy.

With the outbreak of World War I and the entrance of the U.S. into this world conflict, Latinos were eager to serve in the U.S. armed forces. The U.S. Army had only about 200,000 active personnel at the beginning of the war. An act of Congress was passed in 1917 to obtain the necessary manpower and about 3.8 million men were drafted into military service. In addition, in 1910, the total U.S. population was almost 92 million people and of these, 13.3 million were foreign-born while another 12.9 million had two foreign-born parents. Overall, about one-third of the U.S. population included recent immigrants, greatly increasing the likelihood that many spoke little or no English at all.





A farewell portrait during World War I. Courtesy: National Museum Of American History, Smithsonian Institution

Most Hispanics emigrated from Spain, Mexico, and Latin America. Thus, there was a significant barrier to training Latino patriots for military service if they lacked sufficient English language skills. Since the U.S. military was engaged in the war in Europe it needed men immediately. The U.S. went ahead and recruited Hispanics and offered them intensive training at Camp Gordon, Georgia. More than 4,000 Hispanics were trained for military service, but were often relegated to menial jobs and ridicule by their English-speaking military peers.

The language barrier posed the most obvious problem and after rudimentary interviews by military personnel, Hispanic recruits were grouped according to their language proficiency and were assigned officers who could speak Spanish. Most Hispanic draftees were trained at Camp Cody, New Mexico, but there were seven other camps where non-English speaking recruits were trained. This training for soldiers with limited English skills was called the "Camp Gordon Plan." However, WW I ended before its implementation.



Tank warfare during World War I. Courtesy: National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

Hispanics participated in World War I and fought gallantly and with distinction. One young Hispanic soldier, Nicolas Lucero a 19 year-old from Albuquerque, New Mexico received the French Croix de Guerre for his brave action in destroying two German machine gun emplacements and maintaining a constant fire against enemy positions for over three hours.

Private Marcelino Serna, a Latino patriot, enlisted in the Army and was sent to fight in the trenches of France. He was shot by a German soldier and seriously wounded. Private Serna was able to continue fighting and subsequently captured 24 German soldiers protecting them from execution by other U.S. soldiers. For his actions, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and later was decorated with the French Croix de

Guerre, the Victory Medal with three bars, and twice with the Purple Heart. Other distinguished Latino patriots during World War I include Frederico Molina and notably, David Barkley, who was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Other Latino patriots did not return home after the war.

After WW I economic activity declined, a brief severe recession followed in the early 1920's, and a new period of prosperity in the U.S. helped many in the Hispanic Community. However, a decade later, the U.S. adopted a repressive anti-immigration policy against "Mexicans," using mass deportation roundups and repatriation that forced many established Hispanics out of their homes and separated families. These events occurred during the economic depression of 1929-1939 in a backlash to create jobs for European Americans. Thus, they deprived Hispanics of their public and private sector jobs and ignored many past contributions to the military and the nation. Similarly, social and economic strains were evident in 1953-1954, as "Operation Wetback," sweeps deported 1,874,431 illegal Mexicans.

However, this did not prevent or discourage Latinos from participating in the next major engagement, WW II, against the totalitarian regimes of Germany, Japan, and Italy when the U.S. became suddenly involved on December 7, 1941. The attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii shook the U.S. out of its isolationism and preoccupation and ultimately forced it into the forefront of world powers. This major event thrust the U.S. onto the world stage again and led to its assuming the role of world leader.

The European policy of appeasement pursued by England and France in its relations with Germany during the 1930s achieved no lasting protection for these nations as they had hoped. Subsequently, appeasement was unmasked as a diplomatic and political failure that came to an abrupt end with the invasion of Poland by the German army on September 1, 1939. WW II had begun!

## World War II

The U. S. entered WW II on December 8, 1941, following the surprise attacks at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii and Manila, the Philippines, and others, by Japanese Imperial Navy aviators. The U.S. declaration of war with Japan was extended to include Germany and Italy on December 10, 1941, after they declared war on this nation

The U.S. supplied materiel and ordnance to its allies, England and France, despite strong non-intervention sentiment, as Nazi German military forces advanced rapidly across Western Europe after it invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. The Nazis swept east across Europe and invaded Russia on June 22, 1941 in "Operation Barbarossa." The U.S. fought WW II until the formal surrender of Japan on August 14, 1945 on the U.S.S. Missouri. VJ Day; victory over Japan was declared August 15. The war in Europe ended on May 9, 1945, VE Day (victory in Europe), with Nazi Germany's surrender.

Many Hispanic Americans were ready and willing to defend their country. Thus, an estimated 250,000 to 500,000 Hispanics served in the U.S. Armed Forces during WW II. During this era, records were incomplete and unable to precisely document the participation of Latinos in the Armed Forces. However, over 53,000 Puerto Ricans are known to have served in the military during the period 1940-1946.

WWII came to a dramatic end with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on August 6 and Nagasaki on August 9, 1945 by the 509<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, commanded by Colonel Paul Tibbets, The Army Air Force bombers were the "Enola Gay" and the "Box Car," respectively. The "Enola Gay," a B-29 Superfortress class bomber, flew over the coast of Japan, appearing over its target, Hiroshima, after the U.S. flew its daily observation and weather flight over the city. The day seemed perfectly normal, with workers and children on their way to their offices, schools, or to join disaster work teams in the city. The bright flash of this new atomic weapon heralded the beginning of a new era of warfare and brought an unexpected finality to everything that had gone before. The destiny of nations and the role of the U.S. as a world leader were radically altered on August 6, 1945.

There were several National Guard units made up primarily of Mexican-Americans that came from Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Most Latinos were placed in regular military units with the exception of the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry regiment from Puerto Rico. Notably, about 200 Puerto Rican women served in the Women's Army Corps, created to fill needed non-combat roles.

Hispanics served in all theaters of conflict during World War II. In the Pacific theater, Hispanics served primarily on the Philippine Islands and other U.S. Pacific territories. When the Japanese forces first attacked

the US at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941, one of the first U.S. casualties was Sgt. Felipe Trejo of Santa Fe, New Mexico and Epimenio Rubi of Winslow, Arizona.



Ferrying supplies to U.S. combat units. Courtesy: National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

After four months of heavy combat, with supplies exhausted, malaria, and without reinforcements, the U.S. and Filipino soldiers defending the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines were overwhelmed by superior Japanese military forces and taken as prisoners on the infamous “Bataan Death March.” There were approximately 16,000 captured U.S. soldiers on this fatal trek from the Bataan Peninsula to Manila Bay. The Japanese soldiers were not prepared to handle this many prisoners and they lacked transportation, food or medical supplies to provide for them. The Japanese soldiers forced their prisoners to march up the Bataan Peninsula some 85 miles to prison camps. During this 12-day “death march,” many prisoners died from mistreatment by the Japanese soldiers, and fewer than 10,000 U.S. soldiers and several thousand of their Filipino allies survived the march. On this tragic march, the Hispanic soldiers that died in the march were mostly from units from New Mexico. They were moved to prison camps where some of the prisoners kept accounts of their mistreatment, including brutality, disease, and malnutrition.



Checking materiel at a munitions depot. Courtesy: National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

During the Pacific campaign, the 158<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team (a National Guard unit from Arizona) adopted the term “cuidado” which means “take care” as their motto. When the U.S. entered World War II, the unit was sent to Panama to guard the Panama Canal Zone. They were moved in January 1943 to Brisbane, Australia, where they were committed to combat at Milne Bay, Kiriwina Island, Port Moresby, and Arawe (all in New Guinea) in 1943. Then fought their way on to Wake and Noemfoor Islands in New Guinea during 1944 and the Lingayen Gulf, Batangas and Legaspi, Luzon, in the Philippines during 1945 and finally to Yokohama, Japan for duty. They were one of the first U.S. units to see action in the Pacific and were referred to by General Douglas MacArthur as “the greatest fighting combat team ever deployed for battle.”

Other units with large numbers of Hispanic participants included groups such as the 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in which Private Cleto Rodriguez received the Medal of Honor for personally killing 82 enemy soldiers near Manila in the Philippines.

Other awardees included Private First Class Manuel Perez of the 511<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment from the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division was also awarded the Medal of Honor for destroying 11 Japanese pillboxes on Luzon in the Philippines. In another instance, Staff Sergeant Ismael Villegas and Private First Class David Gonzalez of the 127<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from the 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division also received Congressional Medals of Honor for their action on the Villa Verde Trail in Luzon during March and April 1945.

Sergeant Alejandro Ruiz from the 165<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division received the Medal of Honor for his bravery in Okinawa. After he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, he was trained as a mortar crewman, a Japanese translator, and a scout observer. He later received amphibious training and was sent to Saipan on June 15, 1944. He received a Silver Star while serving as a Japanese interpreter.

Guy "Gaby" Gabaldon was later responsible for personally capturing over 1,000 Japanese civilians and soldiers and forcing them to surrender to the U.S. military. He was able to do this despite immense pressure and with first hand knowledge of the Japanese "Bushido Code," whereby Japanese soldiers and civilians committed suicide rather than be captured by the Americans. Having been raised by a Japanese-American family in Los Angeles, California, he spoke the Japanese language fluently and this provided him with a significant advantage.

He utilized his Japanese language skills to communicate with enemy Japanese soldiers and negotiate their peaceful surrender. For his efforts, Marine Private Gaby Gabaldon was awarded the Navy Cross, the second-highest Marine Service award. He risked his life to end the battle so that many of his fellow soldiers would not have to die in further combat with the Japanese. Gaby Gabaldon became a celebrated hero in the U.S., which led to his appearance on the popular TV show, "This Is Your Life" in 1957 and a movie titled "From Hell To Eternity" made in 1960 about his efforts at Saipan. Gabaldon later wrote an autobiographical account of his experiences in the Marine Corps and his heroic deeds in capturing over 1,000 Japanese soldiers and civilians titled, Saipan: Suicide Island. In his book, Gaby Gabaldon describes how his two Japanese-American "brothers" joined the U.S. armed forces in the European campaign but his foster parents and sister were sent to a U.S. detention center.

Hispanics also served in the Aleutians, a defensive line intended to help protect Alaska from invasion by Japanese forces. The conflict in the Aleutians resulted in honoring Private Joe Martinez, the first Hispanic recipient of the Medal of Honor during World War II. Joe Martinez was a native of Taos, New Mexico. He was drafted in August 1942 and undertook his training at Camp Roberts, California. He was assigned to a unit in the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and on May 11, 1943, he landed on Red Beach with his fellow soldiers at Holtz Bay, Attu, an island at the western end of the Aleutian chain. Japanese soldiers attacked his unit fifteen days later after they landed at Holz Bay. During this attack, Private Martinez, on his own initiative led his group on the assault. When they were pushed back, Private Martinez again led the charge against the enemy forces. On two separate occasions, he went into the enemy trenches to dislodge them. He was mortally wounded on his second attempt, which motivated his fellow soldiers to drive the enemy back from their position.



Donald S. Lopez, Burma. Courtesy: National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

Donald S. Lopez served in the U.S. Army Air Force in China and Burma while defending our ally China that had been occupied by Japan as part of its economic and territorial expansion in what it called the Southeast Asia Co-prosperity Sphere in the 1930s. Donald Lopez flew Curtiss P-40s and North American P-51s as a "Flying Tiger" under General Claire Chennault where he became an "ace" after downing five Japanese aircraft in aerial combat. Lopez' other military assignments included five years as a fighter test pilot, a short combat tour flying North American F-86s in Korea, and five years at the U.S. Air Force Academy as an Associate Professor of Aeronautics and Chief of Academic Counseling. More recently, he was appointed Deputy Director at the National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, from 1983 to 1990, and then reappointed in 1996.

As fighting continued in the Pacific and Aleutian campaigns, Hispanic soldiers also fought and died in the Mediterranean campaign that had a significant impact on the U.S. conduct of the war. One notable combat unit was the 141<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment that had evolved from the original 2<sup>nd</sup> Texas Volunteers that fought in the Texas Revolution of 1836. In particular, Company E of the 141<sup>st</sup> had a high concentration of Hispanics and had already seen its share of action in the Mediterranean campaign. The men of the 141<sup>st</sup> Infantry regiment fought through 361 days of combat during World War II. Of these, they spent about 141 days in Italy, 209 days in France, 17 days in Germany and four days in Austria. They suffered 6,000 casualties including 1,126 killed, 5,000 wounded and over 500 missing in action. This group received numerous citations for valor and courage, including three Medals of Honor, 31 Distinguished Service Crosses, 12 Legions of Merit, 492 Silver Stars, 11 Soldier's Medals, 1,685 Bronze Stars and other decorations.

In a related story, the 142<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment included a contingent of Hispanic soldiers, some that were cited for their heroism. Among them was Sergeant Manuel Gonzales from Fort Davis, Texas. Sergeant Gonzales located the position of a German 88mm gun used to provide heavy resistance against U.S. Forces landing on the shores of Salerno, Italy. The enemy opened fire as he approached that position. He threw several grenades when he was close enough, even as German grenades were thrown at him. Although severely wounded, he was able to destroy the enemy's position. Sergeant Gonzales was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism.

However, Hispanic soldiers not only engaged in battlefield action but also contributed to the war effort in non-combat activities. This support included providing supplies, equipment and life-saving services for the men engaged in combat. These non-combatants also provided vital services such as repairing railroads, often under enemy fire and extreme climatic conditions. Their critically needed services guaranteed that combat troops would continue to receive necessary equipment and supplies.

One non-combat unit was the 713<sup>th</sup> Railway Operating Battalion of the Military Railway Service. The "Santa Fe" Battalion, as it was known, was formed at Camp Clovis, New Mexico on March 12, 1942. Its members included experienced railway personnel selected to clean, repair, and build military railways. They also operated the trains to transport vital supplies to the troops fighting on the frontlines. Most of the Hispanic soldiers of the 713<sup>th</sup> in Company A, repaired railway systems and laid new track. The Hispanic members of this unit included: Eulogio Chavez, Lionzo Chavez, Juan Cornejo, Charles Fernandez, Hilario Flores, Jose Gonzales, Jose Martinez, Luz Martinez, Joe Padilla, John Salas, Christmas Tapparo, and George Vassios.

During the European campaign of World War II, Hispanics were assigned to various military units. Notable among these units was the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division in which Staff Sergeant Lucian Adams served and was awarded the Medal of Honor for his courageous action near St. Die, France. Another heroic Hispanic, Macario Garcia, received the Medal of Honor for his military action near Krinkelt, Belgium. Many young Hispanic men exhibited courage and heroism during the European campaign.

At the D-Day landing on June 6, 1944, Oswaldo Ramirez was a Section Leader of an 81-mm Mortar Platoon, part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division better known as the "Big Red One." His unit was bombarded with mortars as their assault landing craft arrived on the Normandy, France beaches. He made it ashore with his rifle and equipment, although not a good swimmer. He was able to rescue 12 wounded men from his unit of 36 soldiers from the cold ocean waters. For his bravery, he was awarded the Bronze Star. After securing the beach, U.S. soldiers gradually fought their way through the German positions onto the French mainland. Ramirez was later assigned to Regimental Headquarters as a Liaison Officer and later became the Company Commander. He met with Generals Eisenhower, Patton, and Bradley and rose to the rank of major by the end of the war.

The U.S. Armed Forces also received additional assistance from other allied nations during WW II. One of our allies was Mexico from which a large majority of Latino patriots trace their ancestry. The government of Mexico declared war against the Axis powers (Germany and Japan) on June 11, 1942 and sent a unit of Mexican fighter aircraft, the Escuadron 201 (Squadron 201), to assist us. They were known as the "Aztec Eagles."

These Mexican pilots were trained for one year in Pocatello, Idaho to fly the P-47 Thunderbolt fighter airplane. The squadron finished all phases of their training by March 1945, were attached to the 58<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, and sent to the Philippines. They began their combat missions June, 1945 and during the next two months flew over the Philippines and participated in 59 combat missions, totaling over 1,290 hours of flight. Only seven members of this fighter pilot group were killed, either in action or while training, during the group's participation in World War II. The unit operated with a full strength of 32 pilots and an average of 17 Republic P-47Ds. They have the distinction of being the only Mexican armed forces unit to serve in combat outside of an official Mexican war conflict. Twenty pilots were awarded U.S. Air Medals, as well as the Philippine's Presidential Unit Citations from the president of the Philippines in 1952, and the Mexican Medal of Merit.

Every Veteran's Day, Carlos Foustinos, a former member of the squadron, flies a Mexican flag in his home along with the American flag. He flies the Mexican flag to commemorate the sacrifice of the men of the 201<sup>st</sup> Fighter Squadron who fought and died in aerial combat alongside Americans in the South Pacific. He flew in approximately 25 missions. He was awarded the "La Cruz de Honor" (The Cross of Honor), equivalent to the U.S. Medal of Honor, from the Mexican Government.

Another Latino hero who is rarely credited is Gerard Rodriguez whose military career lasted more than 38 years. He was born in Andorra, a small country in the Pyrenees Mountains between France and Spain. He experienced military conflict at an early age when the Spanish Civil War reached his homeland in the late 1930s. After the death of his parents, he hiked across France and acquired a job as a cabin boy on a ship headed for the U.S. He became a U.S. citizen in 1940 and joined the Army. He was assigned to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry but when his unit was mechanized, he volunteered to join the 5307<sup>th</sup> Composite Group, which soon gained fame as "Merrill's Marauders." The 5307<sup>th</sup> was the first U.S. long-range penetration group. In 1943, the 5307<sup>th</sup> arrived in India and after training with British military units they filtered into the jungles of Burma behind Japanese lines. Rodriguez was assigned to the Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon. His unit marched over 600 miles to accomplish their mission, living off the land and occasionally receiving airborne supplies. They fought in several major battles and were instrumental in preventing a Japanese invasion of India. Throughout their mission, they were repeatedly hunted by Japanese soldiers and suffered extreme hardships caused by the weather and terrain.

After the war ended, Rodriguez moved to Wichita, Kansas, where he joined the Army National Guard and later the Army Reserve. During his reserve tour, he served in the Special Forces and the U.S. Bicentennial Color Guard, and eventually was promoted to Master Sergeant. He later became a member of the 5048<sup>th</sup> U.S. Army Reserve Noncommissioned Officers Academy when he could no longer participate in parachute jumps with the Special Forces. He retired in 1981 after a promotion to the rank of Sergeant Major. He is believed to have been the last of "Merrill's Marauders" to leave active service.

Throughout the WW II era, 12 Hispanics earned the Medal of Honor for their bravery and heroic actions while in military service. Statistics about Hispanics that actually served in the armed forces are not accurate because Latinos were not classified by their ethnicity.

However, approximately 500,000 "Spanish-surnamed" persons served in the U.S. Armed Forces. This does not account for Latinos without Spanish surnames. Other explanations for the undercount include the social stigma associated with the label 'Hispanic.' This experience dates back to the Depression era (1929-1940) and a U.S. immigration policy to return Latinos to Mexico known as "Operation Wetback," with mass deportation roundups and repatriation drives of 500,000 undocumented and U.S. born Mexican-Americans from first generation and older established families. This U.S. policy promoted jobs for Americans and fostered European American-based cultural assimilation, to the detriment of others. Francisco Balderamma and Raymond Rodriguez provide the details in *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s*. Second, Latino assimilation was aided by adoptions by non-Spanish surname families, thus providing Anglo cultural identities. A third factor was incomplete Hispanic military records.

Upon returning home from the bloodiest war in history, Hispanic war veterans suffered discrimination due to their skin color and "greaser" features. Even the brave recipients of the Medal of Honor were not spared the prejudice that became a barrier for Hispanics during the economic prosperity after WW II.

Latino patriots developed community service organizations to fight the discrimination Latino patriots faced and improve the socio-economic status of all Hispanics. The American G.I. Forum, founded by a group of decorated Hispanic soldiers, gained national recognition after it responded to blatant discrimination.

In early 1949, Dr. Hector Garcia helped to bury Felix Longoria, a Mexican-American soldier whose remains had been returned home long after his death in combat in the Philippines. Beatriz Longoria, the soldier's widow turned to Dr. Garcia because the owner of the Rice Funeral home in Three Rivers, Texas, told Mrs. Longoria that the burial would be in the town's segregated "Mexican cemetery" and denied the family's request to use the funeral home's chapel for a wake in honor of Private Longoria citing that local "whites would not like it."

The American G.I. Forum fought hard to secure Private Longoria's rightful place in the cemetery and obtained key assistance from then-Senator Lyndon B. Johnson. He helped them to arrange for Longoria's remains to be buried at the Arlington National Cemetery. The direct intervention of the American G.I. Forum signaled to Latinos that they rightfully deserved equal treatment. Henry A. J. Ramos has written an excellent history in *The American GI Forum*.

Hispanic Americans contributed significantly to winning WW II, often without proper recognition. Since then, the government has shown its appreciation for the sacrifices of Latino patriots who gave their lives to defend American democratic values. This shift reflects a growing societal respect for diversity.

Maggie Rivas Rodriguez, director, U.S. Latino and Latina World War II Oral History Project, University of Texas at Austin, is documenting Latino bravery. She cites the valor of Hispanics who fought across the Pacific theater with the 158<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team and those who saw action in the 30<sup>th</sup> and 88<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions in Europe. Undoubtedly, similar stories are told in other combat units.

## **Korean War**

During the Korean Conflict, Latino patriots were called up again for duty and served with distinction and honor (1950-1953). They were in U.S. Army and Marine Corps combat units, the Navy, Coast Guard, and Air Force, as the previous generation had done in WWII. Among these Latino patriots were Mexican-Americans from the

barrios of Los Angeles, San Antonio, Laredo, Phoenix, and Chicago. They saw action in Korea fighting bravely to defend their country. During the Korean War, eight Latino patriots received the Medal of Honor for their heroism, and of these, two survived the war and six received the Medal of Honor posthumously.

An all-Latino combat unit that served with distinction during the Korean War was the Puerto Rican 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. This unit was initially constituted as the Puerto Rico Regiment of Volunteer Infantry. There were two battalions, one at San Juan, Puerto Rico (PR) and the other at Henry Barracks, PR. When this unit arrived at Pusan, Korea on September 20, 1950, they saw heavy combat and long service. Over the next three years, they participated in nine major campaigns earning a Presidential Unit Citation, a Meritorious Unit Commendation, and two Republic of Korea Unit Citations. Members of the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment were awarded four Distinguished Service Crosses and 124 Silver Star medals. These patriots were also credited with capturing 2,086 enemy soldiers and killing an additional 5,905 of the enemy.



Military art. An American army unit on the attack.  
Courtesy: National Museum of American History,  
Smithsonian Institution

The 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment endured heavy ground fighting in Korea and was exposed to some of the most mountainous terrain in the world. Some of the fiercest battles also took place during the winter months in Korea, which can be extremely cold with heavy snow and ice.

During the Korean War, Latino patriots also participated in the war in other branches of the U.S. Armed Services. The Korean War was also the first U.S. engagement in which jet aircraft were used on a large scale in wartime. While the Korean War was winding down, the Chinese Communist forces introduced the Russian built MiG-15 jet fighter and the U.S. Air Force responded with the F-86 "Sabre."

Of the 839 MiG-15s shot down during the war, the F-86 Sabres destroyed about 800 of the North Korean planes. In contrast, only 58 F-86s were shot down by the MiG-15s. There were many air-to-air engagements that became common throughout the war. Some of these encounters would reach altitudes of 40,000 feet. From these engagements, the jet ace, the new generation of fighter pilot was born.





On alert at an observation post. National Museum of American History. Smithsonian Institution

One heroic jet ace was Captain Manuel J. Fernandez, Jr. who was assigned to the 334<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 4<sup>th</sup> Fighter-Interceptor Wing. From September 1952 to May 1953, he flew 125 combat missions in the F-86 Sabre. On most of these missions, his job was to seek and destroy Communist MiG-15s in the air. His first air combat victory occurred on October 4, 1952. When he completed his fifth victory, he was designated an “ace” and finished the Korean War with 14 ½ confirmed air victories. This feat placed him 60<sup>th</sup> among the top U.S. Air Force aces in WW I, WWII, and, the Korean War combined. After the Korean War ended, he set a new world record while flying an F-100C, “Super Sabre,” attaining an average speed of 666.661 mph in September 1956. He retired from military service with the rank of Colonel.

Latino patriots served proudly throughout the Korean War and many, especially the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, were honored for their valor and bravery. This was a time in which the U.S. experienced increased prosperity. However, simultaneously, Latinos’ socio-economic status declined. Many Latinos were still treated as second-class citizens despite their patriotic war records. Despite this adversity, they continued to fight and die for their country. Latino patriots received nine Congressional Medal of Honor awards for their participation in the Korean War.

## Vietnam War

Hispanic patriots went into action again during the Vietnam War and fought bravely for their country (1961-1973). Many Hispanic patriots were the first ones in and the last ones out during the Vietnam War. Hispanic patriots were sent to Vietnam to participate in Special Forces advisory units instructing the South Vietnamese on methods to strengthen their military defenses against Communist aggressors.

Before World War II, the entire region of Indochina had been under French colonial rule. During World War II, Japan had occupied the region and later from 1945-1950, France struggled to reestablish its authority and control over Vietnam. By May 1950, the U.S. had started to send military and economic aid to the French. The French Army was engaged in a military conflict against nationalist and communist forces that had earlier provided armed resistance to the Japanese but were now fighting against the return of the French. In 1954, after four years of fighting, the French army were defeated by the communist Viet Minh at the battle of Dien Bien Phu.

The U.S. created the first Special Forces unit on June 20, 1952. In mid-1957, a U.S. Special Forces unit arrived in the Republic of Vietnam (the southern half of Vietnam was partitioned by the 1954 peace agreement with France). In May 1960, another Special Forces unit was sent to South Vietnam to train the Vietnamese Army, which was now engaged in fighting a guerrilla war initiated by the communist North Vietnamese. In November 1961, Special Forces medical units were sent to South Vietnam to provide assistance to various indigenous tribes.

From 1961 to 1965, over 80 Special Forces camps were established as part of the U.S. supported Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) program. The CIDG program was intended to help South Vietnamese groups to raise paramilitary forces to resist Communist guerrilla activity and defend their villages. Each CIDG camp had a South Vietnamese Special Forces team, a U.S. Special Forces team, and from two to seven companies of indigenous self-defense troops. Some camps also had a unit of Mungs, mountain tribesmen from northern Vietnam, hired by the U.S.

Each of the CIDG camps was intended to be a self-contained, fully independent organization capable of resisting Communist forces operating in the region. The U.S. Special Forces team was there to advise and assist with camp administration, and prepare and train military personnel for eventual turnover of the camp to South Vietnamese authorities. However, it did not take the Vietnamese Communists (Viet Cong) long to realize the actual purpose of the CIDG camps. The fighting intensified as the Viet Cong found defensive weaknesses and attacked several camps. The defense of the camps became a priority of the Special Forces since many were not fortified.

In November 1963, a reinforced battalion of Viet Cong attacked the CIDG camp at Hiep Hoa, Long, which had opened in February 1963. The attack occurred at night and the defenders in the camp were taken completely by surprise as heavy machine gun and mortar fire bombarded the camp. Among the U.S. Special Forces personnel at Hiep Hoa was Sergeant First Class Issac Camacho. All of the camp defenders were pinned down by Viet Cong fire and Sergeant Camacho ran from his sleeping area to a mortar position and began to return fire. Pressure from the attacking force soon opened the camp's defensive wall and the commanding officer ordered a withdrawal. In the confusion of the battle and in the darkness of the night, Sergeant Camacho became separated from his Special Forces comrades and was captured by the Viet Cong. He remained a prisoner for almost 20 months, until on July 9, 1965, he was able to escape from his isolation and make his way to freedom crossing through miles of Communist controlled areas.

For his personal courage and action in defending Hiep Hoa and later escape, he was awarded the Silver Star and the Bronze Star Medals in September 1965. He was promoted to Master Sergeant and later given a battlefield commission to the rank of Captain. He retired from the Army and moved to El Paso, Texas.

Lieutenant Everett Alvarez, Jr. is another Latino patriot who distinguished himself in combat. He was one of the first Latinos to participate in the U.S. aerial campaign against Viet Cong forces. Early on August 4, 1964, he was ordered to sink several North Vietnamese gunboats that had attacked two U.S. destroyers. Unfortunately, he and another Navy pilot were shot down by enemy fire in this engagement. The other pilot died and North Vietnamese communists captured Lt. Alvarez. He was a prisoner for more than eight years. During this time, his family in the U.S. suffered greatly, but maintained contact with him via the mail service provided by his captors.

Lt. Alvarez was able to survive this ordeal by his religious faith and patriotism for his country. The North Vietnamese released Lt. Alvarez in February 1973, after negotiations between the U. S. and the North Vietnamese government. He was among the first group of prisoners to regain his freedom after a peace agreement was negotiated in Paris. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Commander. In March 1973, a city park in Santa Clara, California, was dedicated in his honor. He left the Navy soon thereafter, and later served as the Deputy Director for the U.S. Veterans Administration. He has since written two autobiographical accounts, *Chained Eagle* and *Code of Conduct*, about his experiences as a prisoner of war. He is currently employed as a private consultant.

Master Sergeant (then Staff Sergeant) Roy P. Benavidez, Detachment B-56, 5<sup>th</sup>. Special Forces Group, Republic of Vietnam was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroism on May 2, 1968 at a firefight west of Loc Ninh. Sgt. Benavidez joined a rescue helicopter team to extract members of a 12 man Special Forces reconnaissance team that was overrun by a superior Viet Cong force. Sgt Benavidez sustained a remarkable number of wounds in the course of carrying wounded Special Forces members to the first rescue helicopter, which was subsequently destroyed. He deployed to a second rescue helicopter that he called in to complete the recovery operation. He was able to save the lives of eight Green Berets despite his wounds and heavy loss of blood. After retrieving the wounded and several classified documents he boarded the helicopter for medical treatment and safe return to his base.

On September 15, 2000 the secretary of the Navy, Richard Danzig, announced that the Navy would honor Master Sergeant Roy Benavidez by naming the seventh in the Bob Hope Class of large, medium speed, roll on/roll off sealift (LMSR) ships in his honor.

Alfred V. Rascon, Specialist Fourth Class, U.S. Army, distinguished himself on March 16, 1966 while assigned as a medic to the Reconnaissance Platoon, 1<sup>st</sup>. Battalion (Airborne), 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade in Viet Nam. His platoon attempted to aid a sister battalion, that was under intense enemy attack, and was attacked by a larger enemy force. Though told to move to a safer rear position, he instead ran through a shower of bullets and grenades to help his comrades. He was wounded by shrapnel but continued to tirelessly provide support to the gunnery positions of his unit. Each foray against the enemy added to his already serious wounds.

His Medal of Honor citation captures the essence of his heroism that day:

"Specialist Rascon's extraordinary valor in the face of deadly enemy fire, his heroism in rescuing the wounded and his gallantry by repeatedly risking his own life for his fellow soldiers are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army."

The story of Captain Humbert Roque "Rocky" Versace is another example of individual courage in the face of a ruthless enemy. Versace, was born in Hawaii on July 2, 1937. Further investigation into his background indicates that his mother, Theresa Nunez, author of a short story that was the basis for "The Flying Nun," was from Puerto Rico, while his father was Italian-American. He always considered Alexandria, Virginia his home.

Versace, a West Point graduate (1959) like his father, served in Korea and later as an officer with the Old Guard at Arlington National Cemetery. In 1962, he volunteered for a tour of duty in Viet Nam as an intelligence advisor helping the South Vietnamese government fight a communist insurgency. He immersed himself in Vietnamese culture and language in the delta town of Camau. He established medical clinics, obtained tin sheeting to replace thatch roofs, and arranged for wheat shipments to feed the Vietnamese family pigs. He worked on behalf of Vietnamese children and contacted schools in the U.S. to obtain sports equipment for village playgrounds. He volunteered for a second tour of duty intending to subsequently retire from the U.S. Army to enter the Maryknoll Order and work with children in Vietnam. In October 1963, Captain Versace was captured during an operation near the U Minh Forest, a Viet Cong stronghold. He was wounded in a fierce firefight and then kept in solitary confinement, without medical treatment, for open defiance of his captors. He vehemently opposed attempts at indoctrination by the Viet Cong and was a primary target for their brutality and frustration. He lived by the code of duty, honor and country. His resistance and open defiance deflected punishment from other captives and stiffened their will to resist.

Versace made three attempts to escape, his treatment becoming more severe with each failed effort. He was loudly singing "God Bless America" from his isolation box the last time the other prisoners heard from him. On September 29, 1965, communist Hanoi Radio announced Versace's death in retaliation for communist sympathizers killed by the South Vietnamese.

In 1970, Major Nick Rowe, a fellow captive and subsequent escapee, nominated Rocky for an award for valor. The U.S Army awarded him the Silver Star and thus made him the first American soldier who became a prisoner of war to receive a medal, a routine practice among the other armed services for its servicemen and women.

In 2000, following a complete review of Captain Versace's heroism, the Army Special Forces Command resubmitted his award recommendation. Subsequently in January 2001, Secretary of the Army, Luis Caldera approved the Medal of Honor for Captain Versace. The Versace family expects to receive the posthumous award of the Medal of Honor after Congress acts on Senate bill S. 1155, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2002, and the president approves. Section 541 is entitled, "Authority for Award of the Medal of Honor to Humbert R. Versace for Valor During the Vietnam War."

The Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, that was inaugurated in late 2001, is located in Alexandria, Virginia. The memorial contains the names of more than 60 Alexandria patriots - soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines.

## Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm

Operation Desert Shield (the air war) and Operation Desert Storm (the land war) provided another opportunity for Hispanics to serve in defense of their country, its national interests, and engage a foreign enemy. This war brought together a coalition military force composed of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member countries to oppose Iraq and free Kuwait, our ally and an oil rich nation.

The war began with the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq on August 2, 1990. The Iraqi invasion force completely surprised and overwhelmed the defenders in a period of two days. The United Nations Organization (U.N.) after a period of discussion, approved military action in November 1990 against Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi military leader.

U.S. President George Bush subsequently initiated a military action in collaboration with our NATO allies. Allied planes attacked Iraq in January 1991 and initiated Operation Desert Shield. Subsequently, the land war began in February 1991 with Operation Desert Storm that initiated a brief ground campaign that dealt a crushing military blow to Iraq. A "Hail Mary" play was employed, making a diversionary move to the southern border of Iraq using some U.S. troops, and then undetected, shifting forces out to the western desert and swinging northward to strike the enemy decisively from both the north and south. Iraq accepted a ceasefire in April 1991 and U.S. and coalition forces withdrew. Subsequently, two "no-fly" zones were established. One in northern Iraq provided protection for the Kurds, while the one in southern Iraq served to protect the Shiite Moslems living in the zone.

The story of Sergeant Roy Tabron exemplifies the valor shown by many Latino patriots in this war. Sergeant Roy Tabron, a Green Berets soldier, together with Master Sergeant Jeffrey Sims and Sergeant 1<sup>st</sup> class Ronald Torbett, were operating in the Euphrates Valley just 100 miles south of Baghdad on February 23, 1991. Their mission was to set up an observation post in preparation for a decisive attack on the Iraqi enemy on February 24. The three Green Berets were dug in a camouflaged "spider hole" when a child spotted them. She ran to the Iraqi soldiers nearby and told them about her discovery. Soon 100 enemy soldiers were advancing on their position. An F-16 air strike was requested while an M-60 Black Hawk helicopter raced to the scene to extract the embattled trio. Despite heavy fire from the Iraqis, they managed to escape without harm to either the helicopter crewmen or to Sergeant Tabron and his two Green Berets teammates.

Two Hispanic patriots have risen to the top levels of the Marine Corps and distinguished themselves in the Desert Shield/Desert Storm war. Brigadier General Michael J. Aguilar, currently Military Assistant to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy is one Hispanic hero. Brigadier General Aguilar served as the Executive Officer of Marine Aircraft Group 16 that supported the air and ground initiatives that contributed to the coordinated effort to free Kuwait after its occupation by Iraqi forces.

Brigadier General Christopher Cortez, head of the Strategy and Plans Division at the Pentagon, across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C., also served with distinction during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Brigadier General Cortez is only the second active-duty Hispanic general in the Marine Corps. He previously served as commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division in 1945 during WW II. He shares a background and philosophy with many Hispanic patriots, namely, a tremendous will to work hard and succeed, along with a profound love of family and country. His parents came to this country as immigrants, as so many others from different backgrounds and cultures. American born, he was determined to learn from the experience and the sacrifice of his parents, to build a career in the U.S. military. He said, "Heritage is very important ... to know where we came from and the pride associated with that. But first and foremost, we are Marines."

There were 20,000 Hispanic servicemen and servicewomen who participated in Operation Desert Shield/Storm among some 425,000 Americans who served in the war at its peak strength. According to Defense Manpower Data Center Statistics, Hispanics comprised 7.9 percent of the Fleet Marine Force, 6.0 percent of the Navy, 4.2 percent of the Army and 3.1 percent of the Air Force military personnel in the Persian Gulf military operation during the war.

The story of the sacrifice of Latino patriots, expressing a deep pride and love for their country, America, would not be complete without identifying those who did not return home to their families from the Desert Shield/Desert Storm conflict. These 26 brave Hispanic heroes are included among the 144 Americans killed in action and the additional 121 who died in non combat-related events. In addition there were 458 Americans

wounded in this conflict. The Latino patriots who gave their lives are: Andy Alaniz (Texas), Jose Arteaga (Connecticut), John A. Bolivar (Pennsylvania), Manuel Danila (Wyoming), Manuel M. Davila (Wyoming), Delwin Delgado (Florida), Luis R. Delgado (Texas), Mario Fajardo (New York), Eliseo Felix, Jr. (Arizona), Arthur Galvan (California), Arthur O. Garza (Texas), Daniel Garza (Texas), Rosendo Herrera (Texas), Candelario Montalvo, Jr. (Texas), Garrett A. Mongrella (New Jersey), Patbouvier E. Ortiz (New York), Daniel G. Perez (Texas), Kip A. Poremba (Virginia), Manuel Rivera, Jr. (Florida), Eloy A. Rodriguez, Jr. (Florida), Ronald Rondazzo (Maryland), Mario V. Velasquez (Puerto Rico), Carpio Villareal (Texas), and Carlos A. Viquez (New York).

Writing in "Hispanic Heritage Month 1996: Hispanics—Challenging the Future," Army Chaplain (Capt.) Carlos C. Huerta of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 79<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery observed, "Hispanics have always met the challenge of serving the nation with great fervor. In every war, on every battlefield, Hispanics have put their lives on the line to protect freedom."

## **Bosnia Peacekeeping Operations**

Latinos have served in Bosnia as members of an international peacekeeping operation since 1995 in Task Force Eagle-SFOR XI, due to the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. This involves the U. S. and its European allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Two more recent Latino patriots that were called up for military duty by their country were Specialist Steven M. Gonzales, and Staff Sergeant Andrew A. Ramirez. On March 31, 1999, while serving with the Stabilization Force SFOR XI near the Macedonian border, Serbian aggressors ambushed and captured them. These Latino patriots were held as "illegal detainees." However, on April 1, 1999, their status was changed to Prisoners of War (P.O.W.). Specialist Steven M. Gonzales was born in Huntsville, Texas (1978) and entered service with the Army in September 1996. When he was captured, he was 21 years old and a member of B Troop, 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division, The Big Red One, which assumed command on November 12, 1996.

Staff Sergeant Andrew A. Ramirez was born in Los Angeles, California in 1973 and entered service with the Army in July 1992. At the time of his capture, he was 26 years old and also a member of B Troop, 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division stationed in Schweinfurt, Germany. These two patriots were released on May 1, 1999 as a result of negotiations between the Serbian led government and civil rights leaders from the U.S. Upon their return to the U.S., they received a hero's welcome from American communities.

Both of these brave and courageous Latino patriots who served in our Armed Forces during the Bosnian peacekeeping operations are recent reminders of the sacrifices that Latinos have made to our military history. They are living proof, just as with others before them, of their strong desire and sense of duty to serve our country and defend the principles of democracy.

## **Afghanistan**

The military campaign in the war against terrorism began in Afghanistan soon after the U.S. responded to the devastating attack of September 11, 2001 against the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington. The hunt for Osama bin Laden continues, while the task of destroying the Taliban forces in Afghanistan proceeds. U.S. Special Forces and our allies, with Afghan government assistance, continue to attack strongholds where Taliban troops regroup, as of May 2002. The U.S. has vowed to destroy the worldwide al Qaeda network. Further U.S. and allied coalition building continues to eliminate the terrorist threat to all nations.

The rugged mountains of Takur Ghar, Afghanistan was the scene of a bloody encounter with al Qaeda soldiers on March 4, 2002. Specialists Oscar J. Oscano and Omar J. Vela. Army Rangers, were on a rescue mission to retrieve 10 Rangers whose helicopter was shot down on a mountaintop. Over 17 hours, through enemy fire and deep snow, Army air crews, Air Force, and Rangers worked together to limit casualties and effect a rescue. In all, seven Americans gave their lives in defense of our freedom. The 31 involved are all patriots.

U.S. Marines and Special Forces in Afghanistan continue their pursuit of the terrorist leaders with support of Pakistan and coalition allies. The task of nation building Afghanistan has begun with the full support of Americans. Latinos patriots will continue to be part of this developing military history, now being written.

## Epilogue

U.S. Latino patriotism is evident in the history and spirit of America since the American Revolution to Afghanistan. It has no particular claimant or heirs because patriotism is inherent in the spirit and soul of everyone. But patriotism surfaces and sometimes rages more clearly in some Americans than in others, especially at times when humankind and society are challenged over the principles of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Patriotism takes many forms and each expression is a lesson for others.

In 2001, America lost a Latino patriot who was diligent in the defense of his country and protected American lives many times. His code name "Tango Mike/Mike," stood for "That Mean Mexican." This Congressional Medal of Honor recipient was M. Sgt. Roy P. Benevidez.

In his book, *Medal of Honor: One Man's Journey from Poverty and Prejudice*, "Tango Mike/Mike" (Benavidez) wrote these memorable words:

*I believe that there is no greater calling for a man or woman to serve in the military of a free nation. I believe that it is a calling that transcends all others because imbedded deep within the soul of every free man or woman is the knowledge that every freedom we have was earned for us by our ancestors, who paid some price for that freedom. Each and every generation must relearn those lessons, and they are best learned by doing. The strength of every free nation depends on this transfer of knowledge. Only through the transfer of knowledge from generation to generation will free men survive.*

We proudly dedicate this document to U.S. Latino patriots such as "Tango Mike/Mike."

\* \* \* \*

## Medal of Honor

The Medal of Honor was created by an Act of Congress to acknowledge the highest act of valor in combat by members of the U.S. military. The example of valor must be of such outstanding quality that it distinguishes the heroism of a specific individual to his/her country above that of one's own life.

The 39 Latino American Medal of Honor recipients are identified in Appendix I, below.

APPENDIX I

THE HONOR ROLL OF U.S. LATINO MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

	<u>Service Branch</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Place of Birth</u>
<u>Civil War</u>			
Philip Bazaar	U.S. Navy	6/15/1865	Chile
John Ortega	U.S. Navy	12/31/1864	Spain
<u>Boxer Rebellion</u>			
France Silva	U.S. Marines	6/25/1900	Hayward, CA
<u>WWI</u>			
David Barkley	U.S. Army	11/9/18	Laredo, TX
<u>WWII</u>			
Lucian Adams	U.S. Army	10/23/44	Port Arthur, TX
Macario Garcia	U.S. Army	11/27/44	Villa Castano, Mexico
Harold Gonsalves	U.S. Marines	4/15/45	Alameda, CA
David M. Gonzales	U.S. Army	4/25/45	Pacoma, CA
Silvestre H. Herrera	U.S. Army	3/15/45	El Paso, TX
Jose M. Lopez	U.S. Army	12/17/44	Mission, TX
Joseph P. Martinez	U.S. Army	5/26/43	Taos, NM
Manuel Perez, Jr.	U.S. Army	2/13/45	Oklahoma City, OK
Cleto Rodriguez	U.S. Army	2/9/45	San Marcos, TX
Alejandro R. Ruiz	U.S. Army	4/28/45	Loving, NM
Joseph F. Valdez	U.S. Army	1/25/45	Governador, NM
Ysmael R. Villegas	U.S. Army	3/20/45	Casa Blanca, CA
<u>Korean Conflict</u>			
Reginald A. Disiderio	U.S. Army	11/27/50	Clairton, PA
Fernando L. Garcia	U.S. Marines	9/5/52	Utuaado, PR
Edward Gomez	U.S. Marines	9/14/51	Omaha, NE
Ambrosio Guillen	U.S. Marines	7/25/53	La Junta, CO
Rodolfo P. Hernandez	U.S. Army	5/31/51	Colton, CA
Baldomero Lopez	U.S. Marines	9/15/50	Tampa, FL
Benito Martinez	U.S. Army	9/6/52	Fort Hancock, TX
Eugene Arnold Obregon	U.S. Marines	9/26/53	Los Angeles, CA
Joseph C. Rodriguez	U.S. Army	5/21/51	San Bernardino, CA
<u>Vietnam Era</u>			
Roy P. Benavidez	U.S. Army	5/2/68	Laredo, TX
Emilio De La Garza, Jr	U.S. Marines	4/11/70	East Chicago, IN
Ralph E. Dias	U.S. Marines	11/12/69	Shelocta, PA
Daniel Fernandez	U.S. Army	2/18/65	Albuquerque, NM
Alfredo Gonzalez	U.S. Marines	2/4/68	Edinburg, TX
Jose Francisco Jimenez	U.S. Marines	8/28/69	Mexico City, Mexico
Miguel Keith	U.S. Marines	5/8/70	San Antonio, TX
Carlos James Lozada	U.S. Army	11/20/67	Caguas, PR
Joseph R. Rocco	U.S. Army	5/24/70	Albuquerque, NM
Alfred V. Rascon	U.S. Army	3/16/66	Chihuahua, Mexico
Euripedes Rubio	U.S. Army	11/8/66	Ponce, PR
Hector Santiago-Colon	U.S. Army	6/28/68	Salinas, PR
M. Sando Vargas, Jr.	U.S. Marines	4/30/68	Winslow, AZ
Maximo Yabes	U.S. Army	2/26/67	Lodi, CA

## APPENDIX II

### GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND SPECIAL INTEREST ORGANIZATIONS FOR MILITARY RESEARCH (<http://www.pages.rootsweb.com/~haas/links/militarylinks.html>)

**The Place To Start:** Everything from the Dept. of Defense: <http://www.cooklib.org/mildef.html>  
**Archives-Order Forms:** To receive Military Records - <http://www.erols.com/jreb/geneology.html>  
**Arlington Memorial Cemetery:** <http://www.portia.advanced.org/2901/home.html>  
**U.S. Army Home Page:** <http://www.imabbs.army.mil/cmh-pg/> Medal of Honor awardees, Army Nurse Corps, other information.  
**Military Personnel Records Center:** To order personal information on a military person or a civilian involved with the military. Try: <http://www.nara.gov/regional/stlouis.html>  
**Veterans of All Wars:** Military information sites. <http://www.members.aol.com/veterans/warlib6.html>  
**Revolutionary War:** Search records also. <http://www.rootsweb.com/~ars/index.html>  
**War of 1812:** List of veterans. <http://www.rootsweb.com/~kyharris/1812vets.html>  
**The Alamo:** The battle that changed the history of the west. <http://www.numedia.tddc.net/sa/alamo/>  
**Mexican War:** List of Veterans. <http://www.member.aol.com/dmww/home.html>  
**Mexican War:** page. <http://sunsite.unam.mx/revistas/1847/Summa.html> See also article "Proving Ground for the Civil War" [http://www.thehistorynet.com/CivilWarTimes/articles/0496\\_text.html](http://www.thehistorynet.com/CivilWarTimes/articles/0496_text.html)  
**Mexican-American War:** Causes: <http://www.azteca.net/aztec/war/Mexican-American-War.html>  
**Indian Wars:** Homepage of the Indian Wars. <http://www.delta.edu/~anburke/amlit/revevents.html>  
**Indian Wars:** Reenactments of the Indian Wars. <http://www.wf.net/~adixon/SCASRLHI/indian.html>  
**Spanish-American War:** American History - Wars. A detailed account. <http://www.studyweb.com/his/american/amwar4.html>  
**Colonial Wars:** Center for Military History-Colonial Wars Bibliography and Excerpts from "American Military History." <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/online/colon.html>  
**Civil War Cemeteries:** Records. <http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/cgi-bin/cemetary.search>  
**The Civil War Homepage:** <http://www.access.digex.net/~bdboyle/cw.html> and also see <http://www.sunsite.utk.edu/civil-war/warweb.html>  
**Civil War Helpful Hints for Research:** Links and tips to research a Civil War ancestor. <http://www.ristenbatt.com/genealogy/civilwar.html>  
**Civil War Index Page:** Updates and provides information on Civil rosters of union and confederate soldiers. <http://www.insolwwb.net/~egerdes/>  
**Index to the Civil War on the Internet:** Comprehensive data on Civil War, books, poems, flags, medals, clothing, battles. <http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/civlink.html> For information: (714) 894-8161. e mail: [mimilozano@aol.com](mailto:mimilozano@aol.com) and <http://www.members.aol.com/shhar>  
**Ken Jone's Civil War Page:** Alabama and Texas records are featured and links to Regimental or unit histories of all states. <http://www.tarleton.edu/~kjones/>  
**LA State U. Civil War Page:** Over 2,100 links to Civil War sites plus article on researching a Civil War ancestor. <http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/>  
**Soldiers and Sailors in the Civil War:** All races data reported for union and confederate personnel. <http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>  
**Confederate Electric Card Index:** Scanned images of confederate roster cards. Note: slow to load. <http://www.image.vtls.com/collections/CF.html>  
**Chronology of WWI:** <http://www.earth.nwu.edu/people/tom/wwi.chron.html>  
**World War 1:** <http://www.fylde.demon.co.uk/welcome.html>  
**Links for WWII:** Telling father's story. <http://www.members.aol.com/dadswar/index.html/milsites>  
**Ship Crossing Information:** During WWII. <http://www.members.aol.com/troopship/index.html>

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