

Councilwoman Nidia R. Lopez

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United States Postal Service – Stamp Development
Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee
1735 North Lynn Street, Suite 5013
Arlington, Virginia 22209-6432

Dear Stamp Committee Members,

As the first elected Puerto Rican and Hispanic Councilwoman in Jersey City, New Jersey's history, I respectfully request the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee to approve the issuance of a commemorative United States postal stamp honoring the heroism of "The Borinqueneers" of the 65th Infantry Regiment, the only all-Hispanic unit in the United States Army's history.

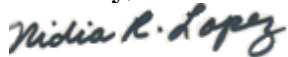
The 65th Infantry Regiment was created in 1899 by the United States Congress as a segregated unit composed primarily of Puerto Ricans with mostly continental officers. The 65th's regimental motto, "Honor and Fidelity," exemplifies its valiant and meritorious service in three wars: World War I, World War II and the Korean War. The unit was nicknamed "The Borinqueneers" after "Borinquen", a name given to Puerto Rico by its original inhabitants, the Taino Indians.

When the 65th Infantry was finally called to the front lines in the Korean War, the men of the 65th performed impressively, earning praise from General MacArthur. They performed a critical role containing the Chinese advances and supporting the United States Marines in the aftermath of the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir. Sent to every corner of the peninsula, they showed outstanding resilience and a legendary fierceness as combatants, in spite of fierce discrimination shown to them within the Army. Over the next three years, the regiment participated in nine major campaigns and earned a Presidential Unit Citation, a Meritorious Unit Commendation and two Republic of Korea Unit Citations. Individual members earned ten Distinguished Service Crosses, 163 Silver Stars and 421 Bronze Stars. The regiment killed six thousand Communist soldiers and captured two thousand. More than three thousand soldiers were wounded including six hundred killed.

Puerto Ricans occupy a special place in the history of the United States Army. Because of the island's commonwealth status, although they are U.S. citizens, they do not have the right to vote in U.S. elections, and yet they serve in the military and can be drafted. For many of the veterans of the 65th, this paradox became an incentive to be even more patriotic. In 1956, "The Borinqueneers" became the last segregated unit to be

deactivated and it became the only unit ever to be transferred from an active Army component to the Puerto Rico National Guard. The 1st Battalion, 65th Infantry Regiment (1-65th Infantry) was assigned to the 92nd Infantry Brigade and today continues its service against the global war on terrorism. Although more than 20,000 Puerto Ricans have served courageously as Borinqueneers since World War I, their contribution and sacrifices have gone largely unnoticed. Honoring "The Borinqueneers" with a commemorative United States postal stamp would be a fitting tribute for these brave soldiers and serve to educate the American public about their existence and service. In closing, thank you for your time and consideration, if I can be of any further assistance please feel free to contact me at (201) 547-5159.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nidia R. Lopez".

Nidia R. Lopez
Councilwoman – Ward C