



EDDIE A. PEREZ
MAYOR

April 5, 2010

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

Dear Stamp Committee Members,

As Mayor of the city of Hartford, I respectfully request the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee issue a U.S. stamp honoring the heroism of "The Borinqueneers" of the 65th Infantry Regiment, the only all-Hispanic unit in U.S. Army history.

The 65th Infantry Regiment was created in 1899 by the U.S. 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", the word given to Puerto Rico by its original inhabitants, the Taino Indians.

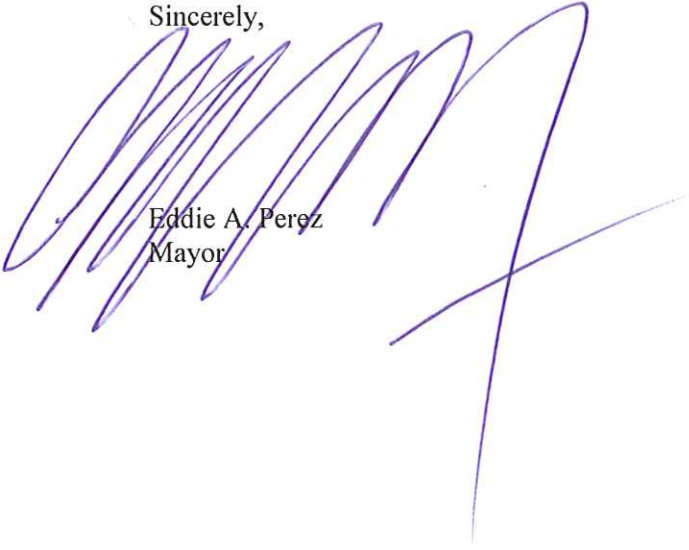
When they were called to the front lines in the Korean War, the men of the 65th performed impressively, earning praise from General MacArthur who wrote "They are writing a brilliant record of achievement in battle." The Borinqueneers performed a critical role containing the Chinese advance and enabling the U.S. Marines' withdrawal in the aftermath of the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir. Sent to every corner of the peninsula, they showed outstanding resilience and a legendary fierceness as combatants, even as they struggled against injustice in the ranks of the military. 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. Six hundred Borinqueneers were killed including more than three thousand soldiers wounded, resulting in a greater number of overall casualties in proportion to other states of the Union. Since 1899, the thousands of Puerto Rican soldiers who were drafted or volunteered willingly faced unique challenges. Because of the island's colony and subsequent commonwealth status, they are U.S. citizens without the right to vote for their Commander-in-Chief. In spite of these obstacles, the Borinqueneers fought on, ultimately establishing a distinguished record of service that does honor to the Army and remains testimony to a unique regiment that today has served our nation for more than a hundred years. In 1956, "The Borinqueneers" became the last segregated unit to be deactivated and 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.

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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 U.S. stamp would be a fitting tribute for these brave soldiers and serve to educate the American public about their existence and service.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.

Eddie A. Perez
Mayor