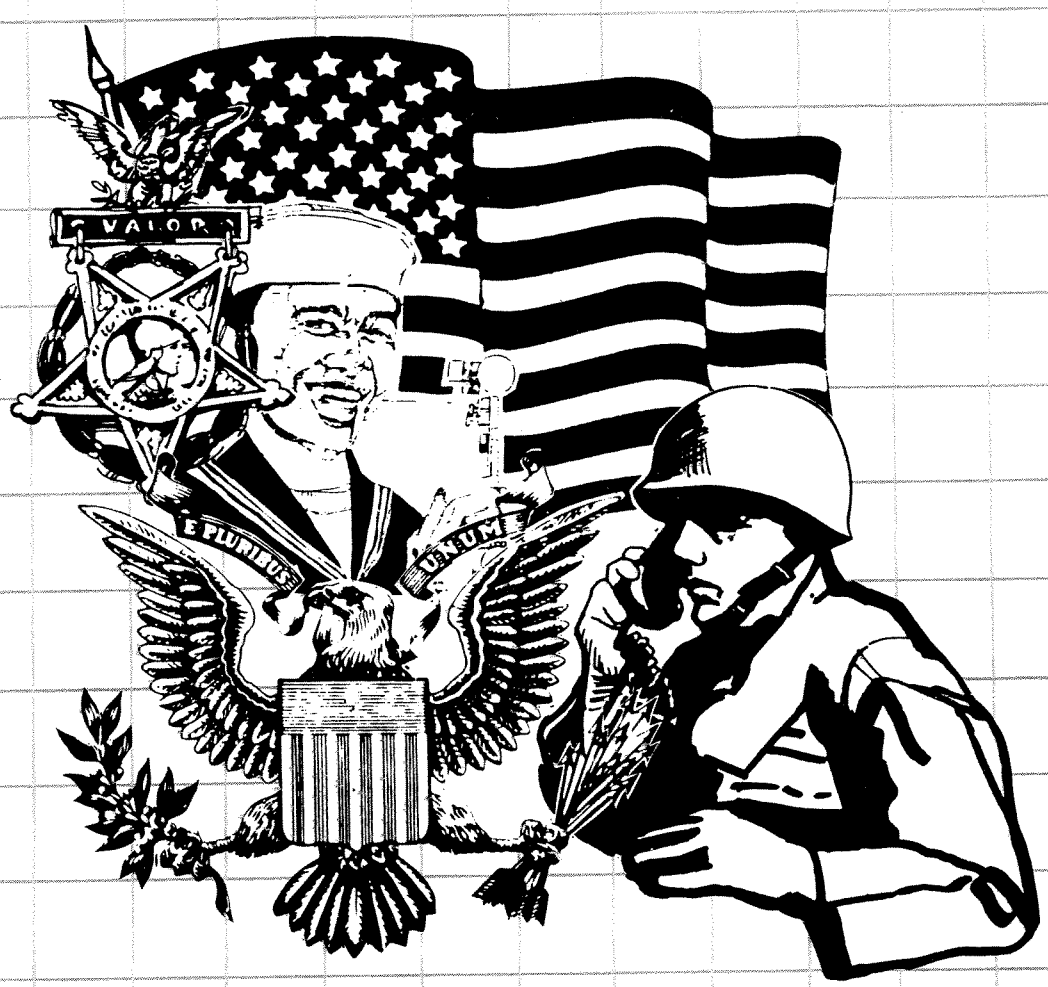
Hispanics in America's Defense



Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Manpower and Personnel Policy

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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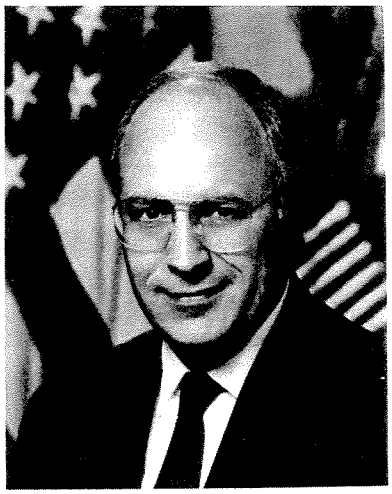


Dear Reader:

This booklet pays tribute to the Hispanic men and women who have served and continue to serve with courage and distinction in America's defense. Although we highlight particular sacrifices and successes of Hispanic military members during wartime, we must not overlook the significant efforts made by Hispanic civilian employees of the Department of Defense (DoD). To show the DoD total force, we have included pictures and information about Hispanic civilians who serve as role models.

The military and civilian contributions of Hispanic Americans reflect a deep commitment to the principles of freedom and democracy which are the strength of the United States. The Hispanic community has given us generals, admirals, philosophers, statesmen, musicians, athletes, and Nobel Prize-winning scientists. Hispanic Americans have contributed gallantly to the defense of our Nation, and thirty-seven have received the highest military decoration our country can bestow--the Medal of Honor. No manner of tribute to our country's heritage could be more appropriate than to acknowledge the importance of Hispanic Americans' contributions to national security. In this booklet we salute their contributions, sacrifices, and bravery.

Sincerely,

Dick Cheney

Hispanics in America's Defense

Introduction

Soldiers, sailors, and explorers of Spanish origin were among the first Europeans to set foot in the "New World." By 1980, persons of Spanish origin were the second largest and fastest growing population subgroup in the United States, constituting over 14,600,000 people, or 6.4 percent of the total national population. Yet most history books in this country do not discuss the contributions of this diverse group of people of Spanish, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, and Central and South American origin.

The military heritage of Hispanics is a proud part of the European presence in the Americas. Much of the exploration and settlement of North and South America which followed the period of discovery in the late 15th century was conducted by Spanish military personnel—the conquistadors.

This booklet does not attempt to detail the full range of Hispanic exploration or conquest, nor does it attempt to chronicle the full range of Hispanic contributions to the military organizations of the United States. Rather, it presents a brief overview which touches upon significant events in North American history, tracing the military aspects and the role of Hispanic Americans in that history. It emphasizes the military contributions because this is a DoD publication, and military service is an ultimate test of one's belief in and contribution to the protection and building of a nation.

Hispanic Americans have defended our nation with pride and courage. Thirty-seven Hispanic Americans have received the Medal of Honor—America's highest military decoration for valor. This booklet salutes their sacrifices and bravery.

Hispanic Exploration and Conquest of North America (1492–1541)

Some scientists have estimated that perhaps as early as 40,000 years ago people discovered the American continent. For approximately 39,500 years they expanded into the far reaches of both North and South America and built great civilizations. We do not know what they called themselves or how many of them there were. Some we know as the Anasazi (New Mexico), the Maya (Central America), the Inca (Peru), the Toltec (Mexico), and the Aztec (Mexico).

In 1492, the isolation of these people was ended when Christopher Columbus, an Italian sailing under Spanish patronage, entered their world through the Caribbean basin. He called the land "the Indies," and he called the people "Indians" because he thought that he had discovered a westward route to the riches of the East Indies. Columbus returned triumphantly to Spain and the wave of European exploration and search for riches in this "other world" began.

Columbus made three more trips to the area of his discovery and explored portions of modern day Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Bahamas. Although he came to realize that he had not discovered the Indies he had originally sought, he did find enough gold and produce from the mining and agricultural colony which he established at Hispaniola (now known as Santo Domingo) to excite the rest of the Western world.

The only other European nation competing with Spain to find a sea route to the Indies was Portugal. In 1498, Vasco de Gama reached India by rounding the southern tip of Africa and sailing across the Indian Ocean. As a result of the achievements of Columbus and de Gama, the Pope divided the Western Hemisphere between Spain and Portugal. For almost the next 100 years, Spain enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the exploration, settlement, and development of North and South America.

Juan Ponce de Leon became the first of the Spanish "advancers" (adelantados) of Columbus' discoveries. In 1508 he explored Puerto Rico; Jamaica in 1509; and Cuba in the years following 1511. This Caribbean exploration ended in 1513 when Vasco Nunez de Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama and became the first European to see the Pacific Ocean. That same year, de Leon discovered Florida. The Spanish explorers paused to evaluate their new discoveries and to plan a major expansion of their efforts.

Rumors of untold riches held by Indians in the interior of Mexico caused the governor of Cuba to establish a trading post on the coast near the present town of Vera Cruz. Led by Hernando Cortes, the traders found themselves welcomed by many of the inhabitants as a savior from their Aztec rulers. Marching into the interior to the Aztec capital, Cortes defeated the Aztec army in 1521 and became the virtual ruler of the area.

The Spanish were quick to follow up on the advances made and this started a 20-year period of military conquest. Utilizing a three-pronged approach, the conquistadors (conquerors) first moved south, down the western coast of South America under the leadership of Francisco Pizarro. During the next 11 years (1524–1535), his armies conquered the Inca empire and subjugated the land between Panama and the present city of Santiago, Chile.

In the second prong, Panfilo de Narvaez and Cabeza de Vaca sailed north from Cuba to Florida in 1527 but were wrecked off the west coast of Florida. They built replacement ships, but not knowing where they were, sailed directly west to the coast of Texas, wandering among the Indians for 6

years before being rescued by troops from Mexico in 1536.

In 1539, Hernando de Soto followed the same course begun by de Narvaez and de Vaca. He reached Florida, however, and initiated the third prong by exploring the region of Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, finally reaching the Mississippi River near Memphis. De Soto died near there but his men sailed down the river and eventually returned to Cuba after a 4-year absence. During their wanderings through southern Texas and northern Mexico, Cabeza, de Vaca, and a black slave, Estebanico (also known as Estevan or Stephen) heard stories from the Indians about a region to the north which had several large, wealthy cities. After their rescue, Estevan led an expedition northward, traveling up to present New Mexico, where he was killed by Zuni Indians in 1539. A second expedition under Francisco Vasquez Coronado was authorized to find the "Seven Cities of Cibola" in 1539. Although he marched northward to New Mexico, then east to Kansas, he was unsuccessful.

By 1541, Spain had discovered, explored, and conquered an empire extending from northern New Mexico to the tip of Chile; the largest area since the Roman Empire. Spain then attempted to consolidate these gains and to systematically strip the conquered lands of their wealth.

Colonization and Settlement (1542–1774)

By 1542, Spain had developed a relatively sophisticated system to administer its new lands. During the period of conquest, approximately 300,000 Spaniards had emigrated to the New World. They established over 200 cities and towns throughout North and South America. During this period of colonization and settlement, Francisco de Ulloa added Baja (lower), California to the Empire and Vazquez de Ayllon attempted to establish colonies in the Carolinas/Virginia area.

Spanish America was divided into two major Viceroyalties, the Viceroyalty of New Spain, which controlled all territory north of the Isthmus of Panama, and the Viceroyalty of Peru, which included all lands to the south. Each was ruled by a Viceroy who exercised the King's powers from a capital city. The Viceroyalty of New Spain was divided into four major subdivisions or audiencias (Nueva Galicia to the north, Mexico, Guatemala, and Santo Domingo).

Audiencias, in turn, were subdivided into cabildo or urban jurisdictions and encomienda or royal grants of native labor and the land they occupied. Nueva Galicia also employed presidios, or small military posts, to guard missionaries and the frontier bordering Indian territory.

The colonial society of New Spain was headed by major office holders who were appointed by the Crown for a fixed period and then returned to Spain. They were assisted by a group of American-born citizens of Spanish descent called Creoles. This numerically larger group controlled the Indian workers on the encomienda and the black slaves imported from Africa to do the agricultural and mining labor. Since the Creoles never went to Spain, their political orientation developed around the colony. They were a racially mixed group, but were not politically dominant.

James de Vargas, Colonial Military Leader

In 1680, Pueblo Indians lead by Pope revolted against Spanish domination and drove the Spanish settlers out of New Mexico. De Vargas, an intrepid soldier, used diplomacy in 1692 to end the revolt. Alone and without a helmet, de Vargas met the Indians. He talked the Indians into capitulating by taking advantage of Pope's death and the Indians' dissatisfaction with the tyranny of the Pope. Spanish rule was restored in New Mexico without loss of life on either side. De Vargas then granted total amnesty to the rebellious tribes. He did not hesitate to fight when necessary, however. In 1693, several tribes rebelled again and de Vargas suppressed them, executing 70 of their leaders.

Painting courtesy of Elio Gasperetti

Since the English employed a different colonial system, initially relying upon English laborers rather than Indians or slaves (who were heavily used later), their politically active population grew more rapidly. In addition, the administrative system was less dependent upon the Crown for decision making and many royal office holders remained, rather than returning to England. Eventually, the English colonies expanded to the borders of New Spain and their leaders were clamoring for independence from the English crown; something which the Spanish system of colonial administration prohibited. It did not take the Spanish governors long to realize that by supporting the rebellious English colonists, they could reduce the influence of England in the New World and perhaps even influence, if not confine completely, the growth of the independent colonies to the east of the Appalachians.

American Revolution 1775–1783

Background

The principal European colonial powers in North America (England, France, and Spain) often engaged in wars which impacted upon their colonial possessions. During the Seven Years War (1754–1763), for example, England captured the Spanish-controlled cities of Havana and Manila. The North American phase of this conflict is known as the French and Indian Wars, which were fought mostly in the Midwest and Northeast. When the fighting stopped in 1763 and the combatants negotiated the Treaty of Paris, Spain ceded its colony in Florida to England. In return, England returned Havana and Manila, which it had captured in 1762, to Spain.

The British divided Florida at the Apalachicola River (see map on page 6) and created two colonies; West Florida with its capital at Pensacola and East Florida with St. Augustine its capital.

From 1763–1775, England attempted to consolidate its new holdings. Spain watched with some concern. Its nearest colony to the British was Louisiana with its capital at New Orleans. Spanish authorities were now concerned about their ability to navigate the Mississippi river in order to reach settlements in the interior and to trade with the Indians. A British presence at the mouth of the river threatened that control. In addition, Spanish trade ships crossed the Gulf of Mexico from Mexico to South America. England was now able to threaten that trade from Pensacola. For Spain to protect its trade routes and its Mexican silver mines, it needed to restore its control of Florida.

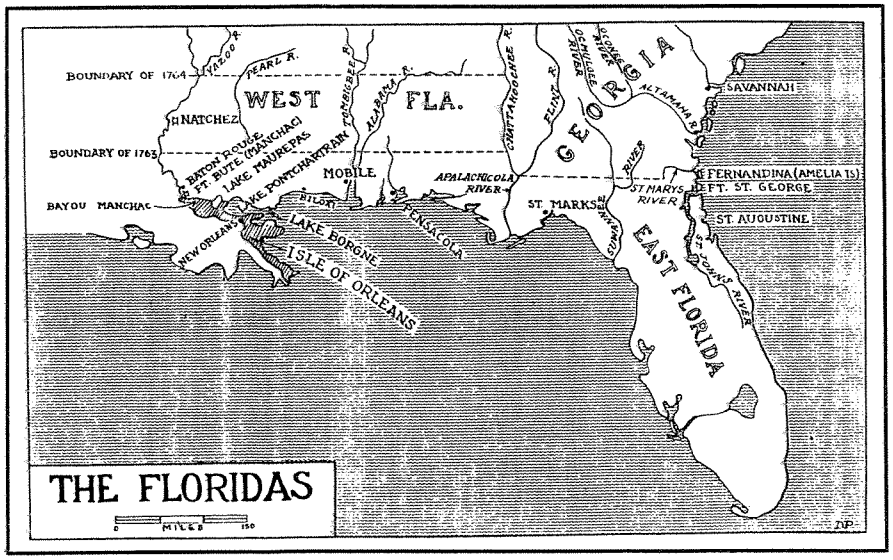
American Revolution

When war broke out between England and its colonists in 1775, Spain closely monitored developments. The English colonists in Florida remained loyal to the king. They had developed a relatively weak form of local government and had not produced the yearning for independence experienced in the North. This was due, in part, to the colonists' realization that despite 12 years of English rule, they were dependent for their survival upon subsidies from the Crown and that the taxes levied upon them and their Northern peers served to subsidize the English presence in Florida. Further, many of the white settlers in the colony held jobs either as colonial officials or as suppliers to the British Army. Thoughts of revolution and of cutting this link with Britain were far from their minds. Finally, as the war progressed, loyalists from other colonies moved to Florida for protection, thereby further strengthening their ties to England.

The New Smyrna Minorcans

Spanish, Greek, and Italian immigrants from Minorca, one of the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean Sea off the east coast of Spain, founded a settlement in Florida in 1767 which they called New Smyrna. In 1778 they abandoned their settlement and moved to St. Augustine, Florida. During the American Revolution, a number of these immigrants joined the St. Augustine militia to help guard Florida, which was then a British colony, from attack by the Americans.

Drawing by Elio Gasperetti



The British colonies of West and East Florida during the American Revolution

Captain Ferdinand de Leyba

While the American Revolution was raging, a combined force of British troops and Indian allies attacked the Spanish-controlled city of St. Louis in Missouri Territory on May 26, 1780. The Spanish militia garrison of St. Louis was commanded by de Leyba. The British-Indian force was repulsed in one of the few defeats suffered by the British for their allies in 1780. This drawing is not a true portrait of de Leyba, but it is based on uniforms of the period.

Drawing by Elio Gasperetti

Bernardo de Galvez

In 1776, Bernardo de Galvez was appointed colonel of the Spanish regiment in Louisiana. He was 30 years old at the time, but no stranger to New Spain. From 1769–1771, de Galvez had fought the Apache in Texas as a young captain and had learned to respect them and to treat the Indians fairly rather than to oppress them. Now he would have an opportunity to apply his theories to tribes along the Mississippi as he struggled to maintain a Spanish presence against competition from Britain. In 1777, de Galvez was appointed governor of Louisiana province.

From 1775–1777, Spain negotiated with the Continental Congress over possible assistance for the revolutionaries. But no agreement was reached because neither side could decide who would control Florida if the English colonists won their freedom. Despite the lack of a formal agreement, de Galvez supported the American rebels by providing cattle from Spanish herds in Texas and by selling weapons and other supplies to American agents who shipped them up the river of by ocean carrier to Philadelphia.

In 1777, the Continental Congress authorized an agent to travel down the Mississippi to New Orleans with American dispatches for de Galvez and to harass British outposts along the Mississippi. The agent, James Willing, captured several ships and raided several plantations and military outposts. When he arrived in New Orleans with his booty he had so agitated the British that they had placed several ships in a blockade to prevent Willing's escape into the Gulf of Mexico. Despite the British threat, de Galvez protected the American agent and protested vigorously to Britain about its threatening actions.

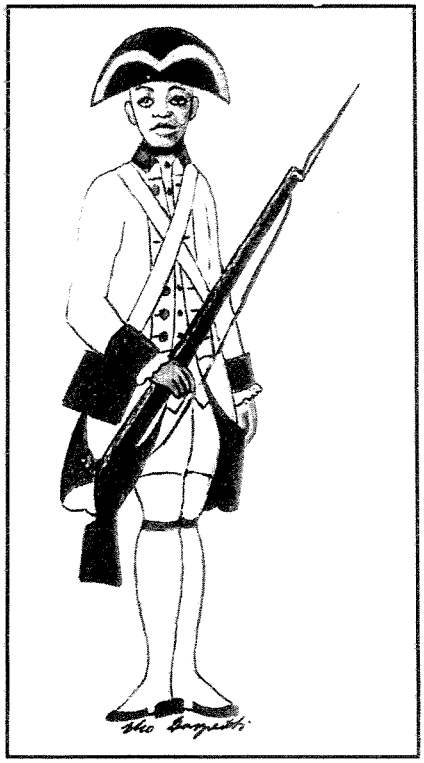
By 1778, the war was going badly for the British. General Burgoyne had surrendered his army at Saratoga and General Clinton abandoned Philadelphia. Sensing British weakness, the French declared war against England in February 1778 and urged its ally Spain to do so as well. Spain resisted but eventually recognized the independence of the colonies in February 1779. Wasting no time, de Galvez raised a small militia unit and with his regular Spanish forces moved to clear the British out of southern Mississippi. He captured all the British forts from Lake Pontchartrain to Baton Rouge.

Governor de Galvez then raised another force and attacked Mobile, capturing it in March 1780. Resting in Mobile, de Galvez raised a third force of over 9,000 men, including blacks, Indians, and mestizos, to attack Pensacola. In March 1781, de Galvez captured the British fort on Santa Rosa Island which guarded the entrance to the city and laid seige to the city. Ordering his ships into Pensacola Bay, de Galvez was shocked to see them refuse to enter the harbor. One of the vessels had scraped bottom and refused to proceed. After pleading with and berating the ship's captain, de Galvez took another ship, hoisted his personal colors, and sailed into the harbor alone. Shamed and inspired by his example of personal leadership and bravery, the remaining ships followed.

Dominican Soldier

Blacks from Santo Domingo, the capital city of the Spanish Colony in what is now the Dominican Republic, fought with the Spanish forces under de Galvez during the Gulf Campaigns (1779–1781) of the American Revolution. This uniform is not authentic, but is based on Cuban uniform of a later period.

Drawing by Elio Gasperetti



Cuban Militiaman

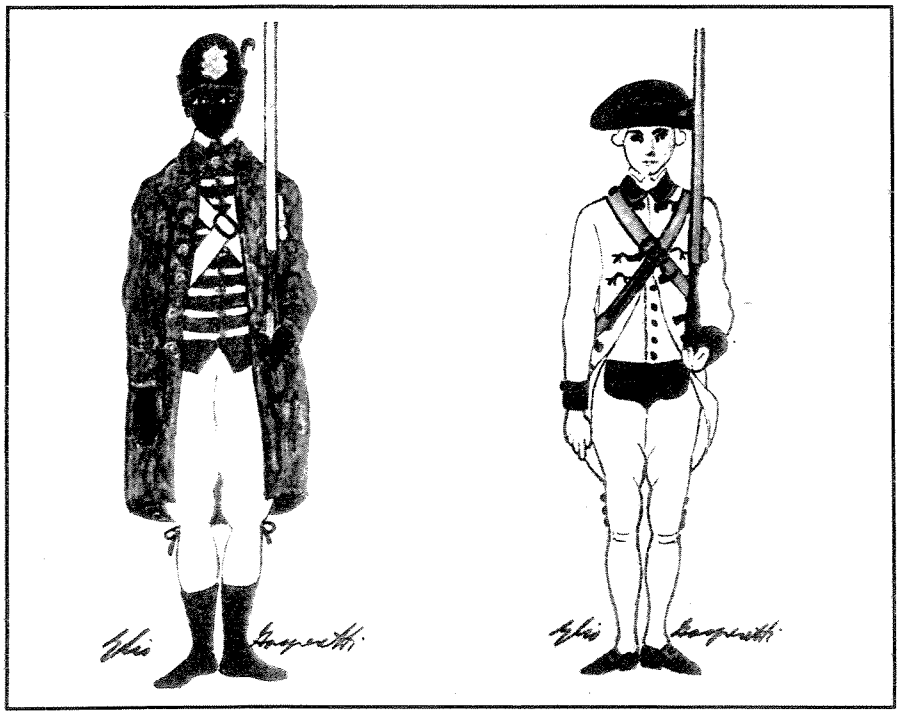
Battalions of morenos (blacks) and pardos (mulattos) from the Cuban Habana Regiment were part of the forces which served under de Galvez during the Gulf Campaigns of the American Revolution.

Drawing by Elio Gasperetti

Officer, Louisiana Regiment of Infantry

This regiment was founded by the Spanish during their occupation of Louisiana (1763–1800). At first, it contained both Spanish- and French-speaking personnel. It was part of the force under Bernardo de Galvez during his victorious Mississippi and Gulf Campaigns against the British. After Spain returned Louisiana to France, the unit was moved to the Spanish colonies of West and East Florida. Its name was unchanged, but it no longer had French-speaking members. The unit was disbanded in 1819 when the United States purchased Florida from Spain.

Drawing by Elio Gasperetti



Puerto Rican Sergeants of Artillery (Left)

Puerto Ricans constituted one of the many diverse units which fought along side Spanish forces under de Galvez during the Gulf Campaigns of the American Revolution.

Drawings by Elio Gasperetti

When his army landed in the city, the English defenders retreated to two forts. Spanish reinforcements from Mobile, New Orleans, and Havana arrived and de Galvez assaulted the British forts in May. During the assault, a sudden explosion evaporated a British powder magazine in one of the forts. Quickly charging, de Galvez captured the fort and assaulted the remaining stronghold; its defenders surrendered.

In appreciation for de Galvez's actions, Charles III, King of Spain, made him a count and he was allowed to change his family coat of arms to show a ship entering Pensacola Bay with the motto "yo solo" (I alone). The name of Pensacola Bay itself was changed from Santa Maria de Galvez. He was also promoted to governor and captain general of West Florida.

While de Galvez had aided the American revolutionary effort, he had also restored most of Florida to Spanish control and had ensured protection of Spanish trade routes in the Gulf of Mexico. In 1785, he was promoted to Viceroy of New Spain. He died of an epidemic in Mexico City in 1786 at the age of 40.

Bernardo de Galvez

Spanish governor of Louisiana and commander of the Spanish troops which defeated British forces in West and East Florida during the American Revolution.

Americans have not forgotten Bernardo de Galvez. The city of Galveston, Texas, is named after him. A statue in his honor is in Washington, D.C.; a Bicentennial gift from Spain.

In 1980, 200 years after his capture of Mobile, the U.S. Postal Service issued a commemorative stamp in his honor. Though a loyal citizen of Spain, he contributed greatly to the founding of our New Nation.

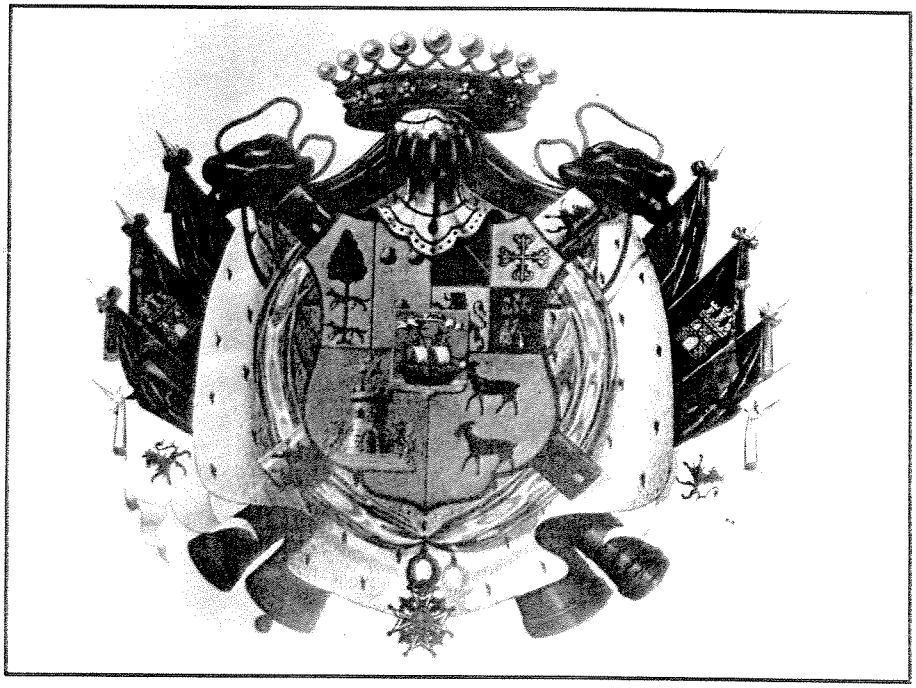
Santiago

Santiago was a slave who took part in the Spanish seige of the British garrison in Pensacola, Florida. He was cited by Bernardo de Galvez, the Spanish commander, for his actions during the battle.

Drawing by Elio Gasperetti

de Galvez Commemorative Stamp

In 1980, 200 years after his capture of Mobile, the U.S. government issued a commemorative stamp in honor of his assistance during the American Revolution.



de Galvez Family Coat of Arms

After his capture of Pensacola in 1781, Bernardo de Galvez was authorized by the King of Spain to change the family coat of arms. He added a ship on a shield with the motto "Yo Solo" (I alone) to the center of the coat of arms to commemorate his leadership in the assault on the city from Pensacola Bay.

George Farragut

Farragut was born on the Spanish island of Minorca and emigrated to North America. He joined the South Carolina Navy as a Lieutenant and fought in the attack on Savannah (1779) and the second defense of Charleston (1780). This depiction is not a true portrait, but is based upon one of his more famous son, Civil War Admiral David Farragut.

Drawing by Elio Gasperetti

Francisco de Miranda

Francisco de Miranda was born in Caracas, Venezuela, on March 28, 1750. He was educated in Spain where his father helped him to obtain a commission in the Spanish army. After serving in Morocco, where he experienced heavy fighting for 2 years, Miranda returned to Spain in 1779. He soon left for New Spain where he served as a captain on the staff of Bernardo de Galvez during Galvez' first campaign against the British, which returned the lower Mississippi River to Spanish control. De Miranda also participated in the siege and capture 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 in the American capture of Yorktown.

As a result of these contributions to the American Revolution, a Park in Pensacola, Florida, a statue in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and a commuter bus in Chicago, Illinois, were dedicated in his honor.

Francisco de Miranda

Venezuelan officer who served under de Galvez during the Gulf campaigns in the American Revolution and an early leader in the fight for Latin American independence.

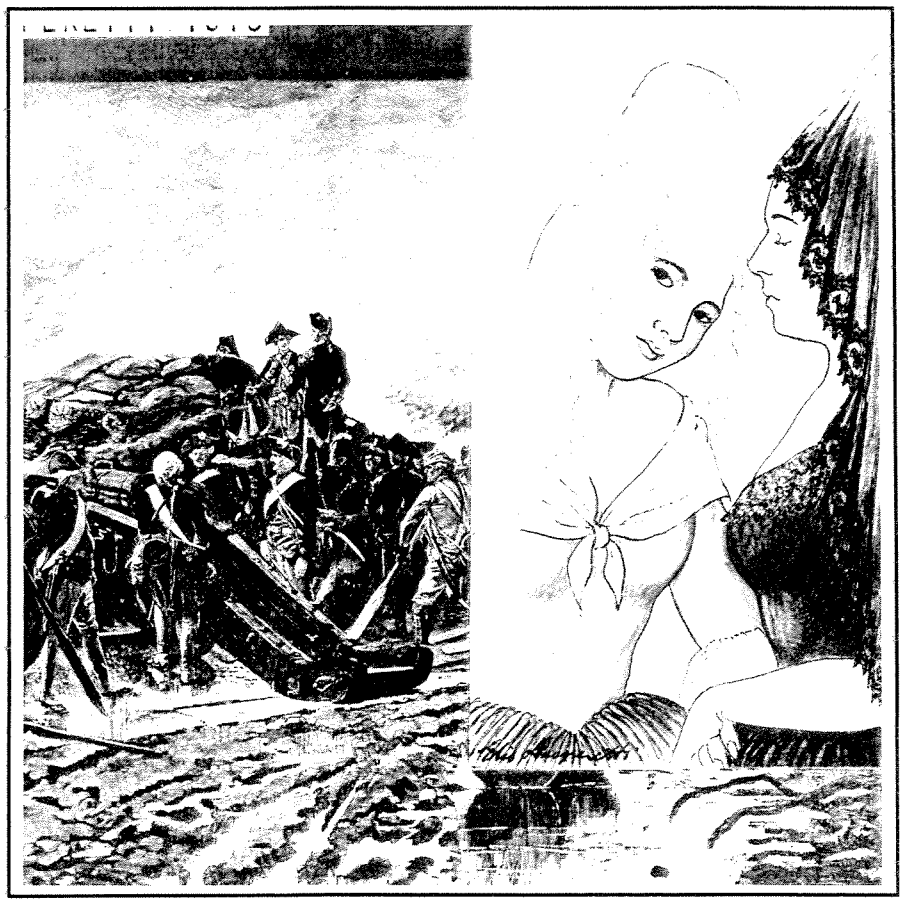
Although de Miranda had earned the patronage of his military superiors in Spain, he encountered political difficulties which caused him to desert the Spanish army. He set out immediately for the new United States in 1783 and studied the revolutionary experiences of the former British colonists. His orientation at that time was toward the freedom from Spain of all Spanish colonies. In 1784, he moved to Europe, where he volunteered to serve in the French revolutionary army and rendered valuable service.

Moving to London, de Miranda became the center of Spanish anti-colonialists and worked with the British government. In 1805, he returned to New York, from Europe, meeting many prominent politicians, including President Jefferson. While in the United States he organized an expedition and attempted unsuccessfully to invade Venezuela. His efforts earned him the title "Precursor of Latin American Independence," by which he is remembered today.

Mexican-Indian Soldier

Mexican Indians and Mestizoes formed part of the Spanish forces under the command of Bernardo de Galvez and fought against the British during the Gulf campaigns of 1779–1781 during the American Revolution.

Drawing by Elio Gasperetti



Hispana Contributions to the American Revolution

In 1781, French and American forces were about to abandon their seige of Yorktown for lack of funds. Women in Havana, Cuba, however, took up a collection and were able to raise a substantial sum of money. By delivering their gift to the French Expeditionary force, they were able to insure that the seige would continue.

The Battle of Pensacola (1781)

In March 1781, troops under Bernardo de Galvez laid seige to the British-controlled city of Pensacola, Florida. The unanticipated explosion of a British powder magazine in one of two forts guarding the city enabled the Spanish forces to capture both forts after a short but sharp fight.

Engraving courtesy of Elio Gasperetti

Interim Years (1784–1823)

Introduction

With the successful conclusion of the American Revolution, Spain's colonial empire in North and South America was at its height. West and East Florida were returned to Spanish control as the price of their support for the new United States. Once again, the Mississippi River was open to Spanish merchants and soldiers. In addition, the British threat to Spanish trade routes across the Gulf of Mexico had been removed.

Ominous signs were on the horizon, however. The unification of the 13 newly independent American colonies into a national republic placed a competing political power along the border with Spanish colonies. In addition, forces within the United States were already arguing for expansion. Also, the activities of Francisco de Miranda raised the specter of revolution in Spanish colonies in South America.

To complicate matters, the Spanish throne was experiencing difficulties at home. Taking advantage of this apparent weakness, the French attempted to return to North America. In 1800, France persuaded Spain to sell the Louisiana territory; all Spanish lands from the Mississippi River west to the Rocky Mountains, including the city of New Orleans. Spain reluctantly agreed, but only if France promised not to relinquish any of this land to the United States.

France agreed with the Spanish proviso, but within 3 years became convinced that it could not sustain a presence in North America and, ignoring its pledge to Spain, offered to sell all of the Louisiana Territory to the United States. President Jefferson seized the opportunity and authorized $15 million for purchase of the Louisiana Territory.

Spain now found its principal land holdings once again abutted by the United States and was further discomforted by having its colonies in the Floridas isolated from the rest of New Spain. The United States continued to apply pressure on the Spanish by sending Lewis and Clark to explore the northern half of Louisiana Territory in 1804–1806 and Zebulon Pike to explore the southern half of the Louisiana Territory in 1806–1807.

In 1810, U.S. forces seized part of Spanish-controlled West Florida. During the War of 1812 with Britain, the United States acquired another portion of West Florida from the British. It is also interesting to note that during the War of 1812, Spanish Americans from Louisiana joined General Andrew Jackson's defenders in defeating a British invasion force under British General Pakenham. Ironically, the Battle of New Orleans occurred after the treaty ending the war had been signed. Finally, in 1819, Spain decided to protect its holdings in Mexico, New Mexico, and California by selling all of its holdings in Florida east of the Mississippi to the United States. In addition, Spain agreed to relinquish any claim it might have to Oregon. The U.S. agreed to give up its claims to Texas, particularly that part between the Natchitoches and Rio Grande Rivers which Pike had explored in 1807.

The decline of Spain's colonial empire, however, was evident. By 1822, all Spanish colonies in North and South America, with the exceptions of Belize, Bolivia, and the Guianas, were to become independent.

Mexico

Within the audiencia of Nueva Galicia and the audiencia of Mexico, political unrest, which would more directly impact upon the United States, was brewing as well. In this area, Spanish colonial policy and administration had produced four politically and socially distinct groups:

Francis (Pepe) Diaz

Diaz was a lieutenant in the Puerto Rican militia. In April, 1797, he lead a group of fifty men from the town of Tao Bajo, to San Juan. They participated in the defense of the town from British attack. By May, 1797, the British forces had been repelled, but Diaz had been killed in the fighting near Martin Pena Bridge. He is often called the first Puerto Rican hero, rather than being of Spanish, African or Indian descent. This is not a true portrait of Diaz, but it is based upon descriptions and uniforms of the period.

Drawing by Elio Gasperetti

(1) the Gachupines (wearer of spurs) or peninsulares—the native born Spaniards who ran the Colonial government; (2) the Creoles—Spaniards born in Mexico; (3) the Mestizos—persons of Spanish and Indian parentage; and (4) the Indians—full blooded original inhabitants conquered by Spain. By the 1800's, there were approximately 40,000 Gachupines, one million Creoles, one and one-half million Mestizos, and one million Indians.

The Mestizos and Indians were denied political or social influence. The Creoles were merchants and artisans with social influence but little political power.

As the Creole class grew in size, so did its political frustrations. Increasingly they viewed themselves as Mexican rather than Spanish and they resented the colonial controls. Successful revolutions in the United States and France only encouraged them to seek their own independence.

During the Spanish Colonial period in Mexico (1519–1821), conspiracies and rebellions erupted. None, however, were successful. In 1810, Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a Creole priest, raised the banner of revolt and an army of Indians and Mestizos rallied at his manifesto "Grito de Dolores." Father Hidalgo was successful in his efforts. He was eventually betrayed and executed in March 1811. His place was assumed by Jose Maria Morelos y Pavon, a Mestizo priest who carried on the fight until 1815, when he too was executed.

In 1820, Colonel Agustin de Iturbide, who had fought both Hidalgo and Morelos, deserted to the revolutionaries. In conjunction with Vincente Guerrero, their rebel leader, he issued the "Plan de Iguala" which espoused three principles: (1) Mexican freedom; (2) equality for all Mexicans; and (3) Catholicism as the official religion. Their document was recognized by Spain in September 1821, and Mexico became an independent state. This meant that the Spanish colonies of New California, New Mexico, Santa Fe, and Texas were now provinces of Mexico.

Texas-Mexican Frontier (1824–1845)

Introduction

The Mexican declaration of independence in November 1821 did not resolve the country's problems. It lacked a unified government and suffered from economic problems. A ruling military junta was established as was an independent Congress. In May 1822, Agustin de Iturbide, leader of the revolution, was proclaimed constitutional emperor of Mexico. Iturbide was unable to resolve the economic problems facing him and his suppression of political opponents; plus, his dissolution of the Congress, caused a military revolt lead by Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. In February 1823, Santa Anna's forces occupied Mexico City and deposed de Iturbide. In 1824, the revolutionaries wrote a Constitution, similar to that of the United States, which provided for a federal system with an elected President.

Origins of Revolt

Despite Spanish and Mexican fears of land grabbing by Americans, the Mexican government issued an immigration grant to Moses Austin which would permit settlement of part of Texas by immigrants from the United States. Austin died before he could exercise the grant, but after Santa Anna's republican revolution of 1823, the grant was reissued to his son Stephen F. Austin. It allowed him to bring 300 families into Texas. Each family received 177 acres of farm land plus 13,000 acres of prairie pasture. The only conditions of the grant were that the colonists obey Mexican law and establish no religion other than Catholicism.

The new American immigrants ignored both conditions. In 1824, Stephen F. Austin helped in the drafting of the new Constitution. As a reward, his immigration grant was renewed. In 1829, the Mexican government abolished slavery which disturbed many of Austin's settlers who were pro-slavery southerners, but Austin obtained an exemption for the Americans who had already imported slaves.

By 1830, the Mexican government became concerned about the U.S. immigrants who were regarded as drunken, lazy people who ridiculed the Catholic clergy and lived off slave labor. One group of Americans had even initiated a Texas independence movement in 1826. Consequently, the Mexican Congress passed a law in 1830 which prohibited further American settlement and which called for strict enforcement of the anti-slavery laws. Such efforts, however, were too late. There were already 20,000 U.S. immigrants in Texas and their presence helped to reduce raids by the Comanche.

In 1833, when Santa Anna became President of Mexico, he centralized the government and abolished the 1824 Constitution. In 1835, Santa Anna announced a new constitution which abolished all Mexican state governments.

The Texan leaders realized that Santa Anna's new constitution would give them no voice in the Mexican government. With the support of Mexican liberals, the Texans proclaimed their independence from Mexico and elected David Burnet and Lorenzo de Zavala, a Mexican, to the presidency and vice presidency of the Lone Star Republic.

The Revolt

Santa Anna reacted vigorously to the rebellion. He was hindered by the fact that the Texans out-numbered the Mexicans by almost 10 to 1 and that not all Mexicans in Texas supported his government. Nonetheless, Santa Anna decided to raise an army and march north to punish the revolutionaries.

Santa Anna left Mexico City on November 28, 1835. He had 800 miles to travel to reach the rebellious Texans. On his way, he raised, organized, and drilled an army of 6,000 to 8,000 troops. On February 23, 1835, they arrived at San Antonio de Bexar and found approximately 200 Texans located in an old Franciscan mission known locally as the Alamo.

Among the Texan defenders of the Alamo were Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and Bill Travis. Also among the defenders were seven Mexicans: Juan Abamillo, Juan Antonio Badillo, Carlos Espalier, Gregorio Esparza, Antonio Fuentes, Calba Fugua, and Jose Maria Guerrero. They were all members of a company of Mexicans raised by Captain Juan N. Seguin of San Antonio to assist in the Texan cause. Other members of Sequin's company were serving with other Texan forces.

Santa Anna's troops immediately besieged the Texans, engaging them with artillery. Captain Seguin was selected to be a courier. Being from San Antonio, he knew the area and he spoke Spanish, which should help him get through Santa Anna's lines. He left with his aide, Antonio Cruz, for help, but no relief column arrived in time. On March 6, 1835, Santa Anna's forces assaulted the Alamo and captured it. There were 183 Texans who died; six of them Mexicans. The seventh, Jose Maria Guerrero, escaped by claiming to Mexicans troops that he was a prisoner of the Texans. Other survivors of the Alamo were Henry Esparza, a 12-year-old at the time (his father Gregorio was killed) and seven women (six Mexican and one Texan) who were wives of men who died there.

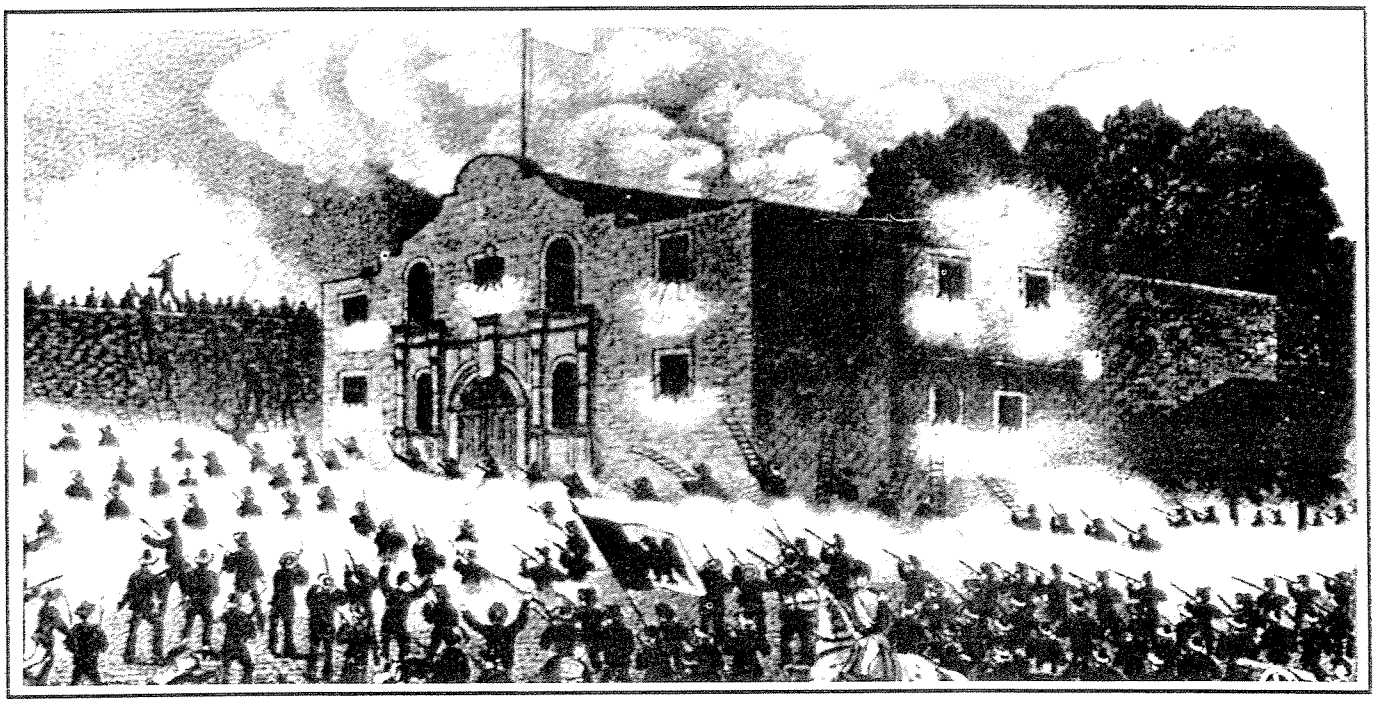
Captain Seguin returned to San Antonio after Santa Anna's defeat and surrender at the battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1835. He gathered the charred remains of the bodies of the Alamo's defenders and buried them in the Church of San Fernando. Eventually, he was promoted to Colonel and became commander of the military post at San Antonio de Bexar.

On May 14, 1836, Santa Anna signed a treaty ending the war and recognizing the independence of Texas. He returned to Mexico City and nullified the treaty.

In 1841, Texas tried to extend its influence over New Mexico, but failed. In 1842, Mexico launched two abortive invasions of Texas, occupying San Antonio in one instance before withdrawing. The British minister to Texas negotiated a truce between Texas and Mexico in 1843, but did not formally recognize the Republic. In 1845, Texas voted to become part of the United States.

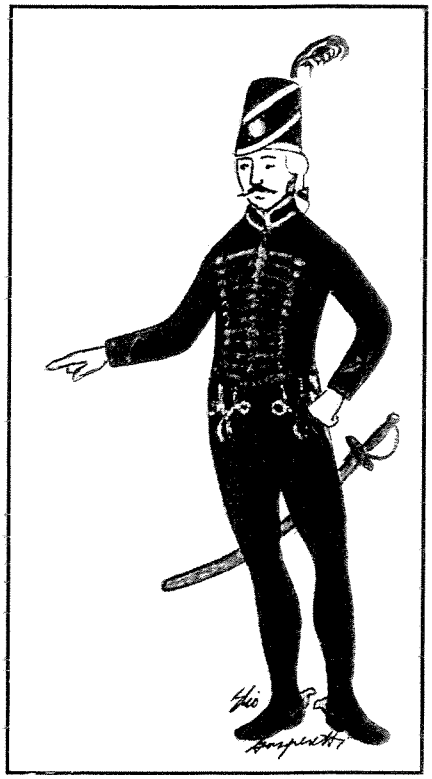
Lieutenant Colonel John Nepomucene Seguin

Seguin, a Mexican/Texan, supported the Texan independence movement and fought with distinction at the battle of San Antonio (1835) and the battle of San Jacinto (1836). He was among the defenders of the Alamo, but missed death when he and his aide were sent out with a message seeking reinforcements. After the war, Sequin returned to San Antonio where he commanded the military post there and later served two terms as the city's mayor. American/Texans soon gained political control of the city and Mexican/Texan inhabitants were subjected to various forms of prejudice and discrimination. Seguin moved to Mexico in 1842 to escape charges of treason, but found himself subjected to similar charges in Mexico. He was forced to join the Mexican Army and served in two abortive attempts to retake Texas. By 1848, he was finally allowed to return to Texas, where he lived until his death.



The Alamo

The rendition above depicts the final assault of the Alamo by Mexican troops under Santa Anna in March 1836. One hundred eighty-three Texans died, including six Mexican/Texans.



A Texas Hussar

The Texas Hussars were an 18th century Spanish/Mexican mounted corps which patrolled the Texas Territory and protected the inhabitants from attacks by Indians.

Drawing by Elio Gasperetti

Civil War (1861–1865)

Introduction

Despite the admission of Texas as a state in 1845, tensions along the border between the United States and Mexico did not decrease. Americans coveted the rich lands in California and the territory along trade routes to the west coast. War between the two nations seemed inevitable as Mexico sought to regain Texas and the Texans argued about the western border of their territory, claiming it to be the Rio Grande River rather than the Nueces River as asserted by Mexico.

War eventually broke out in 1846. American troops moved into the disputed areas occupying Santa Fe and Southern California. Other American forces moved south into Mexico in 1847, seizing Buena Vista and another group invaded the east coast of Mexico, taking Vera Cruz and Mexico City itself. Santa Anna lead the Mexican forces as he had in 1835. He attempted to lure American soldiers to desert by offering them cash and land. Few accepted.

Much of the Mexican-American War was the product of U.S. expansionism and prejudicial disregard of Mexicans. American public opinion considered Mexicans to be "savage, barbaric, immoral, and corrupt." This image was reflected in the news media of the period by stereotypic drawings such as the two of Generals Arista and Paredes on page 21. To the right of each drawing is a portrait which reflects more accurately the actual appearance of each man.

The war ended on February 2, 1848, when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed. The treaty ceded all of Mexico's territory in New Mexico and California to the United States in return for a payment of $18.25 million. Each side condemned the other for actions during the war and deep seated resentments remained.

Internal divisions resulted in a series of national governments which prevented Mexico from taking further action. During the war itself, most Mexicans resisted the American onslaught. However, a little known key participant in the Mexican war was Manuel Dominguez, a peasant weaver who assisted General Winfield Scott by leading an all Mexican "Spy Company" in the campaign against Vera Cruz. His "Spy Company" assisted the American army as spies and couriers.

Civil War

The 1860 census showed 27,466 Mexican Americans living in the United States. When war broke out between the states in 1861, this community found itself divided. 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 Mexican-Americans served in regular army or volunteer units on an integrated basis, although some served in predominately Mexican units with their own officers.

It has been estimated that more than 40,000 books and pamphlets, enough to fill several libraries, have been written about the Civil War. The contributions of racial groups such as blacks and American Indians in this conflict have been documented. Only one book, *Vaqueros in Blue and Gray*, has been printed about the role of Mexican-Americans. The all-Mexican units tended to be volunteer militia units. During the Civil War, Mexican-Americans fought for both the Union and the Confederacy.

The Union

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, with Major Salvador Vallejo commanding, was created. At least 469 Mexican-Americans served in the four companies of the First Battalion of Native Cavalry. They were stationed in various posts throughout the Department of the Pacific in California and Arizona.

Major Salvador Vallejo

Vallejo served as a captain in California's Mexican militia before the U.S. war with Mexico. During the American Civil War, he became an officer in one of the California units which served with the Union Army in the west.

They served bravely while guarding supply trains, chasing marauding bands of Confederate raiders, and helping to defeat a Confederate invasion of New Mexico. Regrettably, most of the unit's records were lost.

In New Mexico, Miguel E. Pino raised the Second Regiment of New Mexico volunteers, which he commanded as its colonel. In addition, at least six independent militia companies (five infantry, one cavalry) were raised in the state for 3 month's service each. Most of the members of these units were Mexican-Americans, as were their commanders. Like the California unit, they too served principally as border guards and fought in numerous small engagements. Among the new Mexico volunteers there were an estimated 4,000 Mexican-Americans. Lt. Colonel Chavez also commanded a New Mexican militia unit and General Stanilus Montoya commanded the Socorro County, New Mexico militia.

Colonel Michael Pino

Pino commanded a unit of Hispanic volunteers in the militia of New Mexico Territory. In 1862, he helped the Union Army defeat a Confederate attempt to invade the Arizona/New Mexico area. This drawing is not a true portrait, but is based upon descriptions and uniforms of the period.

Drawing by Elio Gasperetti

Another non-Texas unit with a number of Spanish-speaking soldiers was the 55th New York State Militia, "The Garde Lafayette."

In Texas, the Union raised 12 companies of Mexican-American cavalry, originally organized into two regiments but later consolidated in one, the First Regiment of Texas Cavalry (Union). Most of the officers in this unit were non-Hispanic, although several Mexican Texans (Tejanos) served as captains (George Trevino, Clemente Zapata, Cesario Falcon, and Jose Maria Martines) and Lieutenants (Ramon Garcia Falcon, Antonio Abad Dias, Santos Cadena, and Cecilio Vela).

HEAD QUARTERS.

KNOW ALL MEN:

That Antonio Lopez de Santa-Anna, President of the United States of Mexico and Commander in chief of the mexican armies has been duly authorizel to make the following concessions to all and every one of the persons now in the American army who will present themselves before me or any of the commanding officers of the mexican forces, viz:

1.st Every soldier in the American army who appears before me or any of the commanding officers of the Mexican armies is to receive immediately *ten dollars* cash, if coming without arms, and a larger amount if he is armed, in order to cover the cost of the arms he may bring.

2.nd Every person who deserts the American army followed by 100 men is entitled to receive as soon as he presents himself with his men, $500 cash, besides the $10 to which every one of the soldiers is entitled, as well as the extra allowance in case they be armed.

3.rd He who deserts with 200 men has right to claim and shall be paid immediately $1000 cash, and so on at the rate of $500, for every hundred men; or the proportional amount if the number be under one hundred; without including the $10 allowed to every soldier, nor the cost of arms and ammunitions, all of which will invariably be paid besides.

4.th All and every one of the soldiers in the American army who will desert and appear before mé or any af the Commanding officers of the Mexican forces, as aforesaid, besides the abovementioned gratifications in cash, are hereby entitled to claim and will immediately receive from me or any of the Commanding officers a document or bond by which the propriety of a grant of land consisting of 200 square acres will be ensured to them as well as to their families or heirs. The division of such grants will be made as soon as the present war is over.

5.th The Officers in the American army are not only entitled to the aforesaid document or bond but the number of acres in addition to the 200 allowed to the soldiers, will be computed in proportion to the respective grades they hold.

6.th Those who desert the American army and enter the Mexican service are to continue in it during the present campaign, and those of the same nation are to remain together if they choose and under the immediate command of their own officers, who will continue in the same grades they held in the American army.

7.th All those persons who come over to the Mexican armies shall be considered, rewarded and promoted in the same way as the Mexicans and according to their services in the present campaign.

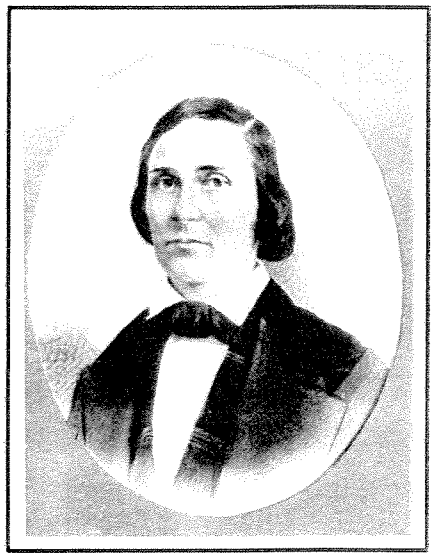
The preceding articles shall be duly published in order that the Mexican Authorities may act in conformity thereto.

Head Quarters. Orizava the April 1847.

Antonio Lopez de Santa-Anna.

Santa Anna's Notice

During the U.S. War with Mexico in 1846, Santa Anna, commander of the Mexican forces, attempted to entice American soldiers to desert by offering them cash and land. Few Americans accepted his offer, but enough did to create a battalion-size unit. Many of its members were executed after recapture by American forces.



Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Chaves

Chaves was a direct descendant of a Spanish soldier who had come to the southwest in 1600. During the war with Mexico (1846–1848), he had fought against the United States, but became a loyal citizen when New Mexico became a U.S. Territory. From 1855–1863, Chaves gained a reputation as an Indian fighter although he did not personally experience the rabid anti-Indian emotions of the period. When the Civil War broke out, Chaves joined the New Mexico volunteers and fought at the battle of Glorieta Pass (March 1862), in which Union forces defeated the most serious of the Confederate attempts to invade New Mexico.

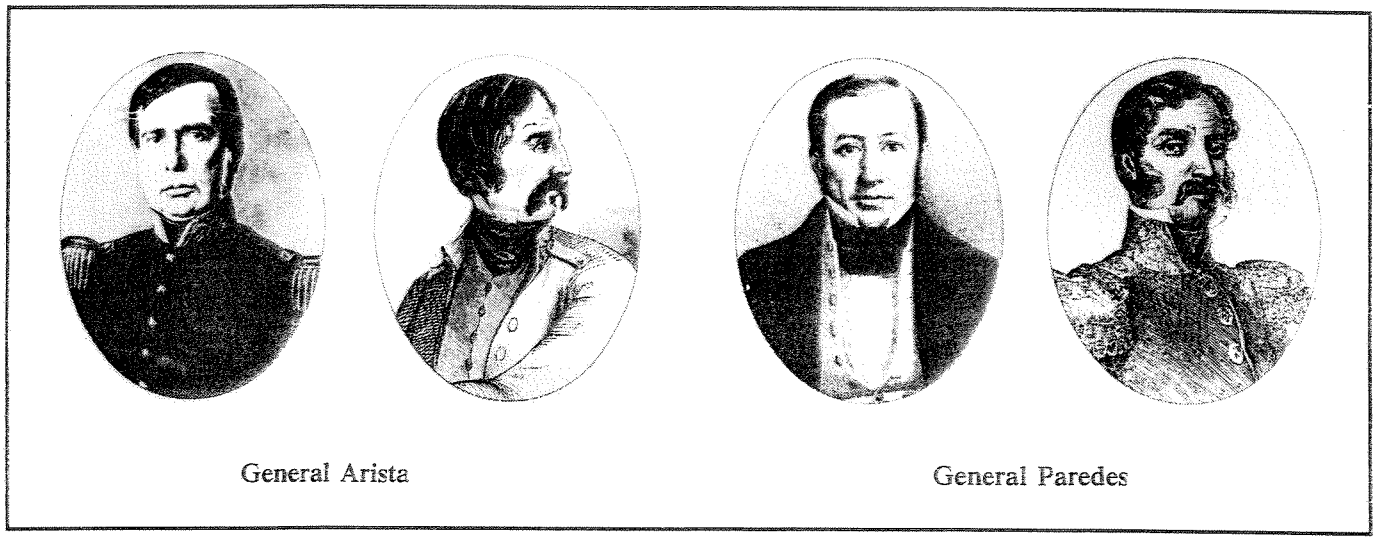
The New Mexico Volunteers

The New Mexico volunteers were probably the oldest militia organization in the New Mexico Territory. The unit's members and officers were predominantly Hispanic. During the Civil War, the unit was incorporated into the Union Army. In 1862, it fought in the battle of Valverde (a Confederate victory) and in the battle at Glorieta Pass (a Union victory). After 1862, the unit was principally engaged in patrolling and minor skirmishes. The Spanish-style uniform shown here is from 1850. It may still have been in use at the beginning of the Civil War.

Drawing by Elio Gasperetti

Captain Roman Anthony Baca

Baca joined the Union forces as an officer in the New Mexico volunteers. He also served as a spy for the Union army in Texas. After the war he became a rancher in New Mexico Territory and served several terms in the territorial legislature.



American Stereotypes of Mexicans

Much of the Mexican-American War (1846-1848) was the product of U.S. expansionism and prejudicial disregard of Mexicans. American public opinion portrayed Mexicans as barbaric, corrupt savages. The drawings of General Arista (left) and General Paredes (right) are typical of the rendering of Mexican leaders in the American press. To the left of each sketch is a portait which more accurately reflects the actual appearance of each man.

Admiral David G. Farragut

The most famous Hispanic participant in the Union forces was in the Navy. David G. Farragut was born on July 5, 1801. His father, a Spaniard, had come to the United States in 1776 and participated in both the American Revolution and the War of 1812.

When David Farragut was nine, he was appointed a midshipman in the U.S. Navy (the term was used to denote young men who were apprenticed aboard ship to learn various tasks of the men they would grow to command). As a boy of 13, Farragut served aboard the *USS Essex* during the War of 1812. After the war, David continued his apprenticeship on several cruises to the Mediterranean. During the war with Mexico, Farragut commanded the sloop-of-war *Saratoga*, but saw no combat. His ship was assigned to blockade duty off Vera Cruz.

In 1854, Farragut established the Mare Island Navy Yard near San Francisco, and he had returned to his home in Norfolk, Virginia when the Civil War broke out. When Virginia seceded, however, he backed the Union and moved to New York. Farragut's first wartime assignment was as a member of a naval board reviewing records of officers to select those to be retired. He soon received command and was ordered to use his West Gulf Blockading Squadron to attack and capture New Orleans.

On April 18, 1862, Farragut opened his assault on the city by bombarding one of two Confederate forts guarding the Mississippi River approach to the city. After 5 days of continuous bombardment, Farragut's fleet sailed past the devastated forts on April 24 and engaged the Confederate ships above the forts. After a furious battle, the Union ships succeeded in getting through and they sailed into New Orleans on April 25th. On the 26th, Union troops under General Benjamin Butler occupied the city.

Farragut proceeded up the river to capture Vicksburg, but was unsuccessful. He

Admiral David G. Farragut

Painting by A. Conrad

U.S. Naval History Photograph NH49699

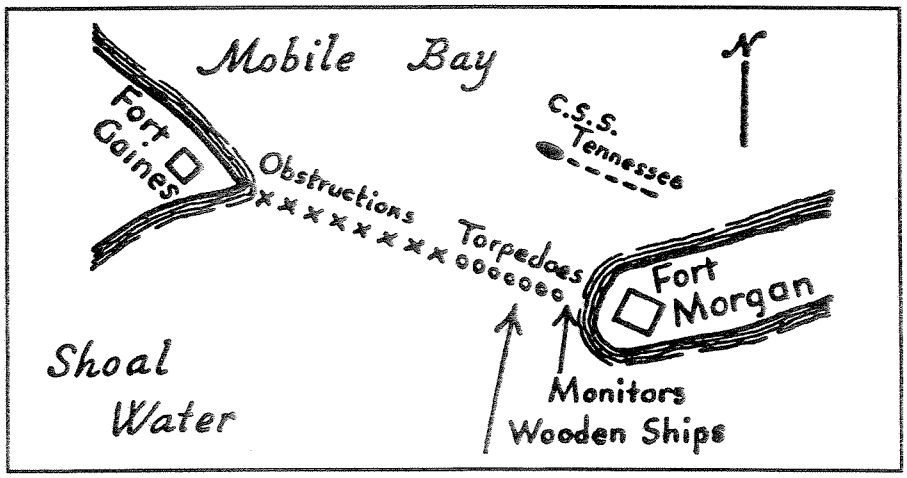
then attacked the Confederate forts at Port Hudson, 135 miles north of New Orleans. The forts protected Confederate supply routes to Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas. In this battle, Farragut developed the tactics for attacking forts which would make him famous. On March 13, 1863, Farragut's squadron attacked the Port Hudson forts. Although they were unable to reduce the forts, they were able to get two ships past the Confederate guns, thus interdicting the Confederate supply routes.

After the battle at Port Hudson, Farragut refitted and repaired his ships. He also prepared for the battle which was to insure his fame as a naval leader.

Mobile, Alabama, was one of three great cotton ports in the South. New Orleans was already under Union control, thanks to Farragut, and now he approached the second largest port—Mobile. The city itself was situated at the north end of Mobile Bay, at the confluence of the Mobile and Alabama Rivers. The Bay was a 35-mile-long extension of the Gulf of Mexico into Alabama. The city was protected by two Confederate forts, each of which lay on a finger of land extending into the Gulf to create the Bay (see map). In the narrow entrance to Mobile Bay, the Confederates had driven wooden piles and anchored explosive mines to them. (Mines were called "torpedoes" at that time.) Behind the forts was the Confederate ironclad ram, *CSS Tennessee*.

In the early morning hours of August 5, 1864, Farragut's fleet approached the mouth of the Bay. Union troops had already placed Fort Gaines under siege, so his principal worries were Fort Morgan, the torpedoes, and the *CSS Tennessee*. Farragut's fleet contained 14 wooden ships and 4 ironclad monitors. His plan was to force a way through the torpedoes while engaging the guns in Fort Morgan.

The four slower monitors advanced first, followed by the wooden ships. Not long after opening fire on Fort Morgan, the leading monitor, *Tecumseh*, struck a torpedo and sank. Following behind the *Tecumseh* was the wooden ship *Brooklyn*. It slowed, stopped, and began to back up to keep from running into the other slower



Sketch Map of Mobile Bay Prior to Farragut's Assault

monitors and to avoid a "row of suspicious-looking buoys" under its bow. In the confusion which followed, Farragut sent two signals, "order the monitors ahead, and go on" and "I will take the lead."

He maneuvered his ship, the *Hartford*, around the *Brooklyn*, and proceeded at full speed. It was later reported that as they passed the *Brooklyn*, Farragut shouted "Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!" His ship passed over the moored mines, scrapping them but causing no explosions. The remaining ships followed him and engaged the *Tennessee*. After a vicious battle, the *Tennessee* was forced to surrender and the city of Mobile was open to occupation by the Union.

After the capture of Mobile, Farragut was commissioned Admiral of the Navy on July 26, 1866. He then took command of the European Squadron. While sailing abroad with the squadron, he visited his father's birthplace at Ciudadela, Minorca, in the Mediterranean Sea and received a hero's welcome. Other European nations also honored him. He died in 1872 having gained international fame as a great naval leader.

Confederacy

Other Hispanics served in Confederate units such as the Benavides Regiment, commanded by Colonel Santos Benavides, and the 10th Texas Cavalry, commanded by Major Leonides M. Martin.

According to the historian Jerry Don Thompson, significant numbers of Hispanics also served in the 55th Alabama Infantry, Manigault's Battalion of South Carolina Artillery, 6th Missouri Infantry, the Chalmetle Regiment of Louisiana Infantry, and the Second Texas Mounted Rifles. Other Confederate units which contained large numbers of Hispanics included Vigil's Independent Company of Cavalry, the Louisiana Zouaves Battalion, 1st Florida Cavalry, the Spanish Legion of the European Brigade, the Spanish Guard (part of the Home Guard of Mobile, Alabama), and four independent New Mexico militia companies known by their commanders' names (Gonzales, Martinez, Tafolla, and Perea).

Colonel Santos Benavides

Commander of the Benavides Regiment in the Confederate Army and defender of Laredo, Texas.

Photo courtesy St. Mary's University Library

The conflict in Texas deeply divided the Mexican-Texans. An estimated 2,550 fought in the ranks of the Confederacy, while 950, including some Mexican nationals, fought for the Union.

In many ways, by 1863, the Civil War in South Texas had become a civil war within a civil war. It was now Texan against Texan, Mexican-Texan against Mexican-Texan. After the hasty retreat of the bulk of the Confederate forces from the lower Rio Grande Valley, the only sizeable Rebel force remaining to defend the area around Laredo, Texas, was commanded by Colonel Santos Benavides. This unit was better known as the "Benavides Regiment."

Santos Benavides was born on November 1, 1823, in Laredo, Texas. As a young man he first tasted the sting of battle during Mexico's Federalist-Centralist wars which ravaged the Rio Grande Valley from 1838 to 1840. In 1856, he became the Mayor of Laredo and at the time of the Civil War, he had become a leading politician and financial figure in the area. He rose quickly in the Confederate ranks from captain to colonel.

Commanding his own regiment, he was the highest ranking Mexican-American in the Confederate Army. Although Generals Hamilton Lee, Slaughter, and Magruder recommended promotion for Benavides to Brigadier General, Colonel John "Rip" Ford was against such a decision, feeling it would diminish his role in the Rio Grande exploits.

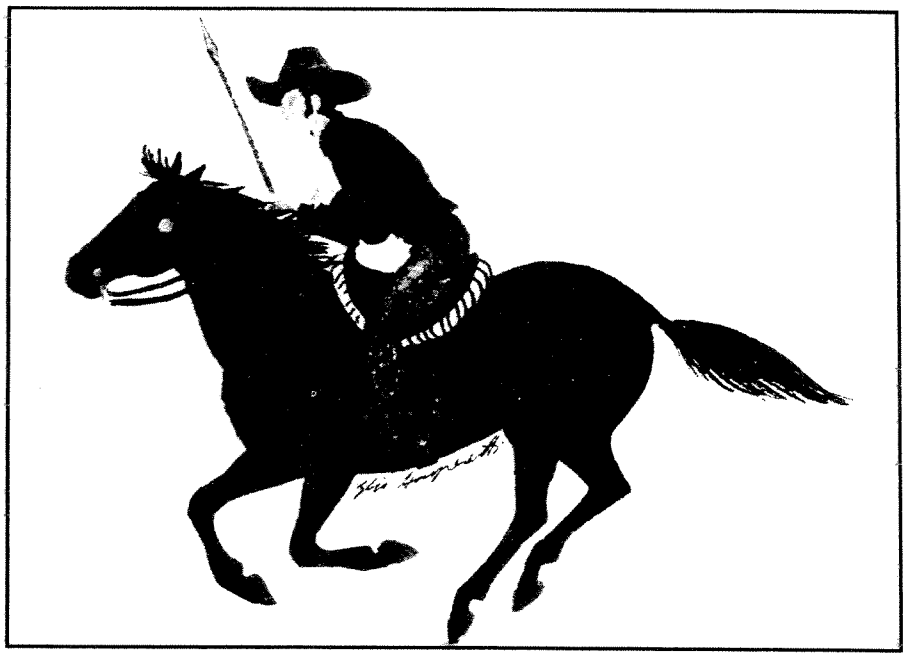
Captain Joseph De La Garza

As a lieutenant, de La Garza served 3 years in the Confederate Army. Upon his discharge, he returned to San Antonio, but re-enlisted in 1864 with the rank of captain. His unit was rushed north to resist the Union attempt to invade Texas in the Red River Campaign. He was killed at the battle of Mansfield which turned back the Northern columns.

Photo courtesy Helen Yturri

In March of 1964, Confederate Brigadier General Hamilton P. Lee asked Colonel Benavides to ride to Brownsville to save the 100-man post which was under siege from elements of the Union's XIII Corps. Included in

this group was the 2nd Texas Union Cavalry, a Brownsville unit newly formed of Unionist Mexican-Texans. The 33rd Cavalry commanded by Colonel Benavides rose to the occasion, and drove the Union forces back. A month after General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox, the Civil War ended for Santos Benavides, his two courageous brothers, and the Mexican-Texans of the Lone Star State. "Tejanos" (as the Mexican-Americans from Texas are called) had been among the first to take up arms for the Confederacy and were among the last to surrender.



Vigil's Independent Company of Cavalry

Vigil's Company was one of five independent militia companies and one militia battalion from New Mexico which joined the Confederate Army. Of the six units, they were the only cavalry unit. All six units were principally composed of Spanish-speaking personnel. Their term of service was short, for Confederate forces were quickly expelled from New Mexico Territory in 1862.

Drawing by Elio Gasperetti

1st Florida Cavalry

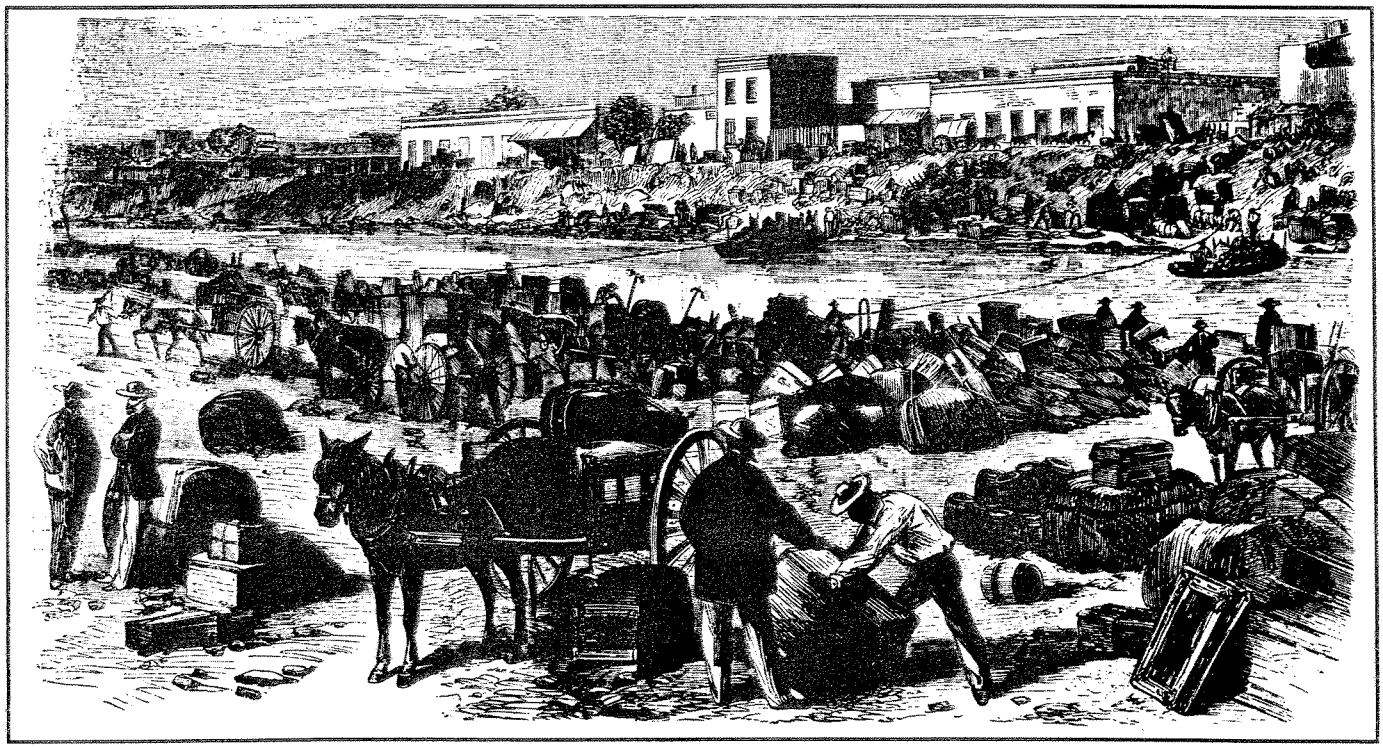
One of a number of Florida units containing men of Spanish ancestry which fought for the Confederacy.

Drawing by Elio Gasperetti

The Louisiana Zouaves Battalion

A Confederate unit raised from the foreign-born in New Orleans. It contained a number of Spanish and Mexican troops.

Drawing by Elio Gasperetti



Brownsville, Texas

On November 2, 1863, the Confederates evacuated Brownsville under threat of capture by Union forces. The 33rd Cavalry (Benevides Regiment) was in the Confederate force which successfully defended the city.

She Fought as a Man

Loretta Janet Velasquez was a Cuban-born woman who masqueraded as a male Confederate soldier. She enlisted in the Confederate Army in 1860, without her soldier-husband's knowledge. She fought at Bull Run, Ball's Bluff, and Fort Donelson, but was detected while in New Orleans and discharged. Undeterred, she re-enlisted and fought at Shiloh until unmasked once more. She then took duty as a spy, working in both male and female guise. Her husband died during the war and she remarried three more times; being widowed in each instance. She traveled throughout the West before settling in Austin, Nevada.

Courtesy Elio Gasperetti

Spanish-American War (1898)

Introduction

By the mid–1820's, Spain had lost most of its colonial possessions in North and South America. One area which it did retain, however, was in the Caribbean and included the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico. Cuba, particularly, soon entered a period of social and political unrest with the institution and then suppression of several Constitutions in the period 1812–1814.

In the years 1826 and 1835, Cubans initiated at least two armed revolts which were unsuccessful. Later attempts in the 1840's, supported by Cuban refugees in the United States, were equally unsuccessful. In 1850, Americans constituted two-thirds of a force under General Narciso Lopez which invaded Cuba. They were defeated by the Spanish Army after capturing the city of Gardenas. In 1851 and again in 1854, two more expeditions against Cuba were similarly repulsed by Spain. From 1868 to 1878, Cuban revolutionaries engaged in the Ten Year's War but were eventually defeated by Spanish force of arms, commanded by General Martinez Campos.

In 1892, the Cuban Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Cubano) was established by the poet and patriot Jose Marti. On February 25, 1892, after working among the Cuban emigre groups in the United States and the Caribbean, Marti and his followers issued the cry of armed revolt—the grito de Baire (Cry of Baire). A three-pronged attack was planned. Cuban forces under Antonio Macio in Costa Rica, Maximo Gomez in Santo Domingo, and Serafin Sanchez and Carlos Raldoff in the United States set out to invade Cuba. The U.S. group was intercepted and turned back by the U.S. Navy, but the other two groups succeeded in landing on the island. From 1895–1896, they practiced guerrilla and economic warfare, raiding Spanish military posts and burning crops in the hope of forcing Spain out. The United States declared itself to be officially neutral in the struggle.

General Anthony Maceo

Maceo was a Cuban and a leader in the Ten Year's War (1868–1878), the first major war for Cuban independence. From exile in Costa Rica, he served as second-in-command to General-in-Chief Gomez, and fought in the final revolt which began in 1895. He was a major antagonist to the Spanish forces, but was finally trapped and killed in 1896, 2 years before eventual freedom from Spain.

On July 15, 1895, the Cuban Republic was declared but Spain responded by sending more troops under General Arsenio Martinez de Campos to put down the revolt. General Campos relied upon pacification tactics and a defensive line of forts and blockhouses (trocha) to suppress the rebellion. He was replaced in 1896 by General Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau, who escalated the conflict by building a second trocha and by resettling the populace into "reconcentrated" areas similar to the strategic hamlets which would be used in Vietnam in the 1960's.

Weyler's intent was to isolate the guerrillas from the populace, but it served only to turn world public opinion against him—particularly in the United States. The American public demanded action to support the Cuban insurrectionists, but the policy of neutrality prevailed. The U.S. presidential elections of 1896 concentrated on domestic issues of the economy although a watchful eye was set toward Cuba.

After the election, the American press began to publicize the plight of the Cuban citizens in the makeshift Spanish reconcentration centers, and

General Maximus Gomez

Gomez was a prominent leader in the Ten Year's War (1868–1878), the major struggle for Cuban independence. He returned to Cuba in 1895 from exile and served as General-in-Chief in the final war for independence. He commanded all Cuban forces which cooperated with the American Army during the Spanish-American War in 1898.

the U.S. Government was requested to act. Although General Weyler was replaced in 1897, the horror stories of his policies continued. The battleship Maine was then sent to Havana harbor to protect American citizens and property as the political situation deteriorated.

U.S. Involvement

On February 15, 1898, a mysterious explosion ripped apart the Maine, killing 260 Americans. The U.S. press demanded action. On April 11, 1898, the United States declared war on Spain with the avowed purpose of freeing the oppressed Cubans.

The U.S. Army of 1898 was a small professional force scattered in posts throughout the country. It consisted of approximately 30,000 officers and men in comparison to nearly 200,000 Spanish troops in Cuba. In June 1898, 17,000 American soldiers landed on the southeastern tip of Cuba at Daiquiri, near the city of Santiago.

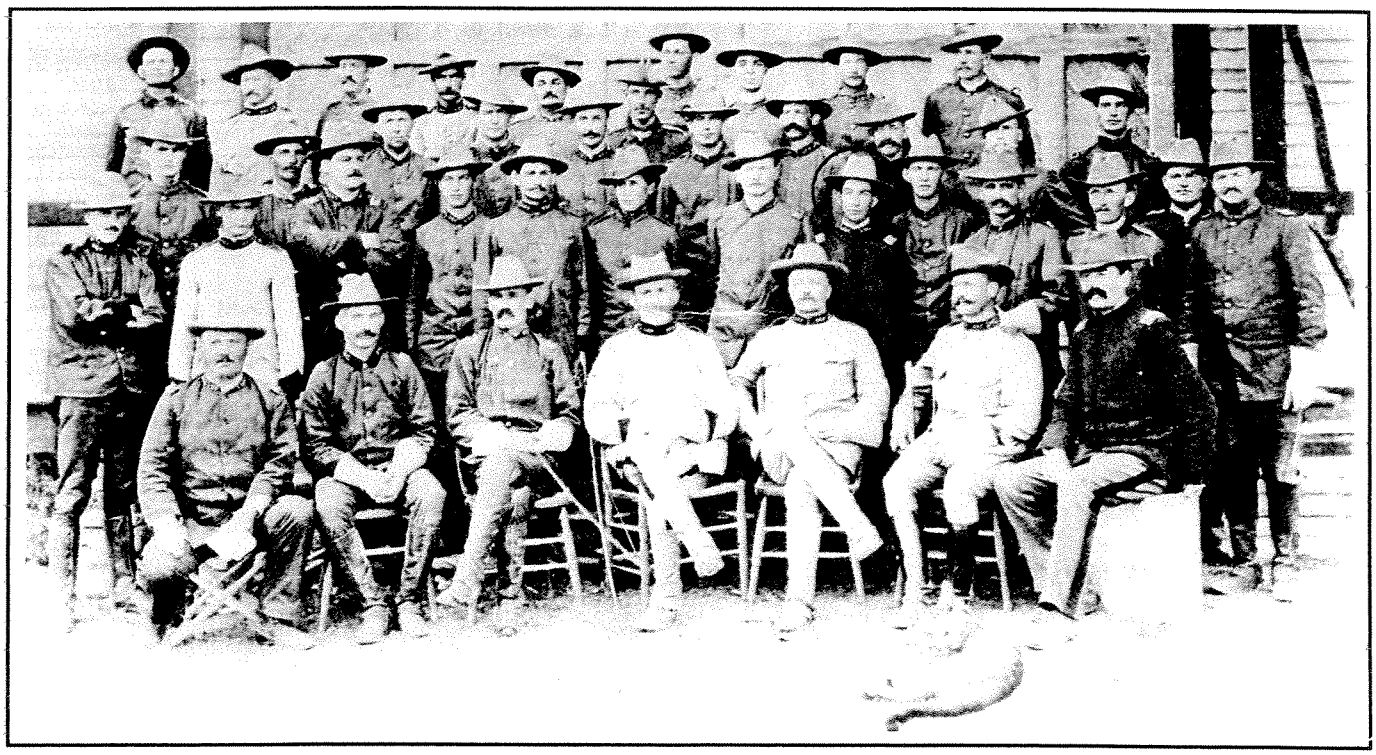
Among the U.S. forces were 1,200 men of the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry under Colonel Leonard Wood and Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt. More commonly known as the "Rough Riders," this unit was an amalgam of America. Approximately five percent were recent immigrants from foreign countries. Another 20 percent were from Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Indian Territories. The remainder came from each state in the Union.

As might be expected, Hispanics were among those who served in the Rough Riders. Among them were private John B. Alamia, Sergeant George W. Armijo, Private G.W. Arringo, 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.

Captain Maximiliano Luna was perhaps the most distinguished Hispanic 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 17th century. He was 38 years old when he joined the Rough Riders, having been educated at the Jesuit College in Las Vegas, Nevada and at Georgetown University in the District of Columbia. His father had represented the New Mexico Territory in the U.S. Congress and he himself had been in the Territorial legislature as well as serving as sheriff of Valencia County.

Captain Luna was athletic and an accomplished musician. He was living in Santa Fe with his wife and selling insurance when he decided to join the Rough Riders.

After landing in Cuba, the Rough Riders and the rest of the American Army marched to Siboney, had their first combat at Las Guasimas, and pushed toward San-



The Rough Riders

Officers of the 1st Volunteer Cavalry pose in 1898 prior to departing for Florida and Cuba. Colonel Leonard Wood, the commanding officer, is fourth from the left in the first row. Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt is fifth from the left in the first row. Captain Maximiliano Luna, the sole Hispanic officer in the unit is standing behind Lt. Colonel Roosevelt (circle).

tiago where they overran Spanish forts at El Caney and on San Juan Hill. During the fighting, George Armijo and G.W. Arringo were wounded.

In conjunction with Cuban forces, the Americans besieged the Spanish garrison in Santiago itself. After the Spanish Navy was defeated outside Santiago Harbor, the city surrendered. Colonel Wood was named Military Governor of Santiago and Captain Luna served as his interpreter.

Cuban Forces

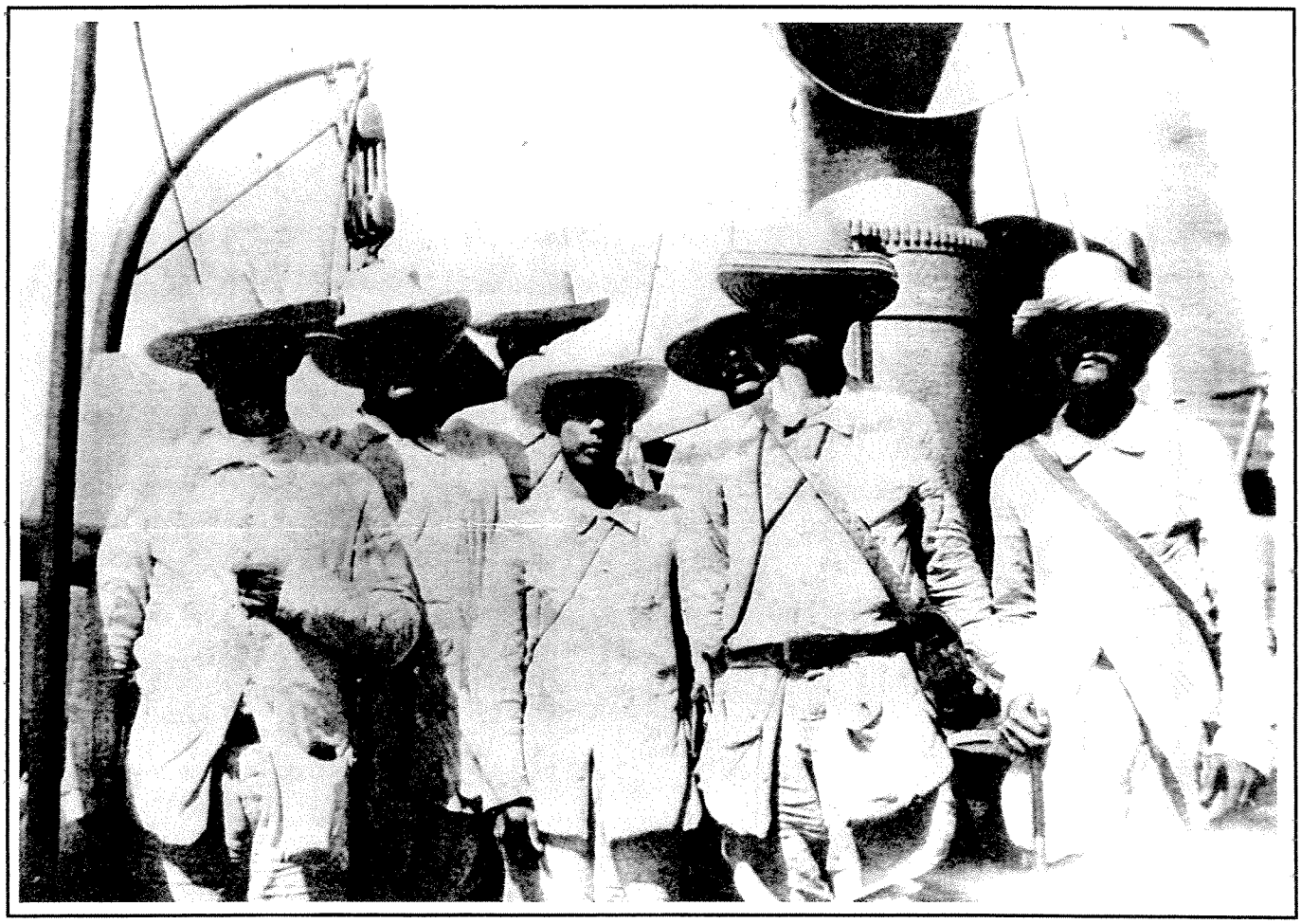
The Cuban revolutionaries had been fighting for 3 years under General Maximo Gomez, prior to the American landing. They anticipated that American support would tip the balance of power in their favor.

By successfully waging a war of attrition and by using guerrilla forces, the Cubans had managed to isolate the Spanish by confining them to the cities and the blockhouses.

The Cubans divided the island into two parts, the Eastern Department, commanded by General Calixto Garcia, and the Western Department, commanded by General J.M. Rodrigues.

In May 1898, the Americans provided a shipload of arms to the Cubans and in June General Garcia conferred with the American force commander, General Shaffer, about how the Cubans would support the landing. The Cubans agreed to keep the Spanish bottled up in the cities and to clear the proposed landing site.

The American forces were impressed with the Cuban plan and personnel, but soon after landing, relations deteriorated. The condition of the haggard Cuban forces disappointed the well-equipped Americans, who overlooked their previous long struggles. In addition, white Americans reacted unfavorably to the large number of blacks among the insurrectionists. As a result, the Cubans felt slighted and were angered at not being given more important assignments.



Cuban Guerrillas

Cuban General Riss and his staff during the Spanish-American War, 1898.

U.S. Naval History Photograph NH 1005

Spanish-American War Survivors

This photo, taken in 1963, shows the last three survivors of the Rough Riders. From left to right they are: Charles O. Hopping, Jesse D. Langdon, and Frank C. Brito, the only surviving Hispanic member.

Wars End

The Spanish garrison surrendered Santiago on July 17, 1898. Eight days later, American forces landed in Puerto Rico and captured the island by August 12. On August 13, one day after the end of the war, American troops took Manila, capital city of the Philippines.

As a result of the peace treaty ending the war, Spain relinquished control of Cuba, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam, all of which fell under American influence. Spain's colonial empire was now gone.

George Armijo, an Hispanic Rough Rider, became a member of Congress after the war. A military camp at Las Vegas, New Mexico was named after Captain Maximiliano Luna. It was later converted to a career and trade school and still bears his name, "Luna Trade School." Frank Brito was one of the last surviving Rough Riders. He died in 1968.

World War I (1914–1918)

The Early War Experience

In March 1917, four American merchant ships were sunk on the open seas by German submarines. Prior to that incident, the United States had been a nonparticipant in the conflict raging in Europe. In April, the United States declared war, but was ill-prepared to assume fighting immediately.

The war effort would require millions of people in the military and the active U.S. Army had only about 200,000 members. A draft act was passed in 1917 to obtain the necessary manpower and about 3.8 million men were drafted.

Out of a total U.S. population of almost 92 million people in 1910, 13.3 million were foreign-born; another 12.9 million had two foreign-born parents. Another group of almost 6 million had one foreign born parent. From this, it can be seen that one-third of the total population were recent immigrants, greatly increasing the likelihood that many had little or no skill in English. This was born out by the experiences of U.S. military personnel at induction centers and training camps. Thousands of draftees, from all over the world, including Spain and Mexico, were found to have insufficient skill in English to complete the training.

The exigencies of the war in Europe necessitated the speedy induction and training of men for shipment to the front. Those with no or limited ability in English were relegated to development battalions at the training centers. For weeks these men were given little or no attention. They grew discontented, restless, sullen, and resentful of their situation.

Eventually, some 4,000 of these non-English speaking men were gathered at Camp Gordon, Georgia. Many were relegated to menial jobs and to ridicule by

their English-speaking brethren. Most wanted to get out of the military.

Eventually, someone discovered that the language barrier was the principal cause of their problem. After rudimentary interviews, the men were separated into language groups and officers who could speak their native tongue were identified. Once communication was established, many useful skills were discerned, including previous military experience in the countries of their birth.

Training then progressed in the native tongue of the draftees. This training, then known as the "Camp Gordon Plan," was extended to seven other military posts. Most Hispanic draftees were at Camp Cody, New Mexico, for training.

In the time it took to discern the problem, design the "Camp Gordon Plan" remedy, and begin to train the non-English speaking soldiers, the war was nearing an end. The training took too long and few saw combat as a result.

Hispanics in Combat

From scattered records, we do know that Hispanic Americans fought in World War I. Nicolas Lucero, a nineteen-year-old from Albuquerque, New Mexico, received the French Croix de Guerre for destroying two German machine gun emplacements and for keeping a constant fire on the enemy positions for over 3 hours.

In another incident, Marcelino Serna, a Hispanic, enlisted in the Army and was sent to fight in the frontline trenches of France. On September 12, 1918, the U.S. First Army launched an offensive to crash through the St. Mihiel salient near the French-German border. That same day, Private Serna shot at a German soldier opposite him in the trenches. The German was wounded but still managed to return Serna's fire, grazing him slightly on the head.

Following a trail of blood, Serna tracked the wounded enemy soldier to a dugout. He paused a moment, then tossed a concussion grenade into the enclosure. To his surprise, not one but 24 Germans came out. As Marcelino was attempting to seek help to detain these prisoners, a young American soldier approached him and attempted to kill the prisoners. Marcelino informed the young soldier that if he wanted to shoot the enemy he should go find some further north of the trenches. He also told him that it was against the rules of war to kill prisoners.

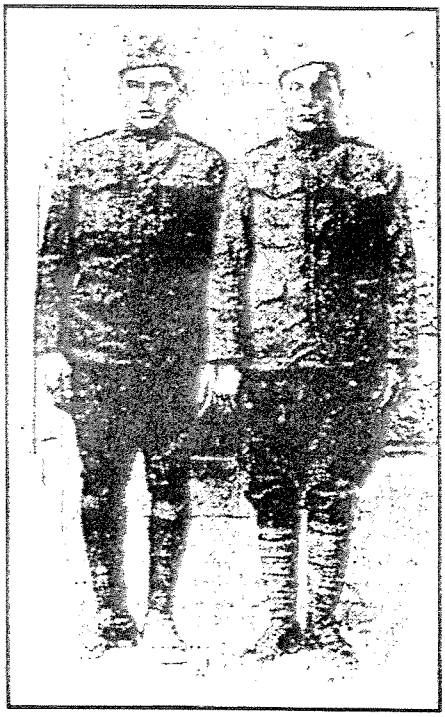
For this feat, Serna was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. For later actions, he was also decorated with the French Croix de Guerre, the Victory Medal with three bars, and the Purple Heart twice. Although seemingly eligible for the U.S. Medal of Honor, he was told by an officer that to be so honored one had to be of a higher rank than a "buck" private, and that he could not be advanced to a higher grade because he could not read or write English well enough to sign reports.

Marcelino Serna

The Mexican-American veteran of World War I proudly displays his medals in a photograph taken several years after the war.

The faded, blurred newspaper photograph reproduced below is captioned:

"Federico Nolina, son of Mr. Micolas Nolina, resident of this city, R.D.F. No. 7; at right, a friend of the young Mexican-Texan. They are seen here in one of regiments that left San Antonio just a short time ago for France and they are going to take part in the struggle against the enemies of democracy."



Hispanic Soldiers

Federico Molina and a friend pose in France during World War I. The photo is reproduced from an old newspaper.

Although these reference are scattered, they are illustrative of the many unrecognized efforts by Hispanics to contribute to the war effort. In another instance, a Senator from New Mexico published in the Congressional Record an honor role of New Mexican Hispanics killed in France during World War I. He named the following:

Thomas Herrera, Leopoldo Carbajal, Alfredo Moya, Manuel Ortega, Porfirio Peno, Alonso Aragon, Donaciano Martinez, Andres Garcia, Desiderio Vigil, Manuel Chavez, Atonicio Garcia; Jose Mario Pena, Pedro Romero, Gilberto Wohlgemuth, Alberto Carbajal, Cadelario Cardon, Cosme Gallegos, Silvio Gonzalez, Maximiliano Cardenas, Luis Moya, Luis E. Mares, Cipriano Martinez, Francisco O. Lucero. As we can see by the names from New Mexico, Hispanics were indeed among the valiant who died in defense of this country in World War I.

Mexican-Texans going to France to fight in 1918 sang the following song:

"Registration 1918"
The cards arrived
at home for each one
verifying the registration
those twenty-one to thirty-one.

Good bye Laredo highlighted
by your towers and bells
but we shall never forget
your beautiful Mexican women.

They are taking us to fight
to some distant land
and taking us to fight
the German troops.

They are taking us to fight
in distinct directions
and taking us to fight
with different nations.

How far is the journey
over the waves
great will be my pleasure
if I will triumph.

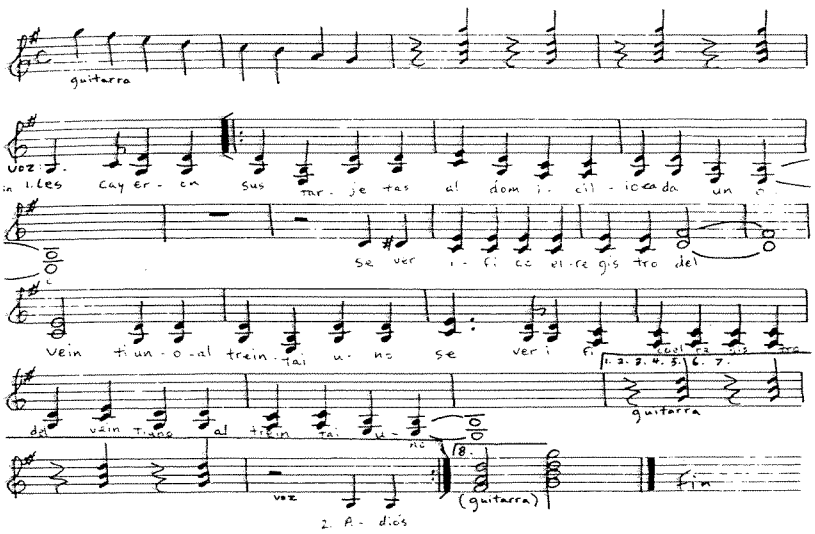
When I was fighting
I would remember everybody
and more of my poor mother
that cried so much for me.

Good bye dear parents
and the lady I love
when we are in France
a sigh we will send you.

Good bye Laredo highlighted
by your towers and bells
but we shall never forget
your beautiful Mexican women.

We cannot say with any certainty how many Hispanics served in U.S. forces during World War I. There can be little doubt, however, that many did serve—and with honor. We should not allow their sacrifices to be lost in the blurred pages of history.

2. Registro de 1918



Les cayeron sus tarjetas
al domicilio a cada uno,
se verificó el registro
del veintiuno al treinta y uno.

Adiós Laredo lucido
con sus torres y campanas,
pero nunca olvidaremos
a tus lindas mexicanas.

Ya nos llevan a pelear
a unas tierras muy lejanas
y nos llevan a pelear
con las tropas alemanas.

Ya nos llevan a pelear
a distintas direcciones,
y nos llevan a pelear
con diferentes naciones.

¡Qué lejos es la travesía
sobre las olas del mar!
Grande fuera mi alegría
si llegare yo a triunfar.

Cuando andaba yo peleando
de toditos me acordaba,
y más de mi pobre madre
que por mí tanto lloraba.

Adiós mis queridos padres
y la joven a quien yo amo,
ya cuando estemos en Francia
un suspiro les mandamos.

Adiós Laredo lucido
con sus torres y campanas,
pero nunca olvidaremos
a tus lindas mexicanas.

Registration 1918

The music and words in Spanish from this popular World War I song.

World War II (1941–1945)

Introduction

It has been estimated that anywhere from 250,000 to 500,000 Hispanics served in the armed forces during World War II. This represents a range of 2.5 to 5 percent of all persons who served during the war. Figures are imprecise because, with the exception of Puerto Ricans, data on Hispanics were not maintained. We do know that over 53,000 Puerto Ricans served during the period 1940–1946.

National Guard units from Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California had a high representation of Mexican Americans. With the exception of the 65th Infantry regiment from Puerto Rico, Hispanics were not in segregated units. Approximately 200 Puerto Rican women served in the Women's Army Corps.

The Hispanic participation in the war effort is difficult to separate from the overall efforts of all the men and women who served in our armed forces. Those whose accomplishments we highlight below should be considered representative of Hispanic contributions to the war effort.

Bataan

World War II began for most Americans on December 7, 1941, when Japanese aircraft attacked Pearl Harbor. The war had been in full swing for 2 years in Europe—and for 4 years in Asia.

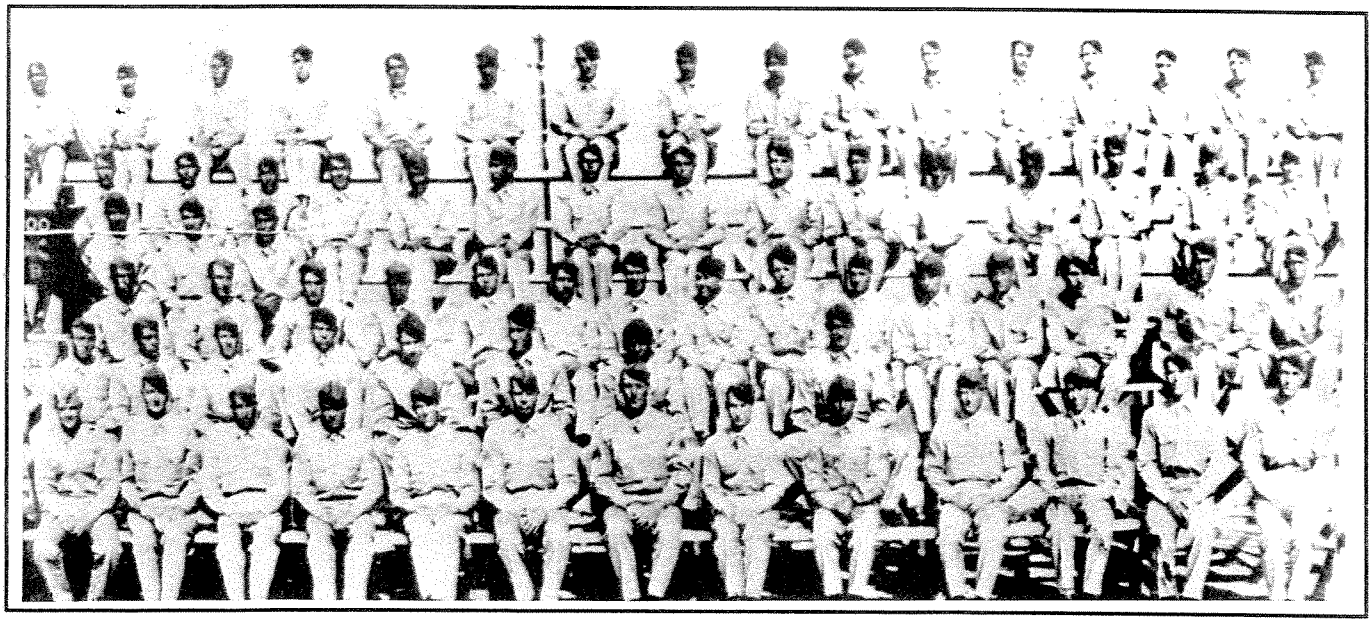
Although the Pearl Harbor attack was unexpected, preparations for an eventual war had begun earlier. As part of the troop movement to bolster the defense of the Philippines, the 200th and 515th Coast Artillery (Anti-Aircraft) were sent to stations around Clark Field near Manila. Both units were from the New Mexico National Guard and had a heavy representation of Hispanic officers and enlisted men. They had been selected because many of the men in the unit spoke Spanish, a principal language of the Philippines. Upon their arrival, they became the largest single American military unit in the Philippines. Most of the 140,000 defenders of the island were members of the Philippine Army (100,000).

The Japanese bombed Clark Field on December 8, 1941, and Sgt. Felipe N. Trejo of Santa Fe, New Mexico and Epimenio Rubi of Winslow, Arizona were among the first American casualties. The Japanese followed this attack with a troop landing on the northern coast of Luzon on December 10. They drove steadily south toward Manila. General MacArthur, who commanded all units in the Philippines, realized that he could not defend the entire island.

While holding back the Japanese as best as possible, he consolidated his remaining forces on the Bataan Peninsula which jutted out into the South China Sea west of Manila to form Manila Bay. Just off the tip of Bataan was the island of Corregidor which guarded the mouth of the bay. MacArthur put his headquarters on the island.

Despite desperate fighting, the Japanese pushed the American forces down the peninsula, successively breaking through four defensive lines.

On April 9, 1942, General Edward P. King was forced to surrender with 36,000 of his troops. General Wainwright retreated to Corregidor where he and the remaining forces held out for another month, finally capitulating on May 8, 1942.



200th Coast Artillery (Anti-aircraft)

Some of the officers and men of Battery B, 200th Coast Artillery (AA), pose in 1941, after being inducted into the U.S. Army.

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The Japanese were ill-prepared to handle the approximately 16,000 prisoners whom they collected on Bataan. Lacking transportation or supplies, they forced their prisoners to march north, back up the Bataan Peninsula, some 85 miles to prison camps. During the 12-day "death march" many prisoners died from Japanese mistreatment; less than 10,000 survived the march.

Once in prisoners of war camps, brutality, disease, and malnutrition further reduced the prisoners' numbers. A Hispanic American survivor, J.G. Lucero of New Mexico, kept a weight chart and cartoons drawn by prisoners as a reminder of his ordeal.

Philippine Invasion, 1941-1942

Japanese troops celebrate the capture of an American position on Orion during the final offensive on Bataan in April 1942.

Courtesy of Dr. Diosdada M. Yap, Editor-Publisher Bataan Magazine, Washington, D.C. U.S. Naval History Photograph NH 73536

Captured American and Filipino Troops After the Surrender on Corregidor

The 11,500 surviving troops became prisoners of war and on May 28, 1942, were evacuated to a prison stockade in Manila. The picture is reproduced from an illustration which appeared in a captured Japanese publication.

Survivors of Japanese Prisoner of War Camps

Mr. Adolfo Garduno (left) from Las Vegas, New Mexico was one of the Hispanic survivors captured on Bataan.

North Africa

On November 8, 1942, American forces assumed the offensive and landed on the coast of North Africa at Oran. Hispanics from National Guard units in the southwest were a part of the 1st and 3rd Infantry Divisions as well as the 2nd Armored Division.

Aleutians

The American invasion of the Aleutian Islands in May 1943 was intended to protect Alaska from Japanese invasion. The fighting there produced the first Hispanic Medal of Honor recipient of World War II—Private Jose P. Martinez.

Born in Taos, New Mexico in 1920, Martinez was one of nine children. He moved with his family to Ault, Colorado in 1927 where his father found work as an agricultural laborer. He was drafted in August 1942 and took his basic training at Camp Roberts, California. After training he was assigned to a unit in the 7th Infantry Division.

On May 11, 1943, Martinez landed on Red Beach with his unit at Holtz Bay, Attu, the western most island on the Aleutian chain. During an attack by his unit 15 days after landing, Martinez' unit was pinned down by Japanese small arms, machine guns, and mortars. On his own initiative, Martinez jumped up and lead his platoon in the assault. Others followed his example. When the attack faltered under withering fire, Martinez again leapt forward. On two separate occasions, he jumped into a trench among the Japanese defenders and drove them back. During the second episode, he was mortally wounded.

A Disabled American Veterans chapter in Colorado and an American Legion post in California are named in his honor. He became an inspiration to many Hispanics in and out of uniform when the Army released his story.

The Mediterranean

On July 10, 1943, the U.S. Seventh Army under General Patton and the British Eighth Army under General Montgomery landed on the southeast coast of Sicily in the early morning hours. This started the Allied attempt to regain control of the Mediterranean, knocking Italy out of the war. In just over a month, the campaign was completed and plans were initiated for the invasion of Italy.

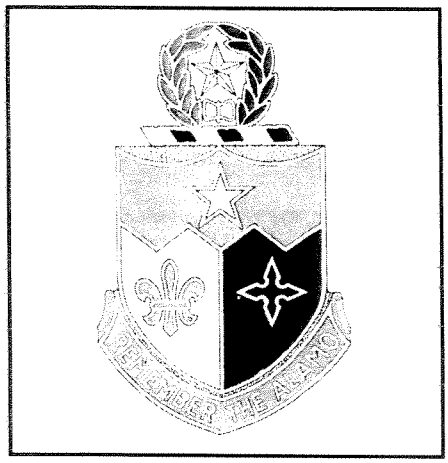
Initially, the U.S. Fifth Army was to land near Naples (Operation Avalanche) and the British on the toe of Italy across from Sicily (Operation Baytown). On September 3, 1943, the British Army moved across the Strait of Messina to the Italian mainland. On September 9, the American Fifth Army hit the beach at Salerno. By the end of the day, the initial beachhead was secured.

One of the units of the Fifth Army was the 36th Infantry (T-Patcher) Division from Texas. A unit of the 36th was the 141st Infantry Regiment, which traced its lineage to the 1st and 2nd Texas Volunteers in the Texas Revolution of 1836. A large number of Hispanics served in the 36th, and particularly in the 141st. Company E of the 141st had a high concentration of Hispanics. The action was heavy at Salerno and E Company had its share.

One historian, Robert Wagner, described it this way in his book, *The Texas Army:*

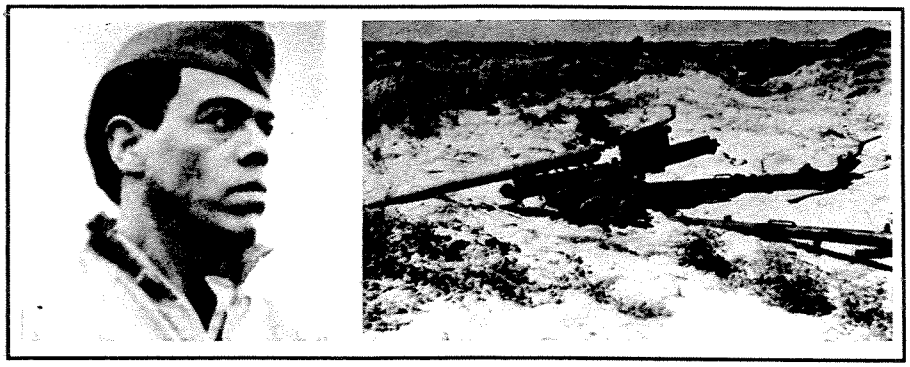
"The 2nd Battalion of the 141st, landing fifty minutes late, passed through rear elements of 3rd Battalion and proceeded along the 3rd's left flank toward its objective. Companies "E" and "F" pressed inland until halted by eight German tanks running back and forth across both company fronts. The tanks inflicted numerous casualties with their machine guns until they were forced to retreat by the effects of infantry weapons alone. In this fight Corporal Benito G. Dominguez of Sequin, Texas, knocked out an enemy half-track with a rifle grenade. Private Raymond G. Guttierez of Sonora, Texas, moved forward firing his BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle). Two enemy bullets pierced his helmet but failed to touch him. The third caught him in the arm. He continued to advance, located the enemy machine gun, closed in on it, and knifed the German gunner to death. First Sergeant Gabriel L. Navarette from El Paso, Texas, had been given the mission of determining local enemy strength and in so doing was wounded in the hand by German machine gunfire as he attempted to operate a signal projector. A member of Navarette's patrol, Private First Class Alfredo P. Ruiz, also from El Paso, approached so close that he was caught in the camouflage of brush used by the Germans and was pulled about ten yards before he was able to break loose."

The men of the 141st experienced 361 days of combat in World War II: 137 days in Italy, 204 in France, 17 in Germany, and 4 in Austria. They sustained over 6,000 casualties; including 1,126 killed, 5,000 wounded, and over 500 missing in action. In recognition of their extended service and valor, despite significant casualties, members of the 141st garnered 3 Medals of Honor, 31 Distinguished Service Crosses, 12 Legions of Merit, 492 Silver Stars, 11 Soldier's Medals, 1,685 Bronze Stars, and numerous commendations and decorations.



Unit Insignia of the 141st Infantry

The 142nd Infantry, sister regiment of the 141st, also had a number of Hispanics in its ranks scattered among each of its companies. They too had their Hispanic heroes; among them Sergeant Manuel S. Gonzales from Fort Davis, Texas. Soon after landing at Salerno, Sergeant Gonzales located the position of a German 88 mm gun which was placing effective fire on U.S. landing craft struggling for shore. He moved toward the gun but was spotted by the Germans who fired at him with a machine gun. Tracers from the Germans gun set Gonzales' field pack afire on his back but he continued to advance. When he had gotten close enough, he threw hand grenades at the German gun and crew. The Germans threw their own grenades at Gonzales. Though wounded, Gonzales continued the attack until he had killed the entire crew and had blown up their ammunition. For his courage, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.



Staff Sergeant Manual Gonzales

He won the Distinguished Service Cross for his bravery in attacking a German 88mm gun crew during the American landing at Salerno during World War II.

Europe

Hispanics served in a large number of U.S. units during the fighting in Europe. Among the units with Hispanic representation were: the 30th Infantry regiment, 3rd Infantry Division in which S/Sgt Lucian Adams of Port Arthur, Texas, was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on October 28, 1944, near St. Die, France; the 313th Infantry Regiment, 79th Infantry Division which landed at Utah Beach in Normandy and fought its way through St. Lo, France, and across the Seine River; 22nd Infantry Regiment, 4th infantry Division in which S/Sgt. Macario Garcia of Sugarland, Texas, was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions November 20, 1944, near Grosshau, Germany; 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division in which Sgt. Jose M. Lopez received a Medal of Honor on December 7, 1944, for his actions near Krinkelt, Belgium; 7th Infantry regiment, 3d Infantry Division in which Private Jose F. Valdez of Governador, New Mexico, was awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery on January 25, 1945, near Rosenkrantz, France; 142nd Infantry Regiment, 36th Infantry Division in which Pfc. Silverstre S. Herrera of Phoenix, Arizona, received the Medal of Honor for his action near Mertzwiller, France, on March 15, 1945; and the 65th Infantry Regiment, an all-Hispanic unit from Puerto Rico, which saw service in Germany and Central Europe.

Noncombatants

During wartime, public attention generally focuses upon the people who do the shooting, shelling, and bombing. Combat troops, however, constitute a relatively small percentage of people in uniform and engaged in war-related activities. Often under extreme hardship, medical, transportation, and quartermaster personnel provide supplies, equipment, and life-saving services. Hispanic Americans made outstanding contributions in these units.

One such noncombatant unit was the 713th Railway Operating Battalion of the Military Railway Service. The 713th, or "Santa Fe Battalion," was formed at Camp Clovis, New Mexico, on March 12, 1942. Its members were experienced railway personnel who had been inducted to clear, repair, and build military railways and to operate the trains which moved vital supplies to the front line troops. Although they did not experience direct combat, they were subject to enemy bombing and shelling in addition to the occupational hazards and dangerous climatic conditions associated with railway work.

After receiving military training, the 713th left New Mexico on January 21, 1943, for Fort Dix, New Jersey, and shipment to North Africa. On February 19, 1943, the unit landed at Casablanca in Morocco. From February through September 1943, the 713th operated trains, cleared and repaired track, and built new track all along the North African coast from Casablanca, Morocco; to Ovan, Setif, and Tebessa, Algeria; to Sbeitla and Sousse, Tunisia.

From February to May 1943, the 713th transported over 500,000 tons in 47,255 cars by rail. They provided the bulk of the rail supply to the American 2nd Corps and the British 1st and 8th Armies which insured a victory for the Allies in North Africa.

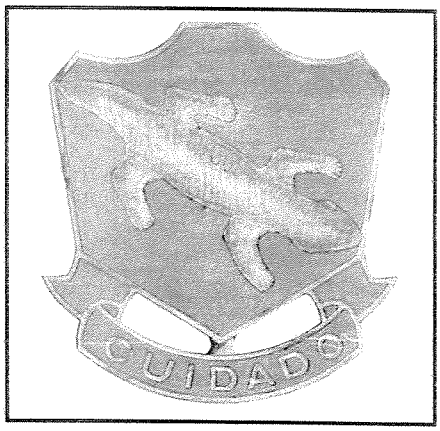
Later in the war, the 713th moved to Italy from October 1943 to June 1944, to Southern France in September 1944, and up to Western Germany in early 1945.

Most of the Hispanics in the 713th were assigned to Company A, which was responsible for repairing existing railway systems and laying new track. Among the Hispanic members were 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. Their unsung contributions to the war effort should not be forgotten.

The Pacific

The fighting in the Pacific had its share of Hispanic heroes. The 158th Regimental Combat Team (an Arizona National Guard unit) was organized originally as the 1st Arizona Volunteer Infantry in late 1865. Some of its first companies were comprised principally of Maricopa and Pima Indians who participated several campaigns against the Apache. It was during this period that the unit adopted as their motto "Cuidado," a Spanish word meaning "take care."

During World War II, the unit was called into Federal service on September 16, 1940, and sent to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for training. In February 1941, the 158th was moved to Camp Barkley, Texas, for more training and then to maneuvers in Louisiana.



Unit Insignia of the 158th Infantry

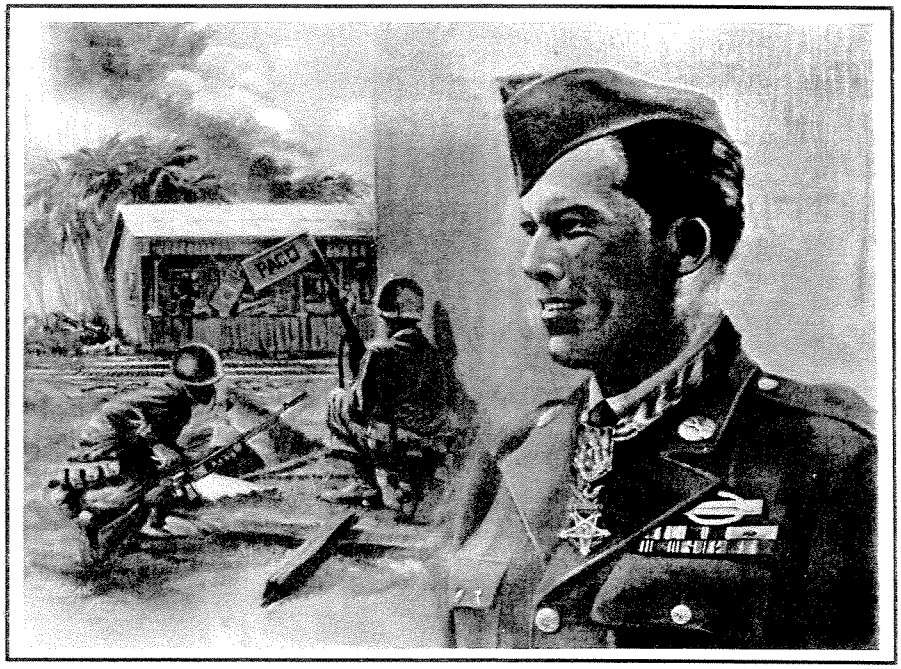
When war became a reality on December 7, the 158th found itself enroute to Panama for jungle training and to guard the Panama Canal Zone. It was there that they adopted the deadly Bushmaster snake for their insignia. In January 1943, the unit was on the move again—to Brisbane, Australia, where it became part of the U.S. Sixth Army.

From Australia, the 158th was committed to combat at Milne Bay, Kiriwina Island, Port Moresby, and Arawe (all in New Guinea) during 1943; at Wake and Noemfoor Islands in New Guinea during 1944; at Lingayen Gulf, Batangas, and Legaspi, Luzon in the Philippines during 1945; and finally to Yokohama, Japan, for occupation duty.

The 158th was one of the first U.S. units to see combat in the Pacific and was referred to as "the greatest fighting combat team ever deployed for battle" by General Douglas MacArthur. Among other units with Hispanic representation were: the 148th Infantry Regiment, 37th Infantry Division in which Private Cleto Rodriguez of San Antonio, Texas, received the Medal of Honor on February 9, 1945, for personally killing 82 Japanese soldiers near Manila in the Philippines; the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 11th Airborne Division in which PFC Manuel Perez of Chicago, Illinois, was awarded the Medal of Honor on February 13, 1945, for destroying 11 Japanese pillboxes on Luzon in the Philippines; the 127th Infantry Regiment, 32d Infantry Division in which S/Sgt. Ismael Villegas and PFC David Gonzales each received the Medal of Honor for their actions on the Villa Verde Trail in Luzon during March and April 1945; and the 165th Infantry Regiment, 27th Infantry Division in which Sgt Alejandro Ruiz from Loving, New Mexico, received the Medal of Honor on April 28, 1945, for his bravery on Okinawa.

Private First Class Manuel Perez

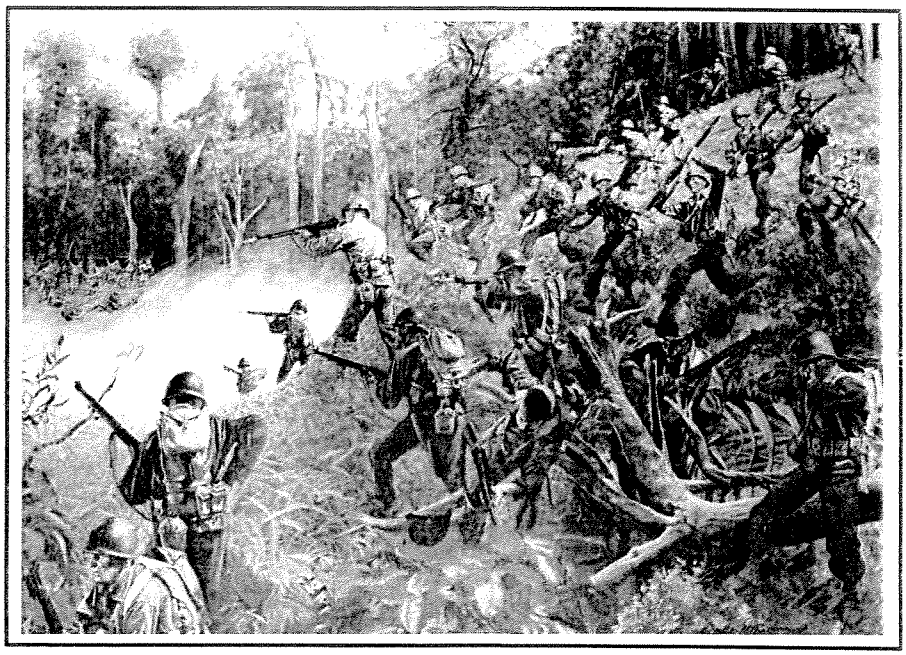
Perez, a member of the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 11th Airborne Division, received the Medal of Honor for destroying 11 Japanese pillboxes on Luzon in the Philippines.



Technical Sergeant Cleto Rodriguez

This rendition of the Medal of Honor recipient's actions in the Philippine Islands (1945) was done by Henry Lozano. The painting is part of the Army's American War Life Collection.

U.S. Army Photograph CC 105121

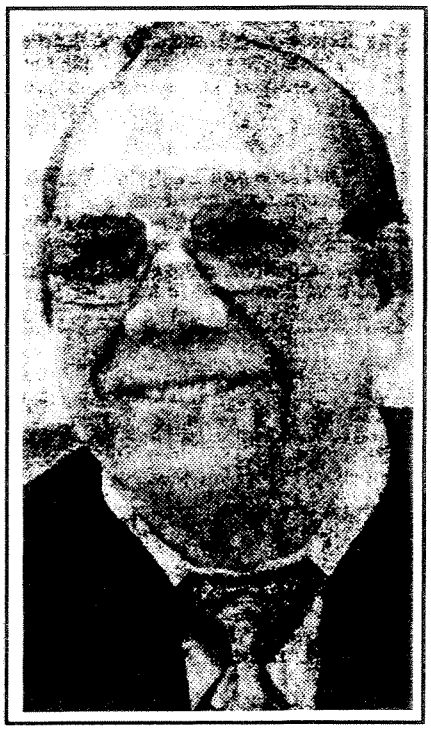


"Cuidado"—Take Care—Bushmaster with Bolo!

Cries of "Banzai" rang through the snake infested jungles while the staccato of enemy machine guns, mortars, and rifles rolled. The bayonet charges were suicidal but the 158th Regimental Combat Team, the "Bushmasters," repulsed the enemy and advanced. It fought day after day in critical battles to open the Visayan passages for allied shipping in the Pacific. The merciless campaign lasted 2 months in terrain laced with tank traps, wire, mines, and bamboo thickets.

Painting by H. Charles McBarron taken from the "Army in Action Series" and included in the "National Guard Heritage Series."

In addition, John G. Benavides served as an intelligence officer with the famed 25th Fighter Squadron, 14th U.S. Air Force (the "Flying Tigers") in China under General Claire Chennault. After the war he became a district attorney and was appointed eventually as the first Hispanic district judge in Bexar County, Texas, on October 1, 1969. He died in June 1982 and was buried with full military honors at Fort Sam Houston.



John G. Benavides

Former intelligence officer with the 25th Fighter Squadron, 14th U.S. Air Force (the "Flying Tigers") and district judge in Bexar County Texas. He died in June 1982.

Not all Hispanics served in the Army during the Pacific fighting. On Saipan and Tinian, Mariana Islands, South Pacific in the summer of 1944, Marine PFC Guy "Gabby" Gabaldon distinguished himself by singlehandedly capturing over 1,000 Japanese. He has the distinction of capturing more enemy soldiers than anyone else in the history of military conflicts of the U.S. Born in Los Angeles, he was adopted by a Japanese American family, who taught him Japanese. When war broke out with Japan, his two "brothers" joined the U.S. armed forces in Europe and his foster parents and sister were sent to a relocation center.

After recruit training, Gabaldon qualified as a mortar crewman, Japanese translator, and scout observer. He then received amphibious training, and was sent to Saipan on June 15, 1944. While serving as a Japanese interpreter, he received a Silver Star. His citation read in part, "...PFC Gabaldon entered enemy positions in caves, pillboxes, buildings and jungle brush and, in the face of direct enemy fire, obtained vital information and aided in the capture of over one thousand enemy civilians and enemy personnel. Working alone in front of the lines, he contributed materially to the success of the campaign and through his efforts, a definite humane treatment of prisoners was insured...." The weakened Japanese soldiers had been commanded to fight to the last man by their officers, but Gabaldon persuaded them to surrender.

Private First Class Guy Gabaldon

This Hispanic Marine received the Silver Star for actions performed on Saipan in 1944 when he aided in the capture of over 1,000 enemy civilians and soldiers.

Twice wounded, he was evacuated to the United States Hospital at Oceanside, California. After the war, Mr. Gabaldon appeared as a guest on the NBC Television Show, "This is Your Life" in June 1957, and a movie depicting his exploits entitled, "From Hell to Eternity," appeared in 1960.

His Silver Star was elevated to a Navy Cross, this country's second highest Navy award for valor, on December 20, 1960.

A little recognized contribution by Hispanics to the war in the Pacific was that made by the 201st Mexican Fighter Squadron (201 Escuadron de Caza).

On June 11, 1942, Mexico declared war on the Axis powers and made plans for the organization of the 201st Fighter Squadron. A select group of pilots from all walks of life were inducted into the squadron. Most had received initial flight training in Mexico or the United States. They were then sent for orientation flight training at Pocatello Army Air Base, Idaho, and trained as a P-47 fighter squadron, with 35 officers and 300 enlisted men.

The squadron finished all phases of its training by early March 1945 with a superior record. The 201st Mexican Fighter Squadron was attached to the 58th Fighter Group (P-47) in the Philippines. There they began combat operations in June 1945. Considering that the 201st was new to combat, their record compares favorably with that of the veteran pilots of the 58th Fighter Group.

They participated in bombing missions in Formosa and supported troops from the 25th Division with bombing and strafing missions. From June 1 to July 10, 1945, the 201st: (1) flew 50 missions and 293 sorties; (2) dropped 181 tons of bombs; and (3) fired 104,000 rounds of ammunition. Seven pilots were killed in action.

On Veteran's Day, Carlos Foustinos, a former member of the squadron, flies a Mexican flag in his home instead of "Old Glory." This flag is flown in commemoration of the men of the 201st Mexican Fighter Squadron who fought and died in aerial combat along with Americans in the South Pacific. Faustinos flew approximately 25 missions, recording 6 Japanese zero kills. This feat brought him the distinction of a flying ace and he was awarded the "La Cruz de Honor" (The Cross of Honor), which is equivalent to the U.S. Medal of Honor, by the Mexican government.

Another unsung Hispanic hero of World War II is Gerard Rodriguez. His military career began during World War II, but spanned three major conflicts in 38 years. Born in Andorra, a small country in the Pyrenees Mountains between France and Spain, Rodriguez experienced war at the early age of 13 when the Spanish Civil War engulfed his homeland. After the death of his parents, he hiked across France and got a job as a cabin boy on a ship going to the United States. He became a citizen in 1940 and joined the Army.

Sergeant Major Gerard Rodriguez on his retirement in 1981.

Gerard Rodriguez

On the march with Merrill's Marauders. Rodriguez (second from right) walked through the jungles of Burma to join Stilwell's Chinese units in World War II.

Rodriguez was assigned to the 3d Cavalry, but when his unit was mechanized he volunteered to join the 5307th Composite Group which was soon to gain fame as "Merrill's Marauders." The 5307th was the first U.S. long-range penetration group and was modeled after the British Chindits under General Orde Wingate.

In 1943, the 5307th arrived in India and after training with Wingate's forces moved into the jungle of Burma, behind Japanese lines. Rodriguez was assigned to the Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon. The 5307th marched over 600 miles in performing their mission, living off the land and occasional drops of airborne supplies. They fought several major battles and were instrumental in preventing a Japanese invasion of India.

Throughout the length of their mission, they were hunted by Japanese troops and suffered from extreme hardships caused by the weather and terrain.

When the war ended, Rodriguez moved to Wichita, Kansas, where he first joined the Army National Guard and then the Army Reserve. During his Reserve tour, he served in the Special Forces and the U.S. Bicentennial Color Guard, eventually being promoted to Master Sergeant. He became a member of the 5048th U.S. Army Reserve Noncommissioned Officer Academy when he could no longer participate in parachute jumps with the Special Forces. In mid-1981, having been promoted to Sergeant Major, he retired. He is believed to have been the last of "Merrill's Marauders" to leave active duty.

Korean Conflict (1950–1953)

The Korean Conflict saw many Hispanic Americans again respond to the call of duty. They served with distinction in all of the Services. Many Hispanic Americans chose to serve in combat units like the Marines and paratroopers; much like their brothers, cousins, and friends had done in World War II.

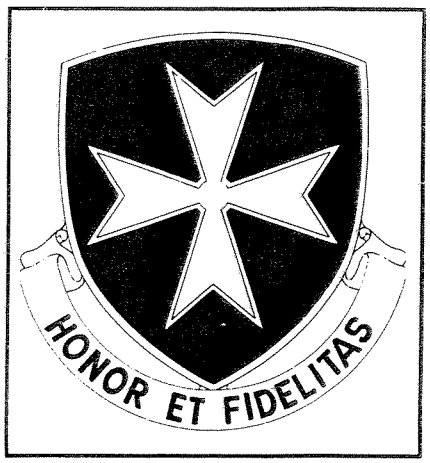
Many Mexican Americans from barrios in Los Angeles, San Antonio, Laredo, Phoenix, and Chicago saw fierce action in Korea. Fighting in almost every combat unit in Korea, they distinguished themselves through courage and bravery as they had in previous wars.

Nine Hispanics received the Congressional Medal of Honor for heroism in the Korean Conflict. Their actions are summarized in the Medal of Honor section of this booklet.

There was one all-Hispanic unit to serve in Korea—the Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment. The unit was initially constituted on March 2, 1899, as the Puerto Rico Regiment of Volunteer Infantry. One battalion was stationed in San Juan and the second battalion, a mounted unit, was stationed at Henry Barracks.

The 65th saw heavy and extensive service in Korea when it arrived at Pusan on September 20, 1950. Over the next 3 years, it participated in nine major campaigns, earning a Presidential Unit Citation, a Meritorious Unit Commendation, and two Republic of Korea Unit Citations.

Individual members of the unit were awarded 4 Distinguished Service Crosses and 124 Silver Stars. They were also credited with capturing 2,086 enemy soldiers and killing 5,905.



Unit Insignia of the 65th Infantry

The 65th in Korea

Chinese communist soldiers captured by the 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 65th Infantry Regiment near Humhung in December 1950.

Korea, 1951

Battle weary soldiers of the 65th Infantry return to safety behind the lines after two days of being trapped north of the Han River in June 1951.

Korean Combat

Rifle crew of Company M, 3rd Battalion, 65th Infantry, with a 75mm recoilless rifle, guarding a valley north of Chorwan, June 14, 1951.

The ground fighting in Korea was conducted in some of the most mountainous terrain in the world and many of the bitterest battles occurred during the winter months, when the soldiers suffered from extremely cold temperatures, snow, and ice.

The Korean Conflict will also be remembered for the first large-scale use of jet aircraft in wartime. The German Air Force had introduced the first jets late in World War II, but the war ended before they could make a significant contribution. Toward the end of the Korean Conflict, Chinese Communist forces introduced the MIG-15 jet fighter; the U.S. Air Force responded with the F-86 "Sabrejet." Of 839 MIG-15s shot down, 800 were downed by Sabrejets. The Communists were only able to shoot down 58 F-86s. Air-to-air engagements at 40,000 feet soon became commonplace in Korea and a new breed of pilot was born—the jet ace.

Colonel Manuel J. Fernandez, Jr.

Captain Manuel J. Fernandez, Jr. was assigned to the 334th Squadron, 4th Fighter-Interceptor Wing. From September 1952 to May 1953, he flew 125 combat missions in the F-86. On most of those missions, his job was to locate and destroy Communist MIG's in the air.

His first victory took place on October 4, 1952. On his fifth victory, he became an "ace" and he ended the war with 14.5 "kills" to his credit, making him the third ranking MIG killer of the entire war. His 14.5 air victories also placed him 60th among the top U.S. Air Force aces of World War I, World War II, and the Korean Conflict combined.

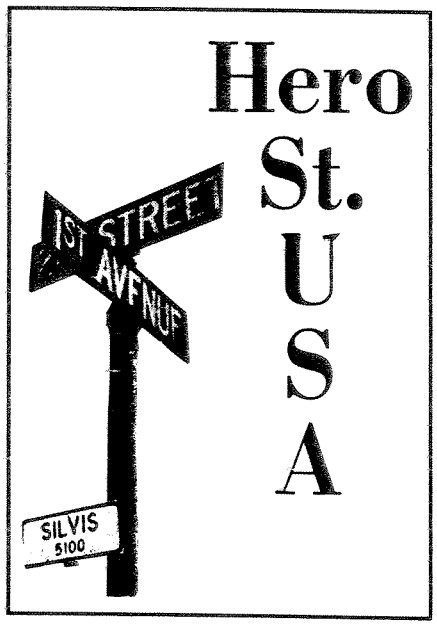
After the war, while flying an F-100C, "Super Sabre," he set a new world record by attaining an average speed of 666.661 mph in the Bendix Trophy Race of September 1956. He retired after achieving the rank of Colonel in the U.S. Air Force.

Hero Street, U.S.A.

In Silvis, Illinois, just west of Chicago, stands a monument to eight heroes of Mexican-American descent who gave their lives in defense of this nation. The monument is a street once named Second Street, now renamed Hero Street U.S.A.

It is not much of a street in size—just one and a half blocks long. The street is muddy with rain in the spring, slick with snow in the winter, and hazy with dust in the summer. Joe Gomez (who earned a Silver Star), Peter Masias, Johnny Munos, Tony Pompa, Frank Sandoval, Joseph Sandoval, William Sandoval, and Claro Soliz grew up together on this small street in a very close-knit environment working for the railroad, as did their fathers who came from Mexico years before. They went to war without hesitation, even though their streets were not paved and the citizens of Silvis chose to ignore the docile, hard-working Mexicans on the edge of town. They never came back.

The men from the 22 families on this block who participated in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam totals 84. In World War II and Korea, 57 men went from this street. The two Sandoval families sent 13: 6 from one family; 7 from the other. Three Sandoval sons did not come back. This street reportedly contributed more men to military service in two wars—World War II and Korea—than any other place of comparable size in the United States. Hero Street U.S.A. stands alone in American military history.



Hero Street, U.S.A.

Corner of 1st Avenue and 2nd Street, Silvis, Illinois

The Men from Hero Street

From left to right, top row, William Sandoval, Johnny Munos, Joseph Sandoval, Peter Masias.
Bottom row, from left to right, Tony Pompa, Joseph Gomez, Claro Soliz, Frank Sandoval.

Vietnam Era (1960–1973)

Introduction

In February 1950, the United States granted political recognition to Vietnam as a quasi-independent state within the French Union. Prior to World War II, the entire Indochina area had been under French colonial administration. During the war, Japanese troops had occupied the area and from 1945–1950, France pursued a course of reestablishing its authority.

By May of 1950, the United States had begun to provide military and economic aid to the French. The French Army was engaged in a military conflict against nationalist and communist forces who had provided armed resistance to the Japanese occupation, but were now combating the French return. After 4 years of fighting, the French Army was defeated by the Viet Minh (a Communist-supported organization) at the battle of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954.

During the French struggle against the Viet Minh, the United States created the first Special Forces unit on June 20, 1952. Special Forces were an outgrowth from the World War II commando and Special Service Force units. The mission of these elite units was to plan, conduct, and support unconventional warfare operation. As such, its members were capable of training, advising, and supporting guerrilla or antiguerrilla units in other countries.

In mid-1957, a U.S. Special Forces unit arrived in the Republic of Vietnam (the Southern half of Vietnam which had been partitioned by the 1954 peace agreement with France). In May of 1960, another Special Forces unit arrived in South Vietnam to train the Vietnamese Army, which was engaged in fighting a guerrilla war.

In November 1961, Special Forces medical units were sent to South Vietnam to provide assistance to Montagnard tribes. (Montagnards were an ethnic group living in the mountains of central South Vietnam.)

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 assist South Vietnamese minority groups in raising paramilitary forces to resist Communist guerrilla activity and to defend minority group villages. Each CIDG camp had a South Vietnamese Special Forces team, a U.S. Special Forces team, and from 2 to 7 companies of indigenous self-defense troops. Some camps also had a unit of Nung's (tribesmen from the mountains of North Vietnam who had been hired by the United States).

Each CIDG camp was intended to be a self-contained, fully independent organization capable of resisting Communist forces operating in the area. The U.S. Special Forces team was to advise the South Vietnamese, assist in camp administration, and prepare all persons for eventual turnover of the camp to South Vietnamese authorities.

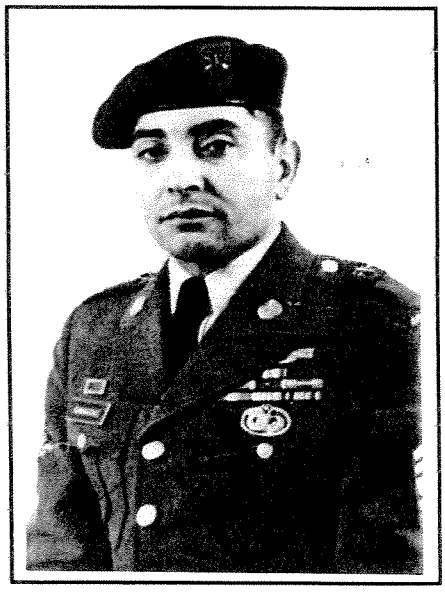
Early Fighting

It did not take the Viet Cong (Vietnamese Communists) long to realize the purpose of the CIDG camps. Fighting picked up in volume as the Viet Cong probed for weaknesses and attacked several camps. Camp defense became a primary Special Forces concern as many early CIDG camps were not fortified.

In November 1963, a reinforced battalion of Viet Cong attacked the CIDG camp at Hiep Hoa, Long, a Province which had been opened in February 1963. It was night and the defenders in the camp were taken completely by surprise as heavy machine gun and mortar fire raked the camp. Among the U.S. Special Forces personnel at Hiep Hoa was Sergeant First Class (SFC) Issac Camacho.

All the camp defenders were pinned down by the withering Viet Cong fire. SFC Camacho ran from his sleeping area to a mortar position and began to return fire. Pressure from the attacking force soon breached the camp's defensive wall and the commanding officer ordered a withdrawal. In the confusion of the battle and the darkness of the night, SFC Camacho became separated from his Special Forces compatriots and was captured by the Viet Cong.

SFC Camacho remained a prisoner for almost 20 months. On July 9, 1965, he was able to escape from his captors and make his way to freedom after crossing miles of Communist- infested territory. For his personal daring in the defense of Hiep Hoa and his successful escape, SFC Camacho was awarded the Silver Star and the Bronze Star Medal in September 1965. He was also promoted to Master Sergeant (MSG). Later, MSG Camacho was given a battlefield commission as a Captain. He has since retired from the Army and lives in El Paso, Texas.



Sergeant First Class Issac Camacho

Intermediate Fighting

In late 1963, Ngo Dinh Diem, President of South Vietnam, was killed in a military coup. A few weeks later, John F. Kennedy, President of the United States, was assassinated. Lyndon B. Johnson became President of the United States.

During this period, U.S. Special Forces in South Vietnam were increased and the CIDG program was expanded under the U.S. Military Assistance Command. Ships of the U.S. Navy also were put on patrol in the Gulf of Tonkin off the North Vietnamese Coast.

Late in the afternoon of August 2, 1964, the *USS Maddox*, a 3,300 ton destroyer, was attacked by three torpedo boats approaching from the north as it patrolled in the Gulf of Tonkin. The *Maddox* avoided three torpedoes which were fired at it as well as 37-millimeter gunfire from the torpedo boats. It returned fire and badly damaged one boat.

On August 3, 1964, the *Maddox* was joined by the *USS Turner Joy* and the two vessels resumed patrol. On August 4, the two vessels were attached soon after sunset. Three to six North Vietnamese gunboats fired torpedoes and automatic cannons at the two U.S. destroyers. Two gunboats were sunk by the U.S. return fire.

In retaliation, two U.S. carriers in the area were authorized to launch 64 planes to attack North Vietnamese gunboat and oil storage facilities. Twenty-five torpedo boats were reported to have been sunk and most of 14 oil storage tanks destroyed by the raiders with a loss of two airplanes.

The pilot of one of the planes was killed; the other pilot, Lieutenant (jg) Everett Alvarez, Jr., jumped from his damaged plane but his parachute failed to open. He was picked up by a fishing boat and imprisoned by the North Vietnamese.

Ensign Everett Alvarez, Jr.

Ensign Alvarez receives his pilot wings from Capt. Ritt Mathew, USN, at the U.S. Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Kinsville, Texas on August 13, 1964.

U.S. Navy Photograph 1105043

Lt (jg) Alvarez was the first American and first Hispanic pilot to become a prisoner of war. He was born in Salina, California, and attended the University of Santa Clara, where he received a degree in electrical engineering. In 1960 he was commissioned in the Navy as an Ensign and had taken flight training at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Florida. He was 26 years old and newly married when his plane was shot down and he was captured.

Lt (jg) Alvarez remained a prisoner of war for almost 8 and one-half years, the longest confirmed POW in the Nation's history. In February 1973, he was repatriated by the North Vietnamese in the first group of prisoners as a result of the peace agreement negotiated in Paris. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and promoted to Lieutenant Commander. In March 1973, a city park in Santa Clara, California, was dedicated in his honor. He left the Navy soon thereafter, served as the Deputy Director for the Veterans Administration, and is now a private consultant.

The Final Years

In the mid-1960's, U.S. conventional troops entered South Vietnam. North Vietnamese regular forces became increasingly evident, and the war shifted into a conventional mode. The U.S. Air Force bombed North Vietnam as did the Navy flying from carriers off the North Vietnamese Coast. Peace negotiations were initiated in Paris and the war began to de-escalate by the early 1970's.

Hispanics served in all military units on the ground, in the air, and at sea. There were no all-Hispanic units and the military did not record separate data on Hispanic participation. Any analysis, therefore, is dependent upon an analysis of unit rosters to identify Hispanic surnames. Any results from such studies are incomplete due to improper identification.

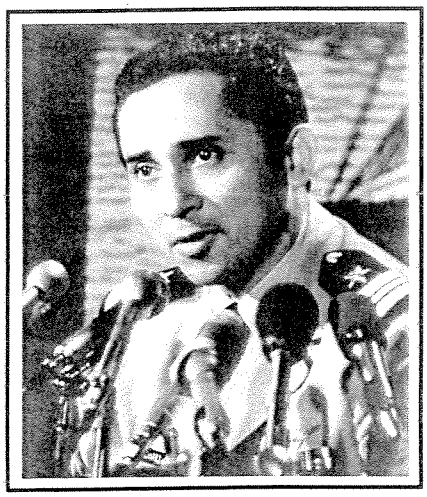
In 1969, a study was released which examined Hispanic participation in the war by analyzing casualty figures for two periods: one from January 1961 to

February 1967, and the other from December 1967 to March 1969. The study revealed that for the two periods, 8,016 men from the States of Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas had been killed. Of the number, over 19 percent had Hispanic surnames. The 1960 census indicated that Hispanics were only 11.8 percent of the total population in the 5 states and 13.8 percent of all military age males in those states.

Two areas of significant Hispanic population were omitted from this study: Florida and New York. But even those preliminary figures indicated the heavy investment Hispanic Americans made in the war effort and its inevitable cost to the Hispanic community. Casualties do not reflect the entire story, for many more people returned from Vietnam than died there. We should not forget the contributions made by the survivors either.

A P.O.W. Returns

In Hanoi, North Vietnam, Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Richard F. Abel (foreground), Public Relations Officer from Cleveland, Ohio, greets the first group of prisoners of war as the men wait for their name to be announced prior to their boarding a C141 Starlifter cargo transport at Gia Lap airport. Navy Lieutenant Commander Everett Alvarez, Jr., from Santa Clara, California, heads the line.



Lieutenant Commander Alvarez

On March 1, 1973, Alvarez spent 30 minutes answering questions for television and newspaper reporters at the Oakland, California Naval Hospital. He was the first man shot down over North Vietnam and was undergoing medical checks at the hospital after spending 8 and one-half years as a prisoner of war.

U.S. Navy Photograph K-98458

Santa Clara City Park

On March 25, 1973, Lieutenant Commander Everett Alvarez, Jr., spoke with people from his hometown of Santa Clara, California, as they dedicated a city park in his honor.

U.S. Navy Photograph K98928

The End

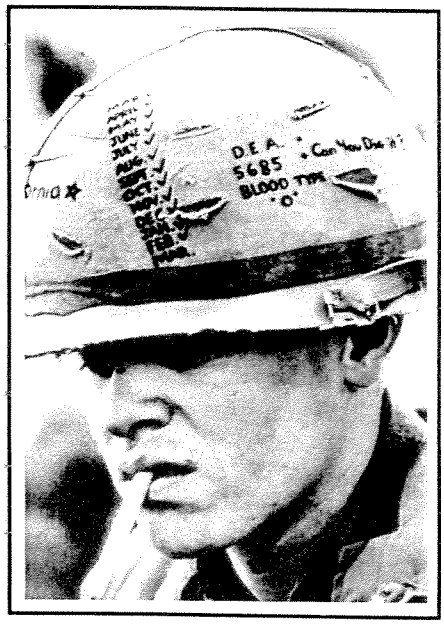
In September 1974, Master Sergeant (MSgt) Juan J. Valdez was transferred to the U.S. embassy in Saigon as the Noncommissioned Officer in charge (NCOIC) of the embassy's Marine Security Guard. He was 37 years old at the time and had been in the Marine Corps since May 1955.

MSgt Valdez had been in South Vietnam before from September 1967 to March 1970, when he had served as a platoon sergeant with the 3rd Amtracs.

At the embassy, he was responsible for the 45 Marines who guarded the embassy. During the final weeks of the war they helped to process persons leaving South Vietnam and to control crowds outside the embassy compound who also sought to leave.

On April 23, 1975, communist forces shelled the Bien Hoa Air Base near Saigon. By April 29, the air base was attacked by ground troops; Saigon was isolated.

A helicopter evacuation from the embassy itself was begun. The Marine Guards provided security for the helicopters while they were on the embassy roof. MSgt Valdez was on the last helicopter to leave on April 30, 1975, thus ending a 15-year saga in which Hispanics were among the first Americans to enter South Vietnam and among the last to leave—a truly notable and honorable record. Hispanic Americans have shown that if there is a theme to Hispanic participation in America's wars, it is: "First in...last to leave."



Lance Corporal Ernest Delgado, USMC

Corporal Delgado takes a break in the last month of his tour in Vietnam.

Post-Vietnam Era (1974–1989)

With the cessation of fighting in Vietnam, the inevitable post conflict draw downs occurred. Units were disbanded and reorganized. The All Volunteer Force was introduced and the Selective Service System reduced.

Peacetime equal opportunity programs were reinstituted and preconflict issues were addressed. A summary of major developments follows.

Equal Opportunity Training: An important element of the DoD Equal Opportunity Program is the Human/Race Relations Education Program. This program was formally established with the publication of the DoD Directive 1322.11, "Department of Defense Education in Race Relations for Armed Forces Personnel," dated June 23, 1971. It requires a matter of policy that an education program in race relations be conducted on a continuing basis for all military personnel in an effort to improve and achieve equal opportunity within DoD and to eliminate and prevent racial tensions, unrest, and violence. The program was place under the supervision of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (now Force Management and Personnel).

The directive also established a Race Relations Education Board (RREB) with the mission of developing overall policy guidance for the DoD program of education in race relations. The original membership of the RREB included the Assistant Secretary for Manpower from each Military Department, a representative of each Military Service, and two Deputy Assistant Secretaries of Defense-Equal Opportunity and Reserve Affairs. The Board was, and still is, chaired by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management and Personnel.

The directive established the Defense Race Relations Institute (DRRI) to train Armed Forces personnel assigned as instructors in race relations. The DRRI was organized as a DoD field activity, attached to the Air Force (Patrick Air Force Base, Florida) for administrative and logistical support, and under the operational supervision of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs). As with the overall DoD Race Relations Education Program, the DRRI was subject to the policy guidance of the RREB.

The primary focus of the program initially was to reduce racial tensions and violence, and achieve racial harmony. Throughout the Armed Forces, emphasis was placed on interpersonal relations at the small unit level. The program accommodated only active duty personnel. DRRI was charged with the development of a standard program of instruction for all Services, except the Marine Corps, which was excluded from the provisions of the directive. The Marine Corps had previously established a Human Relations Institute which was considered to be a parallel course toward achievement of the

DoD goal of harmonious relations among all military personnel.

In August 1973, the DoD directive was re-issued to extend its applicability to members of the National Guard and the Reserve. While the program continued to be called Race Relations Training Education, the scope was broadened at the Institute to include women in the military and ethnic/cultural awareness training such as Hispanic culture and anti-Semitism. For this reason, the name was expanded from Human/Race Relations Institute (DRRI) to Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI). These changes were not made for cosmetics purposes, but reflected a basic change in approach to equal opportunity and training as a result of detailed study. On December 23, 1988, the directive was replaced by DoD Directive 1350.2, Department of Defense Military Equal Opportunity Program.

Defense Equal Opportunity Management In, 1988, the distitute: After an extensive review of the race relations and equal opportunity programs in DoD, and an assessment of the training programs offered by the Institute, the Institute was reorganized in 1977–1978 and its mission was expanded. The curriculum has been revised to shift the focus from primarily individual forms of discrimination to the concern with both individual forms of discrimination and the more pervasive systemic and institutional forms of discrimination. With this broader focus, however, there has been no reduction in the amount of effort devoted to training personnel in race/human relations.

In addition to serving the active forces of the DoD, DEOMI recently implemented a course consisting of correspondence and resident phases to accommodate the scheduling needs of the National Guard and the Reserves.

Since the inception, DEOMI has trained over 6,000 race relations instructors and equal opportunity specialists for the Armed Forces and the United States Coast Guard.

Affirmative Action Plans and the DoD Budgetary Process: An Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) is a management plan which identifies equal opportunity problems and outlines the actions that the command will take to resolve or mitigate those problems. Affirmative actions which have major fiscal resource implications are now included in the DoD budget process. This is a major advancement for equal opportunity.

All of the Military Departments now report on 10 common subject areas as a part of their AAP's:

- Recruiting/Accessions
- Assignment
- Evaluation
- Training
- Promotion
- Discipline
- Separation
- Recognition
- Utilization of Skills
- Discrimination Complaints

Discrimination Complaints: Discrimination complaint procedures are published at every level, including the lowest command level. The procedures must be in writing and prominently displayed where all service members have open access to them. Further, personnel are instructed on the proper procedures to follow in filing discrimination complaints. Equally important, personnel must be assured that complaints can be initiated without fear of intimidation, reprisal, harassment, or embarrassment.

Equal Opportunity in Off-Base Housing Program: The Department of Defense supports Federal Fair Housing legislation through its Equal Opportunity in Off-Base Housing Program. This program is designed to insure that DoD personnel have equal opportunity for available housing regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

The goal of the program is achieved when a person who meets the ordinary standards of character and financial responsibility is able to obtain off-base housing in the same manner as any other person anywhere in the area surrounding the installation, without suffering refusal and humiliation because of discrimination.

Under the DoD Off-Base Housing Program each major installation has a Housing Referral Service (HRS) and maintains listing of available rental and sale property. For housing to be listed with the HRS, the agent for housing must give an assurance that the facility is available to all military personnel without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, or sex.

In the HRS, all military personnel are informed of the military's Fair Housing Program and are counseled on various methods that may be used by agents to discriminate against minorities and women. Personnel are also advised to immediately report any suspected act of discrimination to the Housing Referral Service.

The DoD program assigns responsibility and authority to commanders to investigate alleged discrimination complaints and impose 180-day restrictive sanctions against agents when discrimination complaints are valid.

The DoD Equal Opportunity in Off-Base Housing Program has gained a respected reputation by providing efficient and responsive service in a very sensitive and critical area to hundreds of thousands of military personnel worldwide.

Hispanics in the Active Force

Hispanic participation in the active force has remained generally static in the Post-Vietnam era, as the chart on the right shows. Hispanics now constitute 4.2 percent of all personnel on active duty; in 1971 that figure was 3.1 percent. In 1970, Hispanics constituted 4.5 percent of the total United States' population; in 1980, that figure had grown to 6.4 percent. In 1980, the Hispanic representation in the military age group of 20 to 44 was 3 percent. Currently, the Hispanic representation in the military age group of 20–44 is 3.8 percent. Hispanics constitute approximately 9.5 percent of the total U.S. population.

Table I
Hispanics in the Armed Forces

Year	Total Hispanic Officers	Hispanic % Of All Officers	Total Hispanic Enlisted	Hispanic % Of All Enlisted
1971	4,750	1.3	78,382	3.4
1972	4,152	1.2	78,736	4.0
1973	4,012	1.2	78,135	4.1
1974	4,032	1.3	81,739	4.4
1975	4,046	1.4	83,434	4.6
1976	3,858	1.4	81,887	4.6
1977	4,130	1.5	79,426	4.5
1978	4,242	1.5	77,654	4.4
1979	4,529	1.7	75,425	4.3
1980	3,176	1.1	70,506	4.0
1981	3,657	1.3	72,513	4.0
1982	3,832	1.3	72,809	4.0
1983	4,164	1.4	72,619	4.0
1984	4,484	1.5	71,877	3.9
1985	4,723	1.5	72,456	4.0
1986	5,227	1.7	73,110	4.0
1987	5,405	1.7	77,202	4.2
1988	4,857	1.8	72,478	4.4
1989	5,822	1.9	84,179	4.6