



MEDAL OF HONOR MEDIA KIT



January 2025
Korean War honorees



U.S. ARMY

I WILL ALWAYS PLACE THE MISSION FIRST * I WILL NEVER ACCEPT DEFEAT * I WILL NEVER QUIT * I WILL NEVER LEAVE A FALLEN COMRADE



MEDAL OF HONOR

General Richard E. Cavazos



Hero Biography and Battle Narrative



Hometown: Kingsville, Texas

Unit: Company E, 2nd Battalion, 65th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division

Commissioned: June 16, 1951



Then-1st Lt. Richard E. Cavazos distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty, while serving as the commander of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 65th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, on June 14-15, 1953, in the vicinity of Sagimak, Korea. On the night of June 14, Cavazos led his company during a raid on an entrenched enemy outpost with the mission of destroying the personnel and installation. During the initial attack, Cavazos led his men through intense enemy mortar and artillery fire.

Upon entering the trenches, fierce close combat ensued, and Cavazos directed heavy fire on the enemy and their positions. When an extremely intense enemy mortar and artillery barrage hit his position, Cavazos withdrew the company and regrouped his men. Twice more he led his men through intense enemy fire during assaults on the enemy position, destroying vital fortifications and personnel. During the entire assault, Cavazos gave effective commands and words of encouragement to his men and inspired them to heroic heights of achievement through his personal example and leadership.

When ordered to withdraw his company, Cavazos complied but remained alone on the enemy outpost to search for missing men. While exposed to enemy fire, he located five casualties and evacuated them, one by one, to a point on the reverse slope of a nearby hill where they could be safely recovered by friendly forces.

Returning to the battlefield, he found a small group of men who had become separated from the main assaulting force and personally led them to safety. When informed that men were still missing, Cavazos again returned to the scene of the battle and led another small group of men to safety.



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Battle Narrative (continued)

Cavazos then made two more unassisted trips to the battlefield, searching for missing soldiers. When he was satisfied that the battlefield was cleared on the morning of June 15, he finally allowed his own combat wounds to be treated.

Cavazos later became the first Hispanic brigadier general in 1976, and was promoted to four-star general in 1982.

Then-1st Lt. Cavazos' conspicuous gallantry, extraordinary heroism and intrepidity at the risk of his life, above and beyond the call of duty, are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.



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2nd Battalion, 65th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division

The 65th Infantry Regiment constituted on March 2, 1899, in the volunteer Army as the Puerto Rico Regiment of Volunteer Infantry after the United States took control of Puerto Rico following the Spanish–American War. The two-battalion unit was tasked with keeping the peace after the Spanish colonial administration’s withdrawal. The unit was reorganized and redesignated in 1900 as the Puerto Rico Regiment of Volunteer Infantry, with headquarters at San Juan; in 1901 as the Puerto Rico Provisional Regiment of Infantry; and in 1908 as the Puerto Rico Regiment of Infantry, which was allotted to the regular Army.



Initially composed primarily of Puerto Rican enlisted men led by white officers, native Puerto Ricans began joining the regiment’s complement of officers after its incorporation into the regular Army; by 1909, 11 Puerto Ricans held commissions as first and second lieutenants. As World War I approached, the regiment was bolstered by a third battalion, a machine-gun company and a regimental supply company. After America entered the war, the Puerto Rico Regiment of Infantry was assigned to defend the Panama Canal.

The regiment was redesignated the 65th Infantry on Sept. 14, 1920. During World War II, the 65th Infantry served in a homeland defense role from 1943 to 1944, primarily in the Panama Canal Zone. During this time, Col. Antulio Segarra took command of the regiment, becoming the first Puerto Rican regular Army officer to command a regular Army regiment. The 65th arrived in North Africa on April 5, 1944, and began preparing to enter the European Theater; various components were dispatched to Italy and France in 1944 and 1945. Although, it primarily served in non-combat security roles during its service in Europe, a detachment of the regiment saw limited combat while holding a frontline sector on the Franco-Italian border. The regiment returned to Puerto Rico on Nov. 9, 1945, and its Soldiers collectively earned one Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars and 90 Purple Hearts.

After World War II, the 65th Infantry Regiment was reorganized into a regimental combat team. Its post-war tranquility was short-lived, and after the outbreak of the Korean War, it was assigned as the 3rd Infantry Division’s third maneuver regiment. During the long voyage to Korea in September 1950, the regiment’s men created a unit nickname – the “Borinqueneers” – in homage to the indigenous Taino name for Puerto Rico. Although it had been mainly restricted to support missions during World War II, necessity quickly thrust the 65th into combat.



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The Borinqueneers conducted themselves admirably during the breakout from the Pusan Perimeter and the subsequent advance northwards. With the counterassault of a massive Chinese force soon thereafter, the 65th participated in the Eighth Army's fighting retreat. The 65th elements attached to Task Force Dog covered the Marine withdrawal at the Chosin Reservoir, and the regiment defended the critical port of Hungnam while battered U.N. forces used it as an evacuation route. Returning to Pusan, the 65th fought its way northwards again, proving their mettle during the recapture of Seoul in early 1951.



On Feb. 2, the 65th's 1st and 2nd Battalions executed the last battalion-sized bayonet charge in Army history, routing Chinese forces occupying two strategically vital hills near the South Korean capital.

Through the remaining two years of the war, the Puerto Ricans of the 65th remained an integral part of U.N. efforts to hold the line at the 38th Parallel.

Despite the cultural-linguistic barrier that separated them from the rest of the Army, and the frigid climate that so vastly differed from their sub-tropical home island, the Borinqueneers proved their valor by earning a Medal of Honor, 10 Distinguished Service Crosses, 256 Silver Stars, 606 Bronze Stars and 2,771 Purple Hearts during the Korean War.

After the war's end in 1953, the 65th remained in Korea until it was relieved of its assignment on Nov. 3, 1954. It returned to Puerto Rico later that month and was reassigned to the 23rd Infantry Division on Dec. 2, 1954. It was inactivated on April 10, 1956, and was withdrawn from the regular Army on Feb. 6, 1959.

It was then allotted to the Puerto Rico Army National Guard as an element of the 92nd Infantry Brigade, where it remains to this day. After a long period at home in Puerto Rico, elements of the 65th were federalized and deployed to Africa and the Middle East during the Global War on Terrorism. The Borinqueneers' accomplishments were formally recognized when the regiment received the Congressional Gold Medal in 2016.



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