



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Joining Forces to Remember, Honor Hispanic-American Veterans

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY July 3, 2012

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*Efforts ongoing to construct Hispanic-American Veterans Memorial at Buffalo Naval Park.*

*Senator Kennedy pushing for Hispanic-American Veterans commemorative postage stamp.*

BUFFALO, N.Y. – With Independence Day coming up tomorrow, Senator Tim Kennedy, D-58th District, and several prominent community leaders are joining forces to spread awareness of the many contributions of Hispanic-American Veterans. Efforts are underway to construct a Hispanic-American Veterans Memorial at the Buffalo & Erie County Naval & Military Park, but more work remains before the monument can be completed.

Senator Kennedy is also pushing for the creation of a commemorative postage stamp that highlights Hispanic-American Veterans – specifically the 65th Infantry Regiment, commonly known as the Borinqueneers, which was the only Hispanic-segregated unit in U.S. military history.

About 11 percent of soldiers presently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces are of Hispanic origin and, according to the Census Bureau, there are more than one million Hispanic-American veterans.

“Throughout our nation’s history, so many Hispanic-Americans have left their homes and families and risked their lives to protect our freedom. Now it’s our duty to ensure they receive the respect and honor they deserve,” said Senator Kennedy. “Their contributions to the preservation of our safety and freedom should be remembered and celebrated alongside the accomplishments of all American soldiers. A new memorial on our waterfront and a postage stamp that specifically recognizes the 65th Infantry Regiment would mark the respect and admiration that we all share for our Hispanic-American Veterans.”

At press event held Tuesday at the Buffalo & Erie County Naval & Military Park, Kennedy highlighted several efforts underway to recognize the contributions of Hispanic-American Veterans. A number of local leaders are hard at work to achieve the goal of constructing a Hispanic-American Veterans Memorial that will specifically commemorate the 65th Infantry Regiment and the Gabriel A. Rodriguez American Legion Post 1928, which had focused primarily on honoring and serving Hispanic-American Veterans.

More support is needed before the Memorial can be completed. Individuals interested in contributing or helping with this project should contact the Hispanic-American Veterans Memorial Committee at (716) 912-3489.

“This will be a place that will bring much comfort to the lives of the many Hispanic families that had their loved ones sacrifice so much for our freedom,” said Casimiro Rodriguez, chairman of the Hispanic Heritage Council of WNY. “It will also be a landmark that will help our youth understand that freedom has to be conquered with service to God & Country.”

“Hispanic-American veterans have fought in every conflict in which the United States has ever participated displaying loyalty, bravery, and persistence in the face of adversity,” said Jose G. Rivera, chairman of the Hispanic-American Veterans Memorial Committee. “There is not a single monument or symbol that can serve as an indelible fountain of pride for future generations and recognition of past service by the Hispanic-American citizens and veterans of Buffalo, Erie County and Western New York to the community, state and nation. Once we complete construction, the Hispanic-American Veterans Memorial will be a long overdue commemoration of service and sacrifices.”

Rivera noted that about 500,000 Hispanic-Americans fought in World War II. Hispanic-American service men and women also participated in unprecedented numbers in Vietnam, Rivera said, where one in two Hispanics who went to war served in a combat unit, one in three was wounded in action and one in five was killed in service.

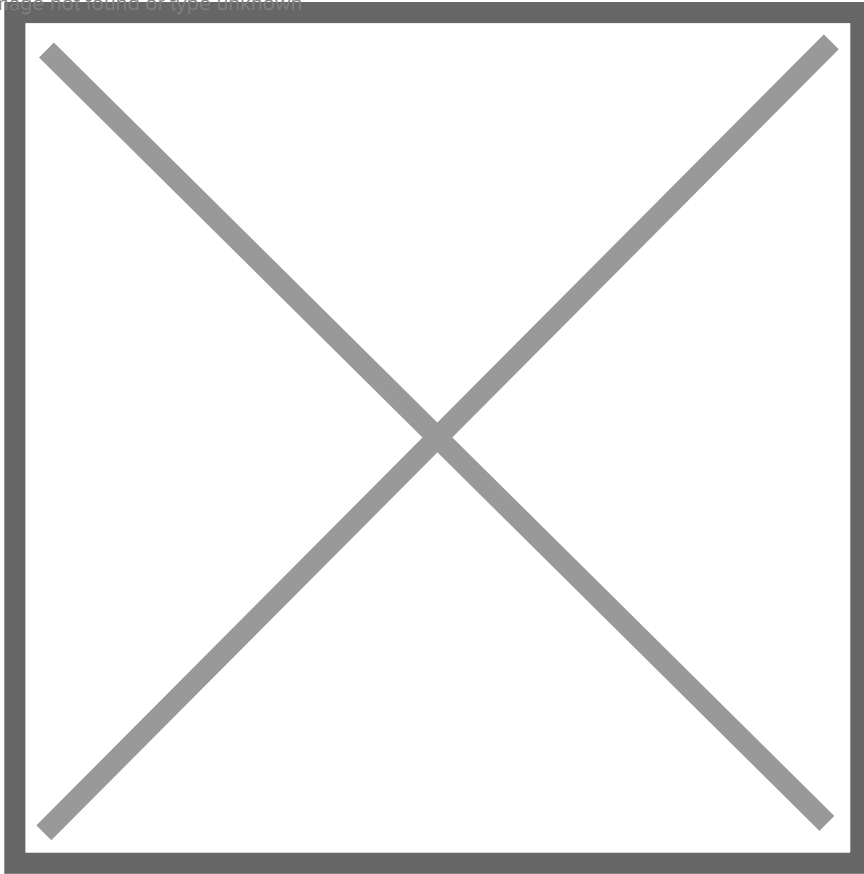
Col. Patrick Cunningham, executive director of the Buffalo & Erie County Naval & Military Park, and Erie County Commander of the American Legion Peter G. Hurd are also encouraging the community to support the commemoration efforts.

Senator Kennedy presented the Hispanic-American Veterans Memorial Committee with an official resolution he cosponsored in the New York State Senate to commemorate the 65th Infantry Regiment. The Senate resolution calls on the U.S. Postal Service to establish a stamp commemorating the Borinqueneers. Kennedy also **sent a letter directly to the committee** that is charged with the task of choosing subjects for postage stamps.

“As we celebrate Independence Day, I urge the committee to remember and honor the contributions of Hispanic-American Veterans and create the commemorative stamp to boost public awareness,” Kennedy said.

To join the call for a Borinqueneers commemorative stamp, [click here to sign the online petition](#). This nationwide petition has already gathered thousands of signatures.

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*Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate’s 58th District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, Eden, Hamburg and West Seneca, the city of Lackawanna and parts of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.*