



# East Harlem Borinqueneers Honoring Committee

## Contact

PO BOX 570  
NEW YORK CITY,  
NY 10029

Phone: (212) 534-6004

E-mail:  
rjh NYC@yahoo.com

## MEMBERS

Rueben Acostas  
Rafael Cora  
Carlos Diaz  
Roger Hernandez Jr.  
Carlos R. Pereira  
Helen Torres  
Zaida Rodriguez

Dear Community Interested Party of East Harlem-

The East Harlem Borinqueneers Honoring Committee wishes to introduce the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment "Borinqueneers" (pronounced Bow-Ring-Ken-Nears), to the community for the purpose of honoring their legacy with a street naming ceremony on East 102nd Street and Lexington Avenue to "**Borinqueneers Way**".

Two days after the North Korean invasion of South Korea, President Harry S. Truman ordered American air and naval forces to intervene in Korea, and soon US military commanders would recommend the deployment of American ground troops. In New York City, the United Nations had unanimously passed a resolution authorizing military action to repulse the North Koreans. Besides the United States, 15 UN member nations would deploy combat troops to aid South Korea.

The United States began a rapid mobilization of its armed forces. One of the units deployed was the 65th Infantry Regiment from Puerto Rico. At the time, the regiment was undermanned, comprised of only 92 officers and 1,895 enlisted personnel out of its authorized strength of 4,000. More than half of the regiment's officers were American, while the enlisted men were entirely Puerto Rican.

The US Army and Americans in general viewed all Puerto Ricans through a racial lens right through the 1950's and up to the period of the 60's up to the period of Civil Rights laws being passed and abolishment of Jim Crow laws. The history of the United States is well documented about this period. Some historians conveniently ignore the racial situation in the USA in the early 1950's where Jim Crow Laws, racist thinking, discrimination, prejudice and bigotry were commonplace.

Just days before deploying, the regiment bulked up by adding 1,200 reservists and 600 recruits. "If I'd had more time," Colonel Harris stated, "I could have recruited 50,000." [1] On August 27, 1950, the Regiment shipped out for Korea. Many of the soldiers in the 65th were World War II veterans, and most were fluent in English and Spanish.

During the long voyage, the men came up with the regiment's now famous nickname, "The Borinqueneers." The first part of the nickname refers to Puerto Rico's original name, given by the Taino natives, who called the island Borinquen. Today, many who were born in Puerto Rico refer to themselves as Boricuas. The second part of the nickname refers to 17th century Caribbean pirates called Buccaneers. The nickname seemed fitting during the voyage across the Pacific Ocean. On September 23, 1950, The Borinqueneers arrived in Pusan, South Korea, which had become the staging base for American and United Nations troops arriving in Korea.

The U.S. Congress has honored the service and sacrifice of the United States Army's only Regular Army segregated Puerto Rican regiment. The Congressional Gold Medal finally recognizes thousands of forgotten Hispanic (mainly Puerto Rican) soldiers of the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry and their service to the US Army and our nation.