

# Century of Valor

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## UNITED STATES MILITARY HISTORY

### Hispanic Americans in the United States Armed Forces

◆ WORLD WAR I ◆ WORLD WAR II ◆ KOREAN WAR ◆ VIETNAM WAR

# Century of Valor

## Facts & Figures

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rogelio C. Rodriguez, B.S., M.S., hails from Santa Paula, CA and is a long time resident of Orange County, CA.

Mr. Rodriguez has been conducting military history research on Hispanic American veterans for over 15 years. His efforts are focused on comprehensive research to bring forth these untold stories.

His professional experience includes engineering, higher education management, and organizational learning and development consulting.

This study provides a historical analysis of the participation of Hispanic Americans in the United States Armed Forces during four major conflicts in the last century - World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

We are still uncovering many untold, forgotten or perhaps hidden stories of American valor and the call to duty. Relatively unknown is the extent of participation of a group of Americans – soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Spanish, Latin American or of Hispanic heritage – who have served their country with pride and distinction.

The facts and figures presented herein are a brief summary of an over-arching study that details the accounts of service men and women, individual details of casualties and award recipients, and selected images depicting military service personnel in the air, land, and sea forces. Information on over 250,000 military service personnel has been compiled from military records, historical documentation, and personal accounts. The identification of these military personnel is based on the accuracy and corroboration of these records. Careful attention has been placed on the compilation of casualties and award recipients, omissions or errors may exist.

Vast amounts of records, unit histories, after-action reports, rosters, and casualty reports are continuously being researched.

A partial list of resources used for this study is listed below.

- U.S. National Archives & Records Administration
- Library of Congress
- Presidential Libraries
- Public Libraries
- University Libraries
- Department of Defense: Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office
- American Battle Monuments Commission
- Center of Military History
- State Archives

### AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE (1917-1918)

The United States declared war on April 6, 1917 and preparation for the war effort required a year of mobilization and overseas deployment. During the period of 1917 to 1918, 4,000,000 troops served in the Army. More than half a million came through the Regular Army and 400,000 (10%) entered through the National Guard. More than 75% came in through the selective service or National Army enlistments, ages 18 – 45. 800,000 served in the Navy, and Marine Corps. Overall, nearly 1,400,000 actually fought in France. It is estimated that 18%-20% of the American Expeditionary Force consisted of foreign-born soldiers, sailors, and marines.

### HISPANIC DOUGHBOYS

The fourteenth census of the United States reported that between 1910 and 1920 there was a 219,802 persons increase in Mexican population. For this period of time the estimated “Mexican” population was 478,383, representing approximately 0.45% of the U.S. population<sup>1</sup>.

The United States census classified U.S. born Mexicans as White, and some as either Spanish or American Indian; this grouping is also reflected in the Reports of the Provost Marshal<sup>2</sup>. Special reports on American Indians and African-Americans were created but not for Mexican-Americans/Hispanics. Thus there is no clear estimate available on actual United States Hispanic combatants. However, based on the Reports of the Provost Marshal there were a relatively high number of Mexican/Hispanic alien selective service registrations. In addition, State records of selective service registrations for Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas show a great many Hispanic surnames.

Through the examination of various unit histories Hispanic doughboys have been found in, but not limited to, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup>, 33<sup>rd</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup>, 36<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, 41<sup>st</sup>, 42<sup>nd</sup>, 64<sup>th</sup>, 77<sup>th</sup>, 78<sup>th</sup>, 79<sup>th</sup>, 80<sup>th</sup>, 82<sup>nd</sup>, 88<sup>th</sup>, 89<sup>th</sup>, 90<sup>th</sup>, 91<sup>st</sup>, and 92<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Divisions.

During World War I the American Expeditionary Force suffered 53,513 battle deaths, 63,195 other deaths, 204,002 wounded in action, 7,212 missing in action, and 4,120 prisoners of war.<sup>3</sup>

Current findings for Hispanic casualties and award recipients are summarized in the following tables.

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<sup>1</sup> Increase of Population in the United States 1910-1920, the fourteenth census, Government Printing Office, 1922, Chapter 1, page 118

<sup>2</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Report of the Provost Marshal General (1918); 2<sup>nd</sup> Report of the Provost Marshal General (1918); Final Report of the Provost Marshal General (1919)

<sup>3</sup> American War and Casualties: Lists and Statistics, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, Congressional Research Service

## SUMMARY OF WORLD WAR I HISPANIC CASUALTIES TO DATE

Casualty Type	Total
<i>Killed in action</i>	444
<i>Died of wounds</i>	45
<i>Died of accident</i>	8
<i>Died non-battle</i>	15
<i>Died (unspecified)</i>	6
<i>Died of disease</i>	57
<i>Died of pneumonia</i>	1
<i>Interned [at sea]</i>	1
<i>Prisoner of war - died</i>	3
<i>Missing in action –Presumed dead</i>	3
<b>Total Deaths</b>	<b>583</b>

Casualty Type	Total
<i>Gassed in action</i>	40
<i>Wounded in action (base on limited sources)</i>	220
<i>Prisoners of war</i>	29
<i>Missing in action (MIA)</i>	79
<i>MIA (Possible)</i>	2
<i>MIA-Returned to duty</i>	9
<i>MIA (reported to be)</i>	10
<i>MIA (previously reported to be)</i>	10
<i>Sick in hospital (per limited data)</i>	10
<b>Overall Casualty Total</b>	<b>992</b>
<i>Known to date</i>	

## SUMMARY OF WORLD WAR I HISPANIC AWARD RECIPIENTS TO DATE

<b>Medal of Honor</b>	1
<b>Navy Cross</b>	2
<b>Distinguished Service Cross</b>	17
<b>Distinguished Service Medal</b>	1
<b>Silver Star Certificate</b>	9
<b>Distinguished Service Decoration</b>	1
<b>French War Cross – Croix de Guerre</b>	4
<b>French Military Medal – Medalle Militaire</b>	1
<b>Italian War Cross – Croce Di Guerra</b>	1
<b>Montenegrin Medal, American Citations</b>	1
<b>Cited for Gallantry in Action</b>	15
<b>Certificate of Appreciation</b>	1





### **“THE SOUTHWESTERN STATES GAVE THEIR FULL COMPLEMENT, AMONG THEM THOUSANDS OF THEIR SPANISH SPEAKING SONS”**

*Spanish Speaking Americans: In the War*

Office of Inter-American Affairs

Washington, 1944

In 1931 Japan invaded Manchuria and took an aggressive stance in their ambitions with further penetration into Southeast Asia. In 1939 Germany invaded Poland which triggered Britain and France, amongst other countries, to declare war on Germany. The United States would remain neutral in accordance to the Neutrality Act of 1935. The Neutrality Act, as resolved by Congress, prevented the United States from “...export arms, ammunition, or implements of war from any place in the United States, or possessions of the United States, to any port of such belligerent states, or to any neutral port for transshipment to, or for the use of, a belligerent country.”<sup>4</sup>

In general, Americans favored neutrality however, the Roosevelt administration initiated amendments to the Neutrality Act to support the war effort in Europe. It was not until the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941 that American sentiment would change. On December 8, 1941, the United States Congress declared war on Japan and Germany.

Determining the level of Hispanic participation in World War II can be a daunting task as Hispanics were classified as Caucasian. Only the 15<sup>th</sup> Census of the United States reported a 1,422,533 “Mexican” population for the 1930’s. However, according to the 16<sup>th</sup> Census of the United States, Population Volume II, page 9, “Persons of Mexican birth or ancestry who were not definitely Indian or of other nonwhite race were returned as white in 1940.” In 1940, Hispanics, mostly Mexican American, accounted for 3 million or approximately 2% of the U.S. population.

It is estimated that 16 million men and women served during World War II. It is approximated that 500,000 men and women of Hispanic heritage served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Approximately 1,500 Hispanic women served during World War II.

There were a total of 406,000 reported fatalities overall for all branches of the United States Armed Forces. Many United States minorities served in World War II and suffered their share of casualties. There were an estimated 400,000 women who served in U.S. military worldwide during World War II and approximately 543 of these service women died in the line of duty.

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<sup>4</sup> "Neutrality Act" of August 31, 1935, Joint Resolution 49 stat. 1081; 22 U.S.C. 441 note

The table below gives an example of official Selective Service reports with limited information on Hispanic data. With the exception of accounting for Puerto Rican troops from a U.S. territory, there is no breakdown of Mexican American or Hispanic participation. This group is therefore categorized and reported under the category of “White.”

		Accumulative to June 30, 1944	July- Dec. 1944	Jan.- June 1945	July-Dec. 1945	Accumulative to Dec. 31, 1945
<b>All Races</b>	Number	7,041,087	393,392	518,127	272,747	8,225,353
	Percent	100	100	100	100	100
<b>White</b>	Number	6,139,589	348,060	457,460	236,675	7,181,784
	Percent	87.2	88.5	88.3	86.7	87.3
<b>Negro</b>	Number	797,444	30,882	46,123	27,447	901,896
	Percent	11.3	7.8	8.9	10.1	11.0
<b>Japanese</b>	Number	11,260	3,483	2,933	2,404	20,080
	Percent	0.2	0.9	0.6	0.9	0.1
<b>Puerto Rican</b>	Number	32,344	8,109	8,005	2,980	51,438
	Percent	0.5	2.1	1.5	1.1	0.6
<b>Others</b>	Number	60,450	2,858	3,606	3,241	70,155
	Percent	0.8	0.7	0.7	1.2	0.9

Source: Selective Service and Victory: the 4th report of the Director of Selective Service, 1944-1945, with a Supplement for 1946-1947.

## CASUALTY STATISTICS FOR MINORITY CATEGORIES

	KIA	MIA	POW	Non-Battle Casualties	Source
<b>African Americans</b>	710 (Army)	206 (Army)	56 (Army)	44 (Army)	African American Troops in WWII, Alexander M. M. Bielakowski, Raffaele Ruggeri, Osprey Pub Co, 2007
	1,248 (Navy)	n/a	n/a	n/a	History of the Medical Department in World War II The Statistics of Diseases and Injuries, US GPO 1950
<b>American Indians</b>	383 (Army)	n/a	n/a	n/a	Indians in the War, Julian H. Steward, 1945
	45 (Navy)	n/a	n/a	n/a	History of the Medical Department in World War II The Statistics of Diseases and Injuries, US GPO 1950
<b>Japanese Americans</b>	680 (Army)	67 (Army)	n/a	n/a	100th/442 <sup>nd</sup> Regimental Statistics
	8	n/a	n/a	n/a	Military Intelligence Service Statistics

n/a: Information not available at this time.

## SUMMARY OF WORLD WAR II HISPANIC CASUALTIES TO DATE

<b>Died - overall Total</b>	<b>9,831</b>
<i>Killed in Action</i>	5,224
<i>Died of Wounds</i>	642
<i>Died of Injuries</i>	17
<i>Died non-Battle</i>	1,682
<i>Died – presumed Killed in Action</i>	21
<i>Died – cause unspecified</i>	5
<i>Buried at Sea</i>	84
<i>Finding of Death</i>	253
<i>Missing in Action – presumed dead</i>	1,532
<i>Prisoners of War – died</i>	364
<i>U.S. Civilians–died overseas [KIA]</i>	5
<i>U.S. Civilians–died overseas [POW]</i>	2
<b>Missing in Action – overall Total</b>	<b>1,532</b>
<i>Missing in Action [undetermined status]</i>	705
<i>Remains Status (Missing) Total</i>	827
<i>Killed in Action – remains recovered</i>	n/a
<i>Killed in Action – remains not recovered</i>	n/a
<i>Missing in Action – remains recovered</i>	4
<i>Missing in Action – remains not recovered</i>	823

<i>Died of Wounds – remains not recovered</i>	n/a
<i>Prisoners of War – killed in action – remains not recovered</i>	n/a
<i>Prisoners of War – presumed dead – remains not recovered</i>	n/a
<b>Prisoners of War - overall Total</b>	<b>2,561</b>
<i>Prisoner of War [undetermined status]</i>	44
<i>Prisoner of War – reported [possible MIA]</i>	4
<i>Prisoner of War – Died in Ship Sinking</i>	70
<i>Prisoners of War – E/DSS/SWE<sup>5</sup></i>	50
<i>Prisoners of War – died</i>	244
<i>Prisoner of War - released</i>	2,061
<i>Prisoner of war - U.S. Civilians</i>	88
<b>Wounded – limited data<sup>6</sup> Total</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<i>Wounded in Action</i>	3,313
<b>Overall Casualties identified Known to date</b>	<b>15,705</b>

<sup>5</sup> E/DSS/SWE - Executed, Died of Ship's Sinking, or Shot While Escaping.

<sup>6</sup> Only limited data is accessible to determine the reasonable number of overall Hispanic wounded. These figures have been compiled from divisional or regimental histories. However, these figures are rationalized to be greater.



## SUMMARY OF WORLD WAR II HISPANIC CASUALTIES BY BRANCH OF SERVICE TO DATE

	Killed (Died)	Missing (Presumed Dead)	Prisoner of War	Wounded **
<b>Army</b>	7,127	723	2,380	1,913
<b>Army Ground Forces</b>	3,783	540	2,034	-
<b>Army Air Forces</b>	384	184	346	-
<b>Undetermined Army Component</b>	2,960	-	8	-
<b>Navy</b>	710	298	36	491
<b>Marines</b>	355	30	15	900
<b>Coast Guard</b>	12	22	n/a	n/a
<b>Merchant Marine</b>	78	459	48	n/a
<b>U.S. Naval Armed Guard</b>	10	n/a	n/a	9
<b>Civilian</b>	7	n/a	88	n/a

n/a: Information not available at this time.

## SUMMARY OF LATIN AMERICAN CASUALTIES ATTACHED TO THE U.S. ARMED FORCES TO DATE

(Not included in overall U.S. Hispanic Casualties)

Latin American Countries	
<b>Overall Casualties</b>	<b>890</b>
<b>Brazil</b>	514
<b>Mexico</b>	7
<b>Puerto Rico</b>	369

## SUMMARY OF WORLD WAR II MEDALS AWARDED TO HISPANICS TO DATE

Overall Award and Decorations Count		18,555
Medal of Honor		12
Navy Cross		19
Distinguished Service Cross		126
Distinguished Flying Cross		74
Legion of Merit <sup>[1]</sup>		45
Silver Star		1409
Bronze Star		2807
Air Medal		773
Soldiers Medal		47
Purple Heart <sup>[2]</sup>		12,058
Combat Infantry Badge		768
Expert Infantry Badge		1
Combat Medic Badge		174
Medic Badge		2
Good Conduct Medal		57
Bronze Service Arrowhead		55
Army Commendation Medal		1
Navy and Marine Corps Medal		5

Army Commendation Ribbon	19
Navy Commendation Ribbon	11
Mariners Medal	2
Certificate of Merit	8
Commendation for Exceptionally Meritorious Conduct	17
Presidential Unit Citation	3
Division Citation	1
Division Letter of Commendation	10
Medal of Freedom	11
Civilian Service Award	2
Asian Pacific Campaign Star	1
Belgium Awards	29
British Award	2
Chinese Order of Ynu-Hui	1
Chinese Cloud and Banner Medal	1
Dutch Award	1
French Croix de Guerre	4
Russian Decoration	2

Note [1]: See Table: Summary of awards of the Legion of Merit awarded to Latin American Allies.

Note [2]: This figure does not account for all wounded or injured in action personnel; there are still many records to account for to evaluate a comprehensive summary.

In general, the Purple Heart is awarded to any member of an Armed Force or any civilian national of the United States who, while serving under competent authority in any capacity with one of the U.S. Armed Services after 5 April 1917, has been wounded or killed, or who has died or may hereafter die after being wounded.

### AERIAL VICTORIES

Research has discovered thirty-one Hispanic pilots who scored a combined total of 92 aerial victories. Five pilots became aces, 2 pilots with four aerial victories each were one aerial victory away from becoming an ace, and the remainder scored multiple or single aerial victories.

## LATIN AMERICAN ATTACHMENTS TO U.S. ARMED FORCES

- Mexico:** The Mexican Expeditionary Air Force (MAEF), “Aztec Eagles”, consisted of the 201<sup>st</sup> fighter squadron. They trained in the United States from August 1944 to March 1945 and deployed overseas as part of the allied forces in the South West Pacific Area (SWPA). The 201<sup>st</sup> fighter squadron was stationed at Clark Field, Philippine Islands and attached to the United States Air Forces 58<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group. The Aztec Eagles flew P-47 Thunderbolts and saw action from March to June 1945.
- Brazil:** The Brazilian Expeditionary Force (BEF) consisted of the “Striking Cobras” which flew P-47 Thunderbolts with the 345<sup>th</sup>, 346<sup>th</sup>, and 347<sup>th</sup> Brazilian fighter squadrons and a Brazilian infantry division was attached to the U.S. 5<sup>th</sup> Army. The BEF saw action in the Mediterranean Theater.
- Puerto Rico:** 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment landed in France on September 1944. The 3rd Battalion was attached to the 12<sup>th</sup> Air Force and sent to Corsica where they fought in the Maritime Alps. The remainder of the regiment entered Germany on April 1945 and was attached to the 63rd Infantry Division from April 30 to May 12, 1945. (European Theater)

### SUMMARY OF AWARDS OF THE LEGION OF MERIT AWARDED TO LATIN AMERICAN ALLIES

Country	LOM Award
<b>Total</b>	<b>249</b>
<i>Argentina</i>	8
<i>Brazil</i>	87
<i>Chile</i>	26
<i>Colombia</i>	9
<i>Costa Rica</i>	1
<i>Cuba</i>	7
<i>Ecuador</i>	10

<i>Guatemala</i>	4
<i>Honduras</i>	1
<i>Mexico</i>	35
<i>Panama</i>	8
<i>Paraguay</i>	3
<i>Peru</i>	26
<i>Portugal</i>	10
<i>Uruguay</i>	12
<i>Venezuela</i>	2

On June 27, 1950, the United Nations Security Council asked member countries to aid the Republic of Korea as a result of the June 25, 1950 invasion into South Korea by the North Korean People's Army. The Truman Administration characterized the conflict as a "police action" where by, President Harry S. Truman announced United States intervention in the Korean Conflict. Although Congress did not officially declare war during the Korean Conflict, the essence of the struggle was in all respects a war and thus the Korean Conflict can be characterized as the Korean War. United States involvement in the Korean War would last up until September 1953.

Hispanic U.S. Census population data is not accurately available for this period, it can only be assumed that there was nominal Hispanic population growth and approximated to be 3.9 million for the years between 1950 and 1953, within the continental United States. For this period the highest concentration of Hispanics resided on the west coast, mid-west, and southwest that being Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants. Additionally in the northeast, and some southeastern states had Hispanic populations with Puerto Rican and Cuban representation.

It is estimated that there were 1,789,000 airmen, soldiers, sailors, and marines serving in-theater during the Korean War. Hispanic Americans also served with distinction during the Korean War. It is estimated that there were 180,000 Hispanic airmen soldiers, sailors, and marines who served in-theater during the Korean War. As in World War II, Hispanics were identified as Caucasian.

The Korean War Casualty Summary Report 2003, prepared by the Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, report that there were 36,576 in-theater casualty deaths.

### **LATIN AMERICAN ATTACHMENTS TO U.S. ARMED FORCES**

Colombia: 1 naval frigate and 4 Infantry Battalions, each serving separate tours of duty, attached to 21<sup>st</sup> Regiment and 31<sup>st</sup> Regiment, U.S. Army. In all, Colombia suffered 140 killed in action, 452 wounded in action, and 94 prisoners of war and missing in action.  
Note: These casualty figures are not included in the overall U.S. Hispanic casualty figures.

Puerto Rico: The 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was attached to U.S. Army 3<sup>rd</sup> Division.

## SUMMARY OF KOREAN WAR HISPANIC CASUALTIES TO DATE

<b>Died - overall Total</b>	<b>2,151</b>
<i>Killed in Action</i>	1,511
<i>Died of Wounds</i>	148
<i>Died of Injuries</i>	6
<i>Died non-Battle</i>	138
<i>Died non-Battle [accident]</i>	10
<i>Missing in Action – presumed dead</i>	273
<i>Prisoners of War – died [non-battle]</i>	57
<i>Prisoners of War – killed in action</i>	5
<i>Prisoners of War – presumed dead</i>	3
<b>Missing in Action - overall Total</b>	<b>299</b>
<i>Missing in Action [undetermined status]</i>	5
<i>Missing in Action – Returned to Military Control</i>	21
<i>Remains Status (Missing)</i>	<i>Total</i> 172
<i>Killed in Action – remains recovered</i>	1

<i>Killed in Action – remains not recovered</i>	115
<i>Missing in Action – remains recovered</i>	5
<i>Missing in Action – remains not recovered</i>	4
<i>Died of Wounds – remains not recovered</i>	1
<i>Prisoners of War – died [non-battle] – remains not recovered</i>	42
<i>Prisoners of War – killed in action – remains not recovered</i>	1
<i>Prisoners of War – presumed dead – remains not recovered</i>	3
<b>Prisoners of War - overall Total</b>	<b>347</b>
<i>Prisoner of War [undetermined status]</i>	5
<i>Prisoner of War - released</i>	277
<b>Wounded - overall Total</b>	<b>5,482</b>
<i>Wounded in Action</i>	4,891
<i>Injured in Action</i>	437



## SUMMARY OF KOREAN WAR HISPANIC AWARD RECIPIENTS TO DATE

Overall Award and Decorations Count	14,773
Medal of Honor	8
Navy Cross	4
Distinguished Service Cross	38
Silver Star	480
Bronze Star	558
Air Medal	13
Purple Heart <sup>[1]</sup>	1952
<i>Purple Heart – estimated total (see note 1)</i>	<i>[7280]</i>
Combat Infantry Badge	1845
Combat Action Ribbon	39
Combat Medic Badge	36
Combat Service Ribbon	2
Korean Service Medal	2128

United Nations Service Medal	2128
National Defense Service Medal	2137
Korean War Service Medal	792
Korean Presidential Unit Citation	1156
Republic of Korea War Service Medal	1334
Army of Occupation Medal	3
Airborne Medal with Combat Star	2
World War II Victory Medal	20
Prisoner of War Medal	68
Parachute Badge	2
Presidential Unit Citation	1
Naval Unit Citation	8
Navy and Marine Corps Medal	4

Note [1]: This figure does not include approximately 5,328 wounded or injured in action personnel, that have been compiled, who may have received a Purple Heart award.

In general, the Purple Heart is awarded to any member of an Armed Force or any civilian national of the United States who, while serving under competent authority in any capacity with one of the U.S. Armed Services after 5 April 1917, has been wounded or killed, or who has died or may hereafter die after being wounded.

### AERIAL VICTORIES

Research has discovered several Hispanic pilots during the Korean War. Two pilots in particular have been documented as having scored aerial victories; one pilot scored 14.5 aerial victories and became an ace, another scored one aerial victory.

Vietnam had been under French colonial rule for nearly sixty years and also under Japanese rule during World War II. In 1954 the country of Vietnam was divided into the North Vietnam (Democratic Republic of Vietnam) and South Vietnam (the Republic of Vietnam). This was an outcome of an international meeting held at Geneva, Switzerland, otherwise referred to as the 1954 Geneva Conference. A Vietnamese Civil war ensued which gave rise to international attention and resulting in a limited international conflict. United States involvement began in 1961 with the signed treaty between South Vietnam and the United States to provide military and economic aid. In 1964 Congress passed a resolution calling for military action against North Vietnam which was provoked by the North Vietnamese torpedoing of U.S. destroyers in the Tonkin Gulf. United States involvement would escalate and lasted up until 1973. Similar to the Korean War, although Congress did not officially declare war during the Vietnam Conflict, the essence of the struggle was in all respects a war and thus the Vietnam Conflict can be characterized as the Vietnam War.

The 1970 Census estimated Hispanic-Americans at 4.5% of the U.S. population, 9.148 million and an estimated 3.9% of the U.S. population in the 1960's, 6.993 million [Cary Davis, Carl Haub, and JoAnne Willette, 1983. 'US Hispanics: Changing the Face of America.' *Population Bulletin*, Vol. 38, No. 3, p. 8, Table 2].

Hispanic-Americans were over-represented among Vietnam casualties, an estimated 7% of the casualties.

Hispanic casualties, specifically for the Southwest where there was a high concentration of Mexican American population, were reported to be 19.4% from January 1961 to February 1967, and 19.0% from December 1967 to March 1969<sup>7</sup>. In contrast to the 11.8% Mexican American population<sup>8</sup> of the period, the casualty rates are relatively high.

The Vietnam War Casualty Summary Report 2003, prepared by the Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, reported that there were 58,198 in-theater casualty deaths. It is estimated that 2,594,000 soldiers, sailors, and marines served in South Vietnam. It is estimated that there were 170,000 Hispanic airmen, soldiers, sailors, and marines who served in-theater during the Vietnam War. As in World War II and Korean War, Hispanics were identified as Caucasian. In addition, 17 prisoners of war and 65 missing in action airmen, soldiers, sailors, and marines of Hispanic heritage have been identified to date.

In the book *Vietnam Reconsidered: lesson from a war*<sup>9</sup> the chapter on "Hispanics and the Vietnam War", by Ruben Treviso, [pgs. 184-186], mentions the following:

- One out of every two Hispanics who went to Vietnam served in a combat unit.
- One out of every five Hispanics who went to Vietnam was killed in action.
- One out of every three Hispanics who went to Vietnam was wounded in action.

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<sup>7</sup> Guzman, Ralph, Mexican American Casualties in Vietnam, Merrill College, University of California at Santa Cruz, [1970]

<sup>8</sup> Based on 1960 report of U.S. Bureau of the Census.

<sup>9</sup> Salisbury, Harrison E., New York: Harper and Row, 1984.

## SUMMARY OF VIETNAM WAR HISPANIC CASUALTIES TO DATE

<b>Died - overall</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,091</b>
<i>Killed in Action</i>		2,163
<i>Killed in Action – remains not recovered -found</i>		5
<i>Killed in Action – remains not recovered</i>		8
<i>Died of Wounds</i>		314
<i>Died of Injuries</i>		73
<i>Died of other causes</i>		331
<i>Died of other causes – remains not recovered</i>		4
<i>Missing in Action – died – remains unspecified</i>		22
<i>Missing in Action – died - remains recovered</i>		12
<i>Missing in Action – died – remains not recovered</i>		6
<i>Prisoners of War – died while captured – remains not recovered</i>		1
<i>Prisoners of War – finding of death – remains not recovered</i>		19
<i>Prisoners of War – finding of death – remains recovered</i>		4
<i>Prisoners of War – U.S. Civilian -finding of death – remains not recovered</i>		1
<b>Missing in Action - overall</b>	<b>Total</b>	138
<i>Missing in Action – U.S. Civilian [undetermined status]</i>		1
<i>Missing in Action – Returned to Military Control</i>		1
<b>Prisoners of War - overall</b>	<b>Total</b>	42
<i>Prisoner of War - escaped</i>		1
<i>Prisoner of War - released</i>		15
<b>Wounded – overall <sup>[1]</sup></b>	<b>Total</b>	n/a

According to the Defense Prisoner of War Missing Personnel Office, of the reported 1,711 non-accounted for personnel missing, 935 American remains have been accounted for and repatriated to the United States – post January 27, 1973.

## SUMMARY OF VIETNAM WAR MEDALS AWARDED TO HISPANICS TO DATE

Overall Award and Decorations Count		5,891
Medal of Honor		16
Navy Cross		29
Distinguished Service Cross		78
Silver Star		397
Bronze Star		1251
Air Medal		160
Soldiers Medal		6
Purple Heart <sup>[1]</sup>		3133
Army Commendation Medal		531
Air Force Commendation Medal		18
Joint Service commendation		240
Navy Achievement Medal		4
Navy Commendation Medal		10

Note [1]: This figure does not include an undetermined number of wounded or injured in action personnel who have not been identified based on limited sources. These individuals may also qualify to be awarded the Purple Heart.

In general, the Purple Heart is awarded to any member of an Armed Force or any civilian national of the United States who, while serving under competent authority in any capacity with one of the U.S. Armed Services after 5 April 1917, has been wounded or killed, or who has died or may hereafter die after being wounded.



◆ WORLD WAR I ◆ WORLD WAR II ◆ KOREAN WAR ◆ VIETNAM WAR