

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

BILL: SM 1266

INTRODUCER: Senator Soto

SUBJECT: United States Infantry Regiment, the Borinqueneers

DATE: March 18, 2013 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Spaulding	Ryon	MS	Favorable
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

SM 1266 is a memorial to the President and the Congress of the United States to urge them to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the United States 65th Infantry Regiment, the “Borinqueneers.”

II. Present Situation:

The History of the 65th Infantry Regiment “Borinqueneers”

The name “Borinqueneers” is a combination of the words "Borinquen" (which was what the Taínos¹ called the island before the arrival of the Spaniards) and "Buccaneers."²

The 65th Infantry Regiment “Borinqueneers” was originally formed on March 2, 1899 to protect America’s strategic interests in the Caribbean. The 65th participated in World War I, as a defense force securing the Panama Canal Zone. During World War II, they again assumed this security mission until 1944 when the regiment was sent to North Africa, Corsica, and eventually into France. By wars in, the Borinqueneers participated in the battle of Naples-Fogis, Rome-Arno, Central Europe, and the Rhineland. Members of the regiment earned a Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, and ninety Purple Hearts.³

The 65th Infantry Regiment was among the first reinforcements to arrive in Korea as General of the Army MacArthur began his famous counter attack driving the North Koreans to the Chinese

¹ The Taínos were seafaring indigenous people of the Caribbean. They were one of the Arawak people of South America.

² Gilberto N. Villahermosa, Honor and Fidelity The 65th Infantry in Korea, 1950–1953, http://www.history.army.mil/html/books/korea/65Inf_Korea/65Inf_KW.pdf, page 27, last viewed March 15, 2013.

³ Villahermosa, pages 5-10.

Border. The Borinqueneers fought valiantly as part of the U.S. Army's 3d Infantry Division. Although their equipment and supplies were frequently lacking, the Borinqueneers earned a reputation as a very brave and disciplined unit.⁴

The 65th was part of a task force which enabled the U.S. Marines to withdraw from the Chosin Reservoir on December 1950. The men of the 65th rushed to their defense and provided over watch protection enabling the Marines to withdraw to their ships with the 65th holding the rear guard.⁵ Throughout 1951, the Borinqueneers fought valiantly in many battles. In 1952, the regiment defended the main line of resistance for 47 days and successfully attacked Chinese positions. In June 1953, the regiment conducted a series of successful raids and successfully counter-attacked enemy units in the Numsong Valley. The 65th held their positions until the armistice was reached.⁶ On February 6, 1959, the 65th Infantry Regiment was transferred from the Regular Army to the Puerto Rico Army National Guard.⁷

The unit was cited for bravery and meritorious service on multiple occasions. Additionally, individual soldiers were awarded for bravery. Of the 10 distinguished Service Crosses and 256 Silver Stars that were awarded to members of the 65th, 4 Distinguished Service Crosses and 124 Silver Stars were awarded to native born Puerto Ricans.⁸ The 65th Infantry also was awarded 606 Bronze Stars and 2771 Purple Hearts. The Borinqueneers are credited with the last recorded battalion-sized bayonet assault in the history of the United States Army. The regiment has participated in 20 campaigns, and received 8 unit decorations, including the Army and Navy Presidential Unit Citation.⁹

The Congressional Gold Medal

The Congressional Gold Medal is an expression of public gratitude by Congress for distinguished contributions, dramatic acts of virtue and patriotism, and the remembrance of great events.¹⁰ Since the American Revolution, Congress has commissioned gold medals as its highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions. Each medal honors a particular individual, institution, or event. Although the first recipients included citizens who participated in the American Revolution, the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, Congress broadened the scope of the medal to include actors, authors, entertainers, musicians, pioneers in aeronautics and space, explorers, lifesavers, notables in science and medicine, athletes, humanitarians, public servants, and foreign recipients.¹¹ The tradition of the

⁴ Villahermosa, pp 46-179.

⁵ "General Order 38", Department of the Army, 30 July 1957. pp. 2-3, <http://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/pdf/go5738.pdf>, last viewed March 15, 2013.

⁶ Villahermosa, pp 237-263.

⁷ Department of the Army, Lineage and Honors, 65th Infantry Regiment (The Borinqueneers), <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/inf/0065in.htm>, last viewed March 15, 2013.

⁸ 110th CONGRESS, 1st Session, H. CON. RES. 253, Recognizing the service, courage, and patriotism of Hispanic Americans who have served and continue to serve as members of the United States Armed Forces.

⁹ Lineage and Honors, 65TH INFANTRY REGIMENT (THE BORINQUENEERS).

¹⁰ Matthew Eric Glassman, Congressional Research Service, Congressional Gold Medals, 1776-2012, http://www.senate.gov/CRSReports/crs-publish.cfm?pid=0E%2C*PL%5B%3C%230%20%20%0A, page 1, last viewed March 15, 2013.

¹¹ United States House of Representative; History, Arts & Archives, <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Gold-Medal/Gold-Medal-Recipients/>, last viewed March 15, 2013.

Congressional Gold Medal is a medal made of gold with the portraits of those being honored or images of events in which they participated.¹²

According to Rule X, 2 (h) of the House Committee on Financial Services' Subcommittee on Domestic Policy and Technology when considering such Congressional Gold Medal legislation must be cosponsored by at least two-thirds (290) of the Members of the House. The Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee requires that at least 67 Senators must cosponsor any Congressional Gold Medal legislation before the committee will consider it.¹³

Since its inception, hundreds of medals have been issued. Some notable recipients include:¹⁴

Recipient(s)	Date of Approval	Public Law
George Washington	March 25, 1776	Continental Congress
Mother Teresa of Calcutta	June 2, 1997	P.L. 105-16, 111 Stat. 35-36
Rosa Parks	May 4, 1999	P.L. 106-26, 113 Stat. 50-51
The Tuskegee Airmen	April 11 , 2006	P.L. 109-213, 120 Stat. 322
The Fallen Heroes Act: Honoring the Men and Women who Perished as the result of the Terrorist Acts on the United States on September 11, 2001	December 23, 2011	P.L. 112-76, 125 Stat. 1275 and 1276

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The memorial urges the President and the Congress of the United States to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the United States 65th Infantry Regiment, the “Borinqueneers” in recognition of their bravery and sacrifice for our great nation.

Copies of this memorial will be dispatched to the President of the United States, to the President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, to each member of the Florida delegation to the United States Congress, to the Puerto Rico Resident Commissioner, to the President of the United States 65th Infantry Regiment Association, the chairman of the Hispanic Achievers Grant Council, and the chairman of the “Borinqueneer” Congressional Gold Medal Alliance.

¹² Glassman, page 1.

¹³ United States House of Representative; History, Arts & Archives, <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Gold-Medal/Gold-Medal-Recipients/>, last viewed March 15, 2013.

¹⁴ *Id*

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.