



Latinos in the United States Military: World War II

Brianna Lasso

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Faculty Mentor: Martín Meráz García, Ph.D.



Abstract

- Address Latinos positive and negative experiences.
- Recognize their achievements and heroic acts.
- Explore their roles and contributions.



Latino participation in World War II

- 16.1 million Americans served in this war.
- 51,000 were Puerto Ricans.
- Estimated 500,000 Mexican Americans served. (Lopez, 2009)

Benefits of serving

- Provided opportunities for Latinos.
- Mexican-American Marine, Bill Lansford explained "As the war advanced and we went on through, these southern guys began seeing that we weren't what they thought we were. And we began seeing that they weren't what we thought they were."



Negative Experiences

- ▶ Being refused service after returning home from combat.
- ▶ Segregated units for Puerto Ricans.



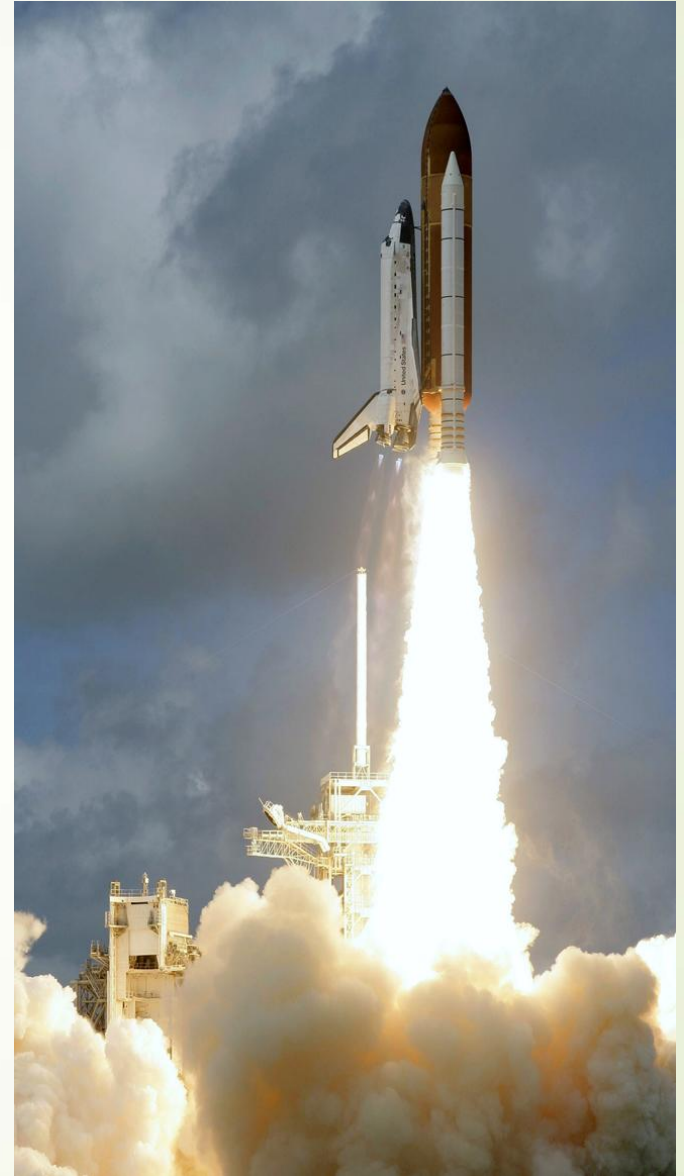
Heroes and their Roles



- Jose M. Lopez
- Sergeant in the 2nd infantry division
- Medal of Honor recipient

Luis J. Franco

- Air Force flight engineer
- Took part in experiments for space travel
- Later became a prisoner of war in Germany (Cole, 1995)



Elsie Martinez



- Worked at a high security base.
- Developed and analyzed photographs of aerial coverage.
- Made maps for allied soldiers.

Rafaela Esquivel

- ▶ Nurse in the ARMY Nurse Corps.
- ▶ Tended to wounded soldiers in the winter of 1945.
- ▶ Operated a makeshift hospital at a monastery. (Rosales, 2009)





Conclusion

- 17 Medal of Honor recipients in World War II were Latino.
- Many Latinos benefitted from being in the military.
- Some had negative experiences.
- They deserve recognition and honor for serving their country.

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