

Governor Sherrill Honors the Legacy of the Borinqueneers with New License Plate Law

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New specialty plate celebrates the storied 65th Infantry Regiment and support programs benefiting Army veterans

TRENTON – As New Jersey celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month, Governor Mikie Sherrill today signed S3818 into law, authorizing the creation of a New Jersey specialty license plate honoring the Borinqueneers, the famed 65th Infantry Regiment of the United States Army made up predominantly of soldiers from Puerto Rico.

“During Hispanic Heritage Month, we are proud to celebrate the generations of Hispanic Americans who have strengthened our state and nation,” **said Governor Mikie Sherrill**. “The Borinqueneers answered our country’s call to serve even while facing discrimination at home—a sacrifice that speaks to their extraordinary courage and love of country. This license plate will help carry their legacy forward while supporting programs that serve our Army veterans who follow in their footsteps.”

Sponsored by Senators M. Teresa Ruiz and Nilsa I. Cruz-Perez and Assemblywomen Yvonne Lopez, Carmen Theresa Morales, and Annette Quijano, the new law directs the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission to develop a license plate bearing the words “The Borinqueneers” and an image or other designation representing the 65th Infantry Regiment.

“The 65th Infantry Regiment was a unit of brave Puerto Rican soldiers who served in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. Most recognized for their valiant and extraordinary victories during the Korean War, they proudly represented Puerto Rico and the United States with unwavering courage and pride,” **said Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz (D-Essex/Hudson)**. “Despite their critical sacrifices, the accomplishments of the Borinqueneers are often absent from history textbooks and classrooms. Creating a license plate and veteran fund in their honor will raise awareness of Puerto Ricans’ contributions to our nation’s history, help provide assistance to vets and their families, and celebrate the incredible story of these remarkable military heroes.”

“Puerto Rican history is part of American history, and one of the finest examples of that is the courageous actions of the Borinqueneers,” **said Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez (D-Camden/Gloucester)**. “This heroic regiment of the US Army put their lives on the line to defend our nation despite facing immense discrimination. Dedicating a license plate and a veteran fund in their honor will shine a spotlight on their inspiring story and help veterans in need.”

“The Borinqueneers served our nation with extraordinary courage and distinction, and their legacy deserves to be recognized for generations to come,” **said Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez (D-Middlesex)**. “This new license plate gives New Jerseyans a meaningful way to honor the members of the 65th Infantry Regiment while helping ensure their remarkable story remains visible and remembered. I am proud to see this legislation signed into law.”

“The Borinqueneers hold a special place in both American and Puerto Rican history,” **said Assemblywoman Carmen Morales (D-Essex)**. “Their bravery and sacrifice in service to our country left a legacy that continues to inspire pride throughout the Puerto Rican community and beyond. By honoring them on New Jersey’s roads, we are helping preserve that history and giving residents an opportunity to proudly recognize their service.”

“The Borinqueneers served our nation with tremendous courage and distinction, overcoming barriers while answering the call to serve. Their service and sacrifice are an important part of both our nation’s history and the story of the Puerto Rican community,” **said Assemblywoman Annette Quijano (D-Union)**. “This law offers New Jerseyans a lasting way to honor the 65th Infantry Regiment while supporting programs that benefit our veterans. It is a fitting tribute to the Borinqueneers and the proud legacy they have left behind.”

The Borinqueneers

The regiment traces its history to 1899, when it was started as the Puerto Rico Regiment of Volunteer Infantry. It entered the Regular Army in 1908 and was redesignated the 65th Infantry in 1920.

Composed primarily of soldiers from Puerto Rico, the unit became known as the Borinqueneers—a name derived from Borinquen, the Indigenous Taíno name for Puerto Rico. The regiment served in World War II campaigns in Europe and again during the Korean War.

The regiment’s honors include two Presidential Unit Citations, two Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citations, two Meritorious Unit Commendations, and Greece’s Gold Medal for Bravery. Members of the unit earned numerous individual decorations, including Distinguished Service Crosses, Silver Stars, and Bronze Stars.

In 2014, Congress awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment in recognition of its pioneering military service, devotion to duty and acts of valor. The medal was formally presented to the Borinqueneers in 2016.

License Plate Program

Under the new law, motorists will pay a \$50 application fee and an additional \$10 annual renewal fee for the specialty plate. Proceeds will be deposited into the Borinqueneers License Plate Fund and used to support programs benefiting United States Army veterans.

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