

## ***Medal of Honor Earned by Mexican Born Veterans***

**Article submitted by Francisco “Paco” Barragán CPA, CIA**

As we remember and celebrate the contributions and selfless sacrifices of all Veterans, either on Veterans Day of November 11<sup>th</sup>, or November 10<sup>th</sup> for my fellow US Marines, Memorial Day in May, or any other day, it is worth remembering the values and backgrounds of our Veterans, especially those of our ***Congressional Medal of Honor*** recipients, and all others who have fought in America’s Defense.

I believe many of our Veterans, whether US-born, or foreign-born were driven by the following Values:

**Flag** - Respect for the Flag which represents a living nation born out of the contributions and selfless sacrifices of other veterans and their families, our families, and our dedicated citizens, in both wartime and peacetime;

**Fidelity** - Being loyal to our country, our constitutional values and principles of Life, Liberty, Justice, and Equality, for all; even when sadly our imperfect yet great nation has not always lived to the spirit of its own principles; and loyalty always in our duty in attending to the needs of those who have served;

**Faith** - Nurturing our own personal Faith and our moral compass, in communion with our fellow Brothers and Sisters in Arms, our members and our community; And creating an environment where people of all faiths, or people with spiritual or no religious inclination, can freely practice their faith or beliefs.

**Family** - Showing Love, Respect, Honor and Gratitude for our Families, and for the Families of those who selflessly and with love sacrificed their lives for our life, freedoms and basic human rights. Believing that Love, Respect and Warm Embrace bring comfort to their healing hearts, as the families honor and as we honor, the memory of their loved ones!

**Friendship** - Remembering that Veterans are a community of friends with unbreakable bonds, forged in battle or in service to nation and by their personal actions, and that we all rejoice in the presence, or in memory of those, before us!

The Medal of Honor which is the nation’s highest military honor awarded by the President of the United States on behalf of the Congress is awarded to a member of the US Armed Forces who distinguishes him- or herself "conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or own life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States.”

This highest of honors has been earned by 43 Hispanic/Mexican-American Veterans. Four of these Medal of Honor (**MOH**) recipients were born in Mexico.

- **Staff Sergeant Marcario** (January 20, 1920-December 24, 1972) born in Villa de Castano, Mexico, received the award for his heroic actions as a soldier during World War II;

- **PFC Silvestre S. Herrera** (July 17, 1917 – November 26, 2007) born in Camargo, Chihuahua, Mexico received the MOH for his heroic actions during WWII in Mertzwiller, France. At the time of his death he was the only living person authorized to wear both the Medal of Honor and Mexico’s Order of Military Merit (Orden de Merito Militar 1<sup>a</sup> clase). Former President Dwight Eisenhower also received the Orden de Merito Militar on August 17, 1946.
- **LCpl Jose Francisco Jimenez** (March 20, 1946 – August 28, 1969) born in Mexico City, who also attended schools in Morelia, Michoacán, received the MOH for his heroism as a US Marine in Viet Nam in August 1969.
- **Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Alfred V. Rascon** (born September 10, 1945 in Chihuahua, Mexico) was a medic in the US Army and was awarded the MOH for his heroic actions near Long Khanh Province in Viet Nam.

Furthermore, in 1982 the US Dept of Defense published “Hispanics in America’s Defense” which summarizes the contributions of Hispanics since the American Revolution (you can find this link at <http://umava.org>)

It is worth noting that many of these Heroes, and other Veterans served their adopted country even when they or their families in the USA faced segregation, discrimination and deportation (about 2,000,000 **US born citizens** of Hispanic/Mexican descent were deported in the 1930’s and as late as the early 1940’s); however, I believe they served heroically always believing that the stains in our Nation’s fabric could be cleansed by the sacrifice of their blood, sweat and tears in service to our Nation... and believing in the **greatness of America and its principles of humanity, and the promise of opportunity to all** those who work to build a stronger nation.

To learn more please visit or join me at UMAVA (the United Mexican-American Veterans Association) at <http://umava.org> as we recognize the sacrifices and contributions of our Veterans!

So my fellow citizens be encouraged, and have pride and faith in the extraordinary contributions and sacrifices of the Hispanic/Mexican-American Veteran!

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