

A ONE HOUR TELEVISION DOCUMENTARY



# ¡VIVA LA LIBERTAD!

THE STORY OF AMERICA'S HISPANIC PATRIOTS

**D**uring the height of the War on Terror, Leroy Petry, a Hispanic American who grew up surrounded by pictures of grandfathers and uncles in uniform, left his home in New Mexico and joined the Army.

**I**n May of 2008, he found himself in Afghanistan fighting for his life.

**W**hile crossing the courtyard of a Taliban compound, he and a fellow Ranger were hit by automatic weapons fire. Wounded in both legs and still being shot at he led his buddy to cover and then engaged the enemy with a hand grenade. The assailants responded with grenades of their own, the first of which wounded two men. The second landed only a few feet from Staff Sergeant Petry who unhesitatingly and with complete disregard for his own safety, rushed forward, picked up the grenade and threw it back, saving the lives of his buddies nearby. Tragically, just as he released the bomb, it exploded, severing his right hand at the wrist and leaving him with numerous shrapnel wounds. Undeterred, he placed a tourniquet around his arm, and still under fire, managed to get to a radio and call in support for himself and the wounded Rangers.



Three years later, as President Obama was awarding Leroy Petry the Medal of Honor, the commander in chief remarked,



“WHAT COMPELS SUCH COURAGE?  
WHAT LEADS A PERSON TO RISK EVERYTHING  
SO THAT OTHERS MIGHT LIVE?”

— PRESIDENT OBAMA





The answer to that question can be found in the actions of Hispanic men and women who have served gallantly in the armed forces of the United States since the dawn of the Republic. They did so, often in the face of discrimination, with the belief that the blessings of liberty were worth fighting for and that the promise of America belonged to them as well.

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will finally and for the first time on film, illuminate their inspirational achievements while answering the question, why, despite obvious social injustice, these men and women fought so valiantly for freedoms they did not fully enjoy.

The one hour documentary, is produced and directed by Sundance, Emmy and Image Award winning filmmaker Frank Martin, creator of the acclaimed public television specials *For Love of Liberty: The Story of America's Black Patriots* and *Unsung Heroes: The Story of America's Female Patriots*. The documentary, produced in both Spanish and English, is intended for national television distribution.



At the heart of ¡Viva La Libertad! are the compelling accounts of the men and women who have lived this story. These inspirational tales of courage, patriotism and cultural pride are brought to life through dramatic readings, interviews, rare photographs, archival materials, personal memorabilia and stylized re-creations.

WHAT FOLLOWS ARE A FEW  
BRIEF SAMPLES OF STORIES THAT WILL  
BE FEATURED IN THE FILM.



**R**OY P. BENAVIDEZ, a Vietnam era Medal of Honor Recipient used the radio call-sign Tango Mike Mike, short for That Mean Mexican. Mr. Benavidez kept 8 wounded men alive under heavy fire despite being badly injured himself. He later attributed his actions to his family's fighting spirit back in Texas in 1836 when Tejanos fought alongside Sam Houston and joined the rebels gathered at the Alamo to take a stand against the Mexican Army. **JUAN SEGUIN**, who was dispatched on a daring but ultimately futile mission to gather reinforcements, was one of the few to escape the massacre.

**E**veryone remembers the Alamo, but few recall the Hispanic patriots who died there.





The Spanish American War would find Latino men and women fighting side by side with the Americans against Spain, most notably as members of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders. Chief among those men was **CAPTAIN MAXIMILIANO LUNA**, a direct descendent of the original Spanish conquistadors whose family had lived in the Rio Grande Valley since before the American Revolution. Yet, less than 20 years later, during WW I, both **NICOLAS LUCERO** and **MARCELINO SERNA**, because of their "Wetback" heritage, would be assigned to second-class American units who fought under the flag of France. Their group, known as 'Les Enfants Perdus...The Lost Children, would become one of the most highly decorated units of the war and Lucero and Serna would each receive the French Croix de Guerre for exceptional heroism.



Hispanic Americans are understandably proud of their combat record during WW II. In the tiny town of Silvis Illinois, a two block lane originally settled by immigrant railroad workers earned the name “HERO STREET” for sending 57 of it’s sons off to war. Some 250 thousand Hispanic American men and women served during that conflict including Arizona’s 158th Regimental Combat Team whom Douglas MacArthur called “the greatest fighting combat team ever deployed for battle.” Men such as GUY GABALDON, who personally convinced over 1,000 Japanese civilians and soldiers to surrender, proved the General right. Guy had been raised by a Japanese-American family in Los Angeles and spoke their language fluently. During the course of the war, his foster family would be sent to a U.S. internment camp.



Following the end of WW II, Hispanic war veterans found the continued discrimination both ironic and increasingly intolerable. When the Governor of Arizona decided to name August 14, 1945, in honor of Medal of Honor recipient SILVESTRE HERRERA, he also had to order businesses in Phoenix to remove signs that read, “No Mexican Trade Wanted.”





**L**ike many other minorities, **Hispanic Americans fought for the right to fight** in the belief that such actions demonstrated their commitment to the principles of Liberty. **GENERAL BERNARDO DE GALVEZ**, the Spanish governor of the Louisiana Territories, though barred from the conflict, defied his countries wishes and helped America defeat the British in the Revolutionary War.

**D**uring the Civil War, thousands of Hispanics shed their blood in both the Confederate and Union armies. Men like **ADMIRAL DAVID FARRAGUT**, who's audacious charge is one of the iconic confrontations in American naval history, and who's battle cry, "Damn the torpedoes. Full speed ahead" is now woven into the fabric of the nations heritage. Others were women like **LORETTA VELASQUEZ** who disguised herself as a man in order to take up arms.





**K**orea was the first U.S. conflict in which jet aircraft were used on a large scale. One of the first jet “aces” was **CAPTAIN MANUEL FERNANDEZ** who flew over 125 combat missions and finished the war with 14 confirmed air victories. His accomplishments place him among the top U.S. Air Force pilots in WW I, II, and Korea combined.

**A** few years later, in a different part of Asia, another Hispanic American flyer, **LT. JG. EVERETT ALVAREZ**, the grandson of Mexican immigrants, would be the first pilot shot down over Vietnam and spend the next 8½ years as a prisoner of war, steadfastly refusing to denounce his country despite repeated torture.

**F**ollowing 9/11, deep in the mountains of Afghanistan, Army Rangers OSCAR OSCANO and OMAR VELA rescued 10 of their fellow soldiers in a 17-hour maelstrom of enemy fire and blinding snow. A year later, LANCE CPL. JOSE GUTIERREZ became one of the first American service members to die in Iraq. Jose was an orphaned child from the streets of Guatemala who had sneaked into the United States illegally and joined the Marines as a path to citizenship. The death of a man who died for a country that was not his own proved to be especially poignant for many Americans including President George W. Bush who visited two other non-citizen soldiers and made them citizens on the spot.

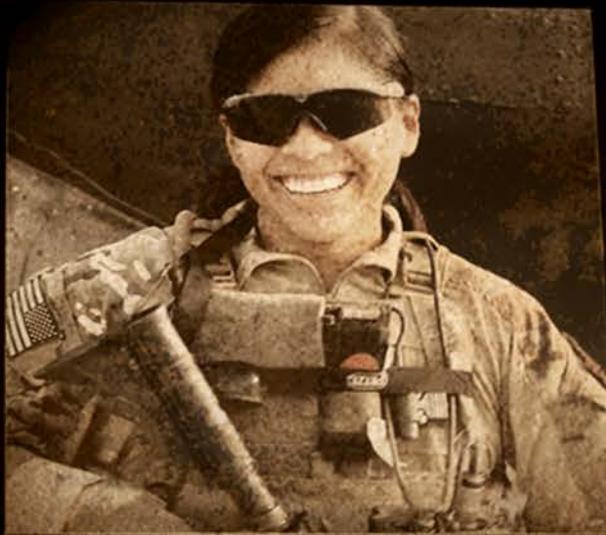
## THE CALL TO DUTY CONTINUES.



**R**ecently, in Afghanistan, CAPT. JENNIFER MORENO, an Army nurse, was killed along with 3 others when enemy forces using an improvised explosive device attacked her unit. In her last moments of life she heard two orders. One was a call to help a wounded soldier struck by a blast in a booby-trapped killing field. The other was a command to stay where she was due to the danger. Capt. Moreno chose to help the wounded soldier and gave her life trying. In the words of her commander, she ran “into hell.” Military officials later said her sacrifice helped prevent an attack “that would have resulted in the deaths of unknown multitudes of innocent civilians.”



MORENO



At 55.4 million strong, Hispanic Americans represent the largest ethnic minority in the United States. As these numbers continue to grow it is vital that America understand the many heroic ways Hispanics have contributed to the security of their nation. When Medal of Honor recipient ROY BENAVIDEZ, famous for his “That Mean Mexican” call sign, passed away in 1998, he left behind a message that speaks eloquently to the reasons why these stories remain important today;



*“I believe that there is no greater calling for a man or woman to serve in the military of a free nation. It is a calling that transcends all others because imbedded deep within the soul of every free man or woman is the knowledge that every freedom we have was earned for us by our ancestors. Each and every generation must relearn those lessons, and the strength of every free nation depends on this transfer of knowledge. Only through the transfer of knowledge from generation to generation will free people survive.”*

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THE STORY OF AMERICA'S HISPANIC PATRIOTS

will share this inspirational saga of courage and sacrifice with every community in the nation. The film, along with its accompanying English language educational component and website, will illuminate a vital aspect of America's history while reaffirming, for all ethnicities, the value of freedom.



PRODUCED BY  
ELEVENTH DAY ENTERTAINMENT, INC.



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