



15 September 2016

National Hispanic Heritage Month Message

Each year our Nation celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15. During this observance, we celebrate the strength of our diversity in Eighth Army. We explore the history, culture and traditions of Hispanic Americans and their outstanding service to our Nation and our Army.

Hispanic Americans have a long legacy of distinguished service to Eighth Army and the ROK-U.S. Alliance here in the Republic of Korea. Asked to serve their country in time of war, Hispanic Americans displayed the Army Values in the face of adversity throughout history.

Among numerous examples of Hispanic American heroes was Corporal Jose Mares, a teenager who survived incredible hardship as a Prisoner of War during the Korean War. He was eating his Thanksgiving dinner on November 24, 1950 while on duty in Korea, when North Korean troops attacked his unit, killing Soldiers seated on either side of him. Five days later, Corporal Mares was captured. Despite nearly three years of brutal treatment, Corporal Mares never broke, even after he was nearly executed for simply refusing to offer any more information than his name, serial number, and date of birth. Corporal Mares was awarded the Prisoner of War Medal. He is a true example what it means to serve.

We draw strength from the contributions of a diverse formation with more than 2,200 Hispanic American Soldiers currently serving in our ranks today. As generations of their ancestors have been, they are shining examples of what it means to serve honorably for this great Nation.

We encourage all personnel to take part in their local National Hispanic Heritage Month activities and learn more about the compelling contributions that Hispanic Americans have made to our Nation and our Army.

Eighth Army is Strong and Getting Stronger!

Pacific Victors!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Merritt".

RICHARD E. MERRITT
CSM, USA
Command Sergeant Major

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Vandal".

THOMAS S. VANDAL
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding