Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	Res 0813-2023	**Version:** *	**Name:**	Recognizing April 13 annually as Borinqueneers Day in the City of New York.
Type:	Resolution		**Status:**	Adopted
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On agenda:	10/19/2023			
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Title: Resolution recognizing April 13 annually as Borinqueneers Day in the City of New York in honor of the courage and wartime contributions of the U.S. Army's 65th Infantry Regiment and their lasting legacy.

Sponsors:

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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
10/19/2023	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
10/19/2023	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
12/6/2023	*	Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations	Hearing Held by Committee	
12/6/2023	*	Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations	Approved by Committee	Pass
12/6/2023	*	City Council	Approved, by Council	Pass

Res. No. 813

Resolution recognizing April 13 annually as Borinqueneers Day in the City of New York in honor of the courage and wartime contributions of the U.S. Army's 65th Infantry Regiment and their lasting legacy.

By Council Members Farías, Ayala, Salamanca, Velázquez, Won, Lee, Holden, Rivera, Avilés, Stevens, Brooks -Powers, Hudson, Gutiérrez, Cabán and Gennaro

Whereas, In 1899, Congress authorized the formation of Puerto Rico's Battalion of Volunteer Infantry, a unit of men primarily from the island of Puerto Rico, which had just become a territory of the United States (U.S.); and

Whereas, In 1908, the Battalion became a regiment in the regular U.S. Army; and

Whereas, Lieutenant Teófilo Marxuach's unit from the regiment fired warning shots at a German supply

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ship trying to leave San Juan Bay, thus marking the first U.S. shots of World War I; and

Whereas, Later in World War I, the regiment impressively defended the Panama Canal Zone; and

Whereas, After the regiment's return to Puerto Rico, it was renamed as the 65th Infantry Regiment; and

Whereas, The 65th Infantry Regiment served with distinction during World War II in North Africa, France, and Germany; and

Whereas, After war in Korea broke out, the 65th Infantry Regiment was sent quickly and arrived in Pusan in 1950, thereafter engaging honorably in many battles during the harsh winter, including fighting off the Chinese People's Liberation Army in the Chosin Reservoir in order to free the trapped U.S. Army's First Battalion; and

Whereas, The 65th Infantry Regiment protected redeployed Marines in what would become the last battalion-sized bayonet assault in U.S. military history; and

Whereas, During the Korean campaign, the 65th Infantry Regiment became known as the Borinqueneers, a name taken from the Taino word for their homeland; and

Whereas, In praising the Borinqueneers, General Douglas MacArthur, who had the Regiment under his command, said that they "give daily proofs on the battlefields of Korea of their courage, determination and resolute will to victory" and that they "are writing a brilliant record of heroism in battle"; and

Whereas, In spite of great praise from U.S. and Korean military leaders, in 1952, 91 Borinqueneers were court-martialed and jailed for not following orders they deemed insulting and unnecessarily risky; and

Whereas, After backlash from Puerto Rico's government, the U.S. Congress, and the public, the U.S. Army pardoned the Borinqueneers expeditiously and blamed poorly trained and inexperienced new officers, who had trouble communicating with the soldiers, needlessly dangerous military tactics, and ethnic prejudice, which was evident both in and out of battle, for the regrettable courts-martial; and

Whereas, The Borinqueneers were cleared by an internal U.S. Army investigation, many hoped for a more substantial vindication, which would finally come more than 60 years later; and

Whereas, On May 29, 2014, the New York City Council adopted Resolution Number 103, "urging Congress to pass and the President to sign H.R.1726 and S.1174, to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as Borinqueneers"; and

Whereas, On June 10, 2014, President Barack Obama signed these bills into law, awarding the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor given by Congress, to the Borinqueneers and noting that it is "a proud day for all those whose lives they saved and whose freedom they defended" and that the Borinqueneers have "earned a hallowed place in our history"; and

Whereas, On April 13, 2016, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan actually presented the Congressional Gold Medal to the Borinqueneers and remarked that these men "showed us time and again that, courage does not know color"; and

Whereas, In addition to the Congressional Gold Medal, the Borinqueneers have earned 10 Distinguished Service Crosses, more than 250 Silver Stars, more than 600 Bronze Stars, and more than 2,700 Purple Hearts, along with commendations from the Republic of Korea, while suffering over 1,500 casualties and over 2,600 wounded; and

Whereas, Section 1088 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (P.L. 116-283) supported the designation of National Borinqueneers Day and recognized the "bravery, service, and sacrifice of the Puerto Rican soldiers of the 65th Infantry Regiment in the armed conflicts of the United States in the 20th and 21st centuries"; and

Whereas, Section 1088 urges Americans on National Borinqueneers Day to participate in activities that celebrate the "distinguished service" and "significant contributions to United States history" of the Borinqueneers and that "pay tribute to the sacrifices made and adversities overcome by Puerto Rican and Hispanic members of the Armed Forces"; and

Whereas, Since 2021, April 13 has been officially recognized by Congress as National Borinqueneers Day;

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Whereas, According to U.S. Census estimates for 2019, New York City (NYC) has a population of more than 650,000 people of Puerto Rican origin, or about 8 percent of NYC's total population; and

Whereas, On July 13, 2023, at an annual Gracie Mansion celebration of Puerto Rican heritage, Mayor Eric Adams, who has referred to Puerto Rico as NYC's "sixth borough," commented, "You look into the history and success of this city, you would see over and over again the role that the Puerto Rican community has played and how they ensured and fortified everything that's great about the city";

Whereas, Borinqueneers have already been honored in the Bronx with the co-naming of Southern Boulevard as "La 65 de Infanteria Boulevard"; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York recognizes April 13 annually as Borinqueneers Day in the City of New York in honor of the courage and wartime contributions of the U.S. Army's 65th Infantry Regiment and their lasting legacy.

LS #14208
10/6/2023
RHP