

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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March 7, 2012

The Honorable John McHugh
Secretary
United States Army
The Pentagon
Washington D.C. 20310-0101

Dear Secretary McHugh,

I write you today on behalf of Sergeant Modesto Cartagena. As you know, Sergeant Cartagena served in the U.S. Army's 65th Infantry Regiment and was a veteran of both World War II and the conflict in Korea. Sergeant Cartagena was recognized by the Army with the Silver Star, Bronze Star and the Distinguished Service Cross for his bravery during the Korean conflict. I have studied Sergeant Cartagena's records and it would serve the Army well to review his heroic acts on April 19th, 1951 near Yonchon, South Korea, for which he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, and consider him for the Congressional Medal of Honor.

As you know, the 65th Infantry Regiment was a segregated unit consisting primarily of Puerto Rican Americans who served their country valiantly. The Regiment was stationed in Korea in 1951, and as Sergeant Cartagena's citation for the Distinguished Service Cross outlines, he successfully and single-handedly destroyed five enemy entrenchments and saved the lives of several U.S. soldiers in the process. In addition to the account of the battle, the award states that Sergeant Cartagena exhibited "extraordinary heroism" and "completely selfless devotion to duty."

I understand and appreciate the high threshold for awarding the Congressional Medal of Honor and I do not wish to circumvent the awards process. However, I believe the heroic actions of Sergeant Cartagena during the Korean conflict deserve, at the very least, an in-depth review by the Army, and ultimately consideration for the Congressional Medal of Honor. Unfortunately, Sergeant Cartagena passed away in March 2010. Although he would be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously, there is no question, that his family would honor and appreciate the recognition and the nation would welcome the opportunity to celebrate the life of yet another American hero.

Sincerely,



U.S. Senator Marco Rubio