

# Western New York Hispanic-American Veterans Memorial

---

## Proposal

The *Western New York Hispanic-American Veterans Memorial Initiative (WNYHAVMI)* hereby proposes to erect a monument at the Buffalo and Erie Naval and Military Park, Buffalo, NY.

The WNYHAVMI would like to honor and commemorate the memory and service of all Hispanic-American veterans past, present and future. The project intends to recognize into posterity the sacrifices and significant contributions made by Hispanic American veterans on behalf of our country - in peace as well as war times. The expected ground-breaking date will be November 11, 2011 or 11/11/11.

The monument depicts a lone infantry soldier kneeling in front of the traditional Fallen Hero Memorial consisting of the M16 rifle, combat boots, helmet and dog tags. The statue is life size and cast in bronze. The bronze monument is affixed on an ellipse shaped 3 foot black granite. The granite stone has 22 Flags etched along its side rim representing the 21 Hispanic American countries in our Western Hemisphere and the United States of America. The top of the ellipse will also have a written inscription in tribute to the Gabriel A. Rodríguez American Legion Post No. 1928 and the 65th Infantry Regiment also known as "The Borinqueneers". The ellipse rests on top of another black granite octagonal base foundation with the inscription *In Gratitude To All Hispanic-American Veterans For Their Service* and the emblems of the five branches of the Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard).

The monument will be surrounded by 2200 interlocking engraved pavers donated by private and corporate contributors. The Statue is situated just in front of the USS Sullivan Naval War Ship along the multiple promenades of other veteran memorials (between the Rust Bucket and the Korean monuments) located at the Buffalo and Erie Naval and Military Park. A separate informational panel will also be included containing biographical and informational descriptive narratives with pictures of Gabriel A. Rodríguez, a replica of a 1992 painting depicting the Puerto Rican 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment's bayonet charge against a Chinese division during the Korean War (original version found at Arlington cemetery), and other educational materials, as well as credits to contributors who made the monument possible.

The significance of this monument is that it will be the first ever such monument erected on behalf of Hispanic-American veterans in the Western New York region. Scores of families will be able to come to the memorial and reflect as well as commemorate the participation and sacrifices of past and present Hispanic-American veterans. The families will be able to purchase bricks (pavers) that will be engraved with the name of their loved ones. Proceeds from the sale of those bricks will serve to offset the cost of maintaining the monument. Countless generations of children will be able to come to the memorial and learn about Western New York Hispanic-American veterans and those who served with the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, one of the most decorated outfits comprised in their majority by Hispanic-American veterans from Puerto Rico, from where most Hispanic-Americans in this region originate. The memorial will mark the city's appreciation for the service of veterans belonging to an ethnic group that already makes up the largest minority of citizens in this nation with an ever growing representation in the Western New York region.