

Latinos in Military History



El Soldado stands on the Capitol grounds, memorializing the military contributions of Latinos. Restoring El Soldado pays tribute to ALL Latino Veterans and Servicemembers. Be a part of El Soldado's legacy that began more than 70 years ago.

Donations of \$25 are encouraged, but any amount is appreciated! Donate today at:

www.el-soldado.org

Robert Ruiz, former Chair of the Mexican American Veterans Memorial (MAVM) Beautification and Enhancement Committee, is a California Native and a Vietnam Army Veteran. In 1964, Ruiz received his draft notice and shortly after headed to Ford Ord for basic and advanced infantry training. Ruiz was then stationed for training at Fort Benning, Georgia, followed by Special Forces training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

It was not long after his training that Ruiz deployed to the beach of Quy Nhon, South Vietnam, with the First Cavalry Division. In 1966, Ruiz was wounded in action and transferred to the Letterman Hospital in San Francisco where he spent the next four months rehabilitating his injuries.



Ruiz holding Delta Company dog in Vietnam, 1965. Photo courtesy of Ruiz.

After leaving the military, Ruiz fulfilled his educational aspirations at San Jose State University, graduating with both a Bachelors and Masters degree. With his military career and education accomplished, Ruiz continued the path of public service. In 1992, Ruiz was appointed to serve on the Selective Service Board for South Sacramento County. During his 15 year tenure, he served as a board member, Vice Chairman, and finally as Chairman. Ruiz remained dedicated to his work and was appointed as a member to the MAVM Beautification and Enhancement Committee by Governor Schwarzenegger in November of 2008 and subsequently as Chairman by retired Brigadier General Bradigan, former CalVet Secretary. Some of Ruiz's accomplishments as Chairman were contributing to the architect selection, obtaining a negative Environmental Impact Report, appointing a Memorial historian, lobbying for the appointment of women to the committee, and developing an outreach program for the beautification of the MAVM/El Soldado.

Have a Latino-inspired photo or story? We would love to hear from you! Send it our way to minorityveterans@calvet.ca.gov.