

San Jose Mercury News, September 30, 2007

Letter to the Editor—

My dad, Humberto Herrera, was a WWII combat vet. My Uncle Jorge was a WWII vet, serving stateside. My Uncle Pete is a WWII combat vet, served in the Philippines and survived hand-to-hand combat. My Uncle Lalo is a WWII combat vet, Purple Heart, shot through the chest in Italy. My Uncle Ray is Korean War combat vet. My older brother Esau is a Vietnam-Era vet. I'm a Vietnam-Era vet. I have several nephews who have served, and are currently serving, in Iraq and Afghanistan. That's three generations of service and there are many, many more Mexican-American families that have similar stories. Too few people know that Mexican-Americans have been awarded more Medals of Honor than any other ethnic group (and not that it is a competition, but rather evidence of honorable service). My blood roils when I am reminded that, as Navarrette says, "the war never ends." It's 2007 and Latinos have been in every conflict since this country's founding. Why do we have to work so hard for our Latino youth to see themselves in service of this country?

Joel Ruiz Herrera