

Tony and the Flag
For El Boricua
From Tony (The Marine) Santiago

I want to share with everyone the following, sometimes the best things happen when you least expect them and from people that you have never met. Like the time that the Puerto Rican Government presented me with the Resolution in recognition of my written work. Two days ago I received a package. To my surprise, the Chief of the Maintenance Management, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Fwd.) United States Marine Corps, Cpl . R.P. Lemiszki, sent me a letter, in which he recognizes my ongoing contributions to the military community. Now get this, he also sent an American Flag which was flown over the 2nd Marine Aircraft (Fwd) Headquarters, Marine Air Base, Al Asad, Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. This was really an unexpected honor, don't you think? I'm sending you a copy of the USMC letter and some pictures which I want to share with you and our readers.



**Tony (The Marine) Santiago and granddaughters (l.-r.)
Isabel Santiago and Nina Skrdla-Santiago with the Flag**



Cpl. Robert Lemiszki poses with the Flag before sending to me.



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

2D MARINE AIRCRAFT WING (FORWARD)
AL ASAD AIRBASE
UNIT 78092
FPO AE 09509-8092

IN REPLY REFER TO
4790
MMO
20 MAY 09

From: Maintenance Management Chief, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing Pwd
To: Tony "the Marine" Santiago Sr.

Subj: UNOFFICIAL LETTER OF APPRECIATION

Dear Tony,

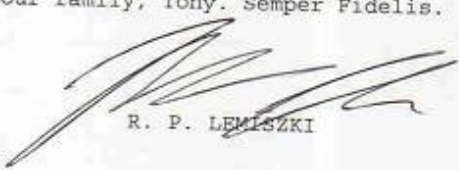
I'm very pleased and honored to be able to send you this package and this letter. The accompanying United States Flag was flown over the 2nd MAW headquarters this past Sunday. It's a small honor, to be sure, but I feel wholeheartedly that you deserve it, and a great deal more.

I've been of the opinion that the war fought in Vietnam has not been appreciated or understood by the American public as a whole. Your contribution in such an unpopular war may have gone unnoticed for some time, but that time had ended. You and your fellow Marines went through a Hell that I have only had the palest taste. You deserved recognition many years ago, and the nation as a whole failed you in that regard. I hope you can forgive us for that, and I intend to make sure that you receive that appreciation now.

I'd also like to recognize your ongoing contributions to the military community. As a writer of history, you immortalize those that have gone on before you. You've done some amazing work, only a fraction of which I have seen. Both on and off of Wikipedia, you write and honor and memorialize those who served our nation well, as well as those who have let us down. I'll also single out your contributions for Puerto Rico, as well as Latinos and Latino Americans as a whole. Truly, you have done great things for a great people.

The attached photographs aren't of a professional quality, but I hope they do bring a smile to your face. The first one is of me preparing to fly your flag, about a minute before my comrades and I marched outside to hoist them in the morning. The second is of your flag aloft on a beautiful Sunday morning. I would have liked to have had a photo taken during the colors-raising ceremony itself, but any Marine within sight or hearing was at the position of attention, so such was not possible.

God bless you and your family, Tony. Semper Fidelis.


R. P. LEMISZKI