

By: Ellis

H.C.R. No. 27

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The Texas Legislative Medal of Honor was established  
2 by the 58th Texas Legislature to honor gallant and intrepid service  
3 by a member of the state military forces of Texas, and through his  
4 courageous actions during battle in World War II, Colonel M. B.  
5 Etheredge of Huntsville distinguished himself as a worthy recipient  
6 of this prestigious honor; and

7 WHEREAS, Raised in East Texas, Col. Etheredge was serving as  
8 superintendent of a small school district in Damon when the United  
9 States entered the war; resigning his position, he enlisted in the  
10 army as a private in 1942; after completing basic training he was  
11 sent to noncommissioned officers' school and, after only eight days  
12 there, to officers' candidate school in Fort Benning, Georgia,  
13 where he graduated on February 5, 1943; and

14 WHEREAS, On the night of March 12-13, 1944, Col. Etheredge  
15 was assistant commander of a combat patrol when it came under heavy  
16 machine-gun fire north of Carano, Italy; disregarding the bullets  
17 flying all about him, he personally led his squad in a successful  
18 assault on the machine gun; when a second machine gun erupted, he  
19 again braved the barrage as he directed his men in laying down fire,  
20 allowing the main part of the patrol to advance against the gun and  
21 silence it; and

22 WHEREAS, Farther along, a third strong point opened heavy  
23 fire; once more, Col. Etheredge moved about aggressively in the  
24 midst of this attack, developing a strong firing line and enabling

1 the main body of the patrol to skirt the house and continue on its  
2 mission; altogether, the patrol killed at least 10 Germans,  
3 captured 12, and knocked out two machine guns, and Col. Etheredge's  
4 remarkable gallantry and leadership in this operation earned for  
5 him a Silver Star; and

6 WHEREAS, Two months later, on May 23, 1944, in Italy, Col.  
7 Etheredge immediately took charge of Company "K," 30th Infantry  
8 Regiment, when the commanding officer and other key personnel were  
9 cut down; deciding to continue the attack, he ignored heavy fire to  
10 move up and down a ditch for 75 yards, reorganizing his company and  
11 bolstering its morale; though wounded in the leg, he then led his  
12 men running and crawling into the face of steady small arms fire for  
13 some 550 yards, rested them for 10 minutes, and then resumed the  
14 assault, advancing another 250 yards, overrunning the objective and  
15 organizing an all-around defensive position; and

16 WHEREAS, Col. Etheredge's actions were instrumental in  
17 securing a vital battalion target, relieving pressure on two flank  
18 companies, and opening a way for a third company to advance; his  
19 critical role in this day's action was rewarded with the appendage  
20 of an oak leaf cluster to his Silver Star; and

21 WHEREAS, Col. Etheredge subsequently commanded Company "K"  
22 in France; there, on August 16, 1944, he once again exposed himself  
23 to gunfire in the course of significantly assisting the American  
24 advance; he was sitting atop a tank destroyer, directing its fire at  
25 German-held buildings 200 yards distant, when he barely escaped a  
26 machine-gun fusillade; and

27 WHEREAS, A platoon flanking the building then fell into

1   disarray and Col. Etheredge dashed across 75 yards of open ground  
2   through more machine-gun fire to reorganize the group; choosing a  
3   route that skirted the barbed wire outside the buildings, he next  
4   led a 50-yard assault that captured 29 enemy soldiers, an anti-tank  
5   gun, a mortar, large quantities of ammunition, and numerous  
6   vehicles; in recognition of his bravery and decisive command, he  
7   received a second oak leaf cluster; and

8         WHEREAS, During the war Col. Etheredge also received two  
9   Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts; he was eventually discharged  
10  with the highest efficiency rating of any officer discharged from  
11  the Fourth Army; this dauntless soldier later served three terms in  
12  the Texas Legislature and taught for 33 years at Sam Houston State  
13  University; and

14        WHEREAS, The Texas Legislative Medal of Honor is the highest  
15  commendation Texans can bestow on members of our state military  
16  forces, and the outstanding valor manifested by Col. Etheredge on  
17  repeated occasions most assuredly merits the award of our state's  
18  supreme military honor; now, therefore, be it

19        RESOLVED, That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas  
20  hereby confer the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor on Colonel M. B.  
21  Etheredge in recognition of his heroic service and express to him  
22  our deepest appreciation on behalf of all his fellow Texans; and, be  
23  it further

24        RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
25  prepared for Col. Etheredge as an expression of highest regard by  
26  the Texas House of Representatives and Senate.