

By: Callegari

H.R. No. 1619

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The family and friends of U.S. Marine Sergeant James
2 Rodney Tijerina of Katy suffered an immeasurable loss with the
3 death of this valiant soldier on February 7, 2007, at the age of 26,
4 as a result of multiple traumatic injuries while a crew chief of a
5 medical evacuation CH-46E helicopter that was shot down by hostile
6 fire while conducting an urgent CASEVAC mission; and

7 WHEREAS, On that fateful morning, a U.S. service member was
8 on a ventilator and required immediate surgery; Sergeant Tijerina's
9 aircraft was in the number one slot and took the urgent CASEVAC
10 mission; the helicopter crew safely delivered the service member
11 and two other patients to the hospital in Balad; on the return trip,
12 the team was asked to pick up a much-needed box of blood from Balad
13 and deliver it to a field hospital near Fallujah; en route to
14 Fallujah, the aircraft was shot down by a missile with all seven
15 crew members on board; Sergeant Tijerina was flying with some of the
16 best aircrew in the squadron, including Captain Jennifer Harris,
17 Sergeant Travis Pfister, and First Lieutenant Jared Landaker; and

18 WHEREAS, Sergeant Tijerina was assigned to Marine Medium
19 Helicopter Squadron 364, "The Purple Foxes," Marine Aircraft Group
20 39, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, I Marine Expeditionary Force, at Camp
21 Pendleton, California; he was on his second tour of duty in Iraq; he
22 reenlisted with the U.S. Marine Corps and, as noted by Lieutenant
23 Colonel S. C. Killeen, his commanding officer, "James was excited
24 about his orders to Hawaii. He was looking forward to spending time

1 with his wife, Clowean, and having a job that would not take him
2 away from her on deployment. He enjoyed flying and was excited
3 about his future, but he remained focused on the noblest mission in
4 Marine aviation, casualty evacuation. He knew that going to the aid
5 of our wounded Marines was the highest calling and he always
6 answered that call."; and

7 WHEREAS, Born on April 13, 1980, to Peter Tijerina and Lilia
8 Escamilla Carr, James Tijerina was a graduate of Katy High School,
9 where he played tight end for the 1997 state championship football
10 team; in 2002, he fulfilled a long-held desire to serve his country,
11 and it was while stationed at Camp Pendleton that he met Clowean
12 Lotoy, whom he married in the summer of 2006; and

13 WHEREAS, Sergeant Tijerina cared deeply for animals and
14 nature, and especially enjoyed visits to Yosemite National Park; a
15 natural athlete as well, he won first place among 250 other soldiers
16 in a 5K race at Camp Taqaddum just weeks before his passing; his
17 family and friends take comfort in the many writings he left behind;
18 in his last poem, titled "Faithful American," he describes his
19 reverence for his country:

20 "I was born inside this country
21 That gives my dreams . . . a chance to be
22 I respect all that it stands for
23 The comforting embrace it gives . . . to you and me
24 I will never take for granted,
25 I will gladly die for . . .
26 A nation that means freedom
27 I could ask for nothing more

1 America isn't perfect
2 She's had her problems in the past
3 But her intentions are for the better
4 Her resolve will always last
5 Not everyone feels . . . the same exact way
6 Sometimes there are pessimists
7 With negative words to say
8 They don't believe in America,
9 They've forgotten her history
10 That has gotten us this far,
11 Turning their back on faith
12 Disregarding who they are
13 We must believe in this nation
14 We must trust its destiny
15 She is guided under God

16 She will never be held captive, She will always be free"; and

17 WHEREAS, Highly decorated for his courageous service,
18 Sergeant Tijerina was awarded the Good Conduct Medal, the
19 Sea Service Deployment Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global
20 War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism
21 Expeditionary Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Purple
22 Heart, and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal; and

23 WHEREAS, Our state and nation are fortunate to have young men
24 and women whose love for their country inspires them to military
25 service, yet the tragic death of Sergeant James Tijerina is a
26 sobering reminder of the cost of war; Americans owe a profound debt
27 to our nation's servicemen and servicewomen, whose valiant efforts

1 and enormous sacrifices are deserving of their fellow citizens'
2 deepest respect and gratitude; and

3 WHEREAS, Although the loss of Sergeant James Tijerina has
4 left a void in the lives of all who knew and loved him, memories of
5 his passion for life, nature, and his kind and caring ways will
6 forever endure in their hearts; now, therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 80th Texas
8 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Sergeant James
9 Tijerina and extend sincere sympathy to the members of his family:
10 to his wife, Clowean Lotoy Tijerina; to his mother and stepfather,
11 Lilia and William R. Carr; to his father, Peter Tijerina; to his
12 sister, Lynn Ann Shaw; to his brothers, Peter Tijerina II, William
13 R. Carr, Jr., and Daniel Forrest Carr; to his grandmother, Tomasa V.
14 Tijerina; and to his other relatives and many friends; and, be it
15 further

16 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
17 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
18 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of U.S. Marine
19 Sergeant James Rodney Tijerina.