

By: Pena

H.R. No. 1427

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The Rio Grande Valley has given legions of
2 courageous men and women to the United States armed forces, and one
3 of the most heroic was Pedro Cano, of Hidalgo County; and

4 WHEREAS, Born to Nicholasa Gonzalez Cano and Secundino Cano
5 on July 7, 1920, in Nuevo Leon in Mexico, Mr. Cano moved with his
6 family to Texas when he was just two months old; with the exception
7 of the time he spent in the U.S. Army, he lived the rest of his life
8 on the Texas side of the Rio Grande, where he worked as an
9 agricultural laborer and farmer; and

10 WHEREAS, When he was called up by the army during World War
11 II, Mr. Cano, a slight man with limited knowledge of English, had
12 little wish to leave the Valley; he reported for duty nevertheless
13 and subsequently deployed to the European theater; in the fall of
14 1944 he was with the 4th Infantry Division when that force, after
15 helping to liberate Paris, launched an attack on the Siegfried
16 Line; and

17 WHEREAS, In the course of that push against German defenses,
18 Private Cano fought in the months-long battle of Hurtgen Forest,
19 and it was during that struggle that he etched his name in the
20 annals of military valor; he was advancing with his company near
21 Schevenhutte, Germany, in December 1944 when the unit came under
22 withering fire from German machine guns; with his comrades pinned
23 down, Private Cano worked his way forward alone, through a hail of
24 fire and over more than 100 yards of heavily mined terrain, until he

1 was within 30 feet of the nearest German emplacement; firing one
2 round with his hand-held rocket launcher, he destroyed the position
3 and killed its two gunners and five supporting riflemen; he then
4 moved on toward a second emplacement, which he attacked with his
5 rifle and hand grenades, killing several more soldiers; and

6 WHEREAS, With another American company nearby similarly
7 immobilized, Private Cano crept to within 15 yards of a third
8 emplacement, killed its two gunners with a rocket, and then
9 destroyed yet another emplacement and killed its gunners, enabling
10 that company to also advance; and

11 WHEREAS, The next day, the Americans once more encountered
12 heavy German resistance, and Private Cano again moved forward alone
13 with his bazooka; crossing open, fire-swept ground, he succeeded in
14 suppressing three more machine-gun positions and killing their
15 gunners, bringing to nearly 30 the number of German soldiers he
16 killed during that two-day period; and

17 WHEREAS, Sometime later, while on patrol, Private Cano and
18 his platoon were surprised by German soldiers, who inflicted heavy
19 casualties; Private Cano lay motionless on the ground until the
20 assailants closed in, then tossed a grenade into their midst,
21 wounding or killing all of them; and

22 WHEREAS, It was in this engagement, or shortly thereafter,
23 that Pedro Cano sustained injuries that left him permanently
24 disabled; in addition to a Purple Heart, he was awarded two Silver
25 Stars and a Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's
26 second-highest award for gallantry; of the more than 16,100,000
27 individuals who served in the U.S. armed forces during World War II,

1 only 5,059 were recognized with the DSC; and

2 WHEREAS, Mr. Cano's most illustrious medal arrived by mail at
3 his home near Edinburg, and the unassuming veteran put it away in a
4 closet; area citizens, however, learned of the award and were
5 indignant at the military's seeming lack of respect; they secured
6 the cooperation of the U.S. War Department in planning a public
7 celebration, much to Mr. Cano's consternation, and April 26, 1946,
8 was designated Pedro Cano Day; and

9 WHEREAS, Edinburg schools and most businesses closed for the
10 occasion and some 4,000 local residents turned out to witness a
11 parade, followed by a ceremony at the courthouse square; there,
12 General Jonathan M. Wainwright, commander of the 4th Army,
13 presented the DSC to Mr. Cano in the presence of Rear Admiral Joseph
14 James Clark of the U.S. Navy, General J. Trinidad Rodriguez and
15 Colonel J. Tiburcio Garza Zamorra of the Mexican Army, Texas State
16 Senator Rogers Kelley, Valley military heroes William G. Harrell,
17 Luis N. Gonzalez, and Jose M. Lopez, U.S. and Mexican consular
18 officials, Mr. Cano's wife and mother, and a throng of
19 well-wishers; in his remarks, General Wainwright declared that he
20 believed Pedro Cano actually deserved the highest recognition of
21 all, the medal of honor; and

22 WHEREAS, The day's festivities also included a barbecue
23 funded by public subscription, a luncheon and reception for Mr.
24 Cano and special guests, and a dinner and dance hosted by the
25 Edinburg Civic Association; in addition, the state commander of the
26 American Legion conferred on Mr. Cano a life membership in that
27 organization; and

1 WHEREAS, In May 1946, Mr. Cano realized a longtime aspiration
2 when he received his American citizenship; though disabled, he also
3 longed to take up farming again, and the state stepped in to provide
4 him with 40 acres, a house, a truck, and farm equipment; and

5 WHEREAS, Pedro Cano died on June 24, 1952, as a result of a
6 traffic accident; survived by his wife, Herminia Garza Cano, his
7 daughters, Dominga and Maria, and his son, Susano, the 31-year-old
8 veteran was buried with military honors in Edinburg, where today a
9 street and an elementary school both bear his name; and

10 WHEREAS, The heroism exhibited by Pedro Cano is a testament
11 to the extraordinary capacity of the human spirit for selfless
12 action in the face of near-certain death, and his fellow citizens
13 owe this quiet Texan a lasting debt of gratitude and remembrance;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Representative Aaron Peña has justly recognized
16 Pedro Cano by authoring this resolution in his behalf during the
17 regular session of the 81st Texas Legislature; now, therefore, be
18 it

19 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas
20 Legislature hereby commemorate the courageous service of Pedro Cano
21 and recognize April 26, 2009, as Pedro Cano Day in Edinburg; and, be
22 it further

23 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
24 prepared for Mr. Cano's family as an expression of high regard by
25 the Texas House of Representatives.