



1 officials in Denver, Colorado, gathered a group of men and held them  
2 until their draft status could be verified; and

3 WHEREAS, Included in this group, Mr. Serna chose not to wait  
4 for such verification and instead volunteered for service in the  
5 United States Army; after only three weeks of training, 20-year-old  
6 Private Serna was shipped to England, where he was assigned to the  
7 355th Infantry of the 89th Division, a unit that was to see action  
8 in some of the most arduous campaigns of the war; and

9 WHEREAS, By the time the unit arrived in France, Private  
10 Serna's status as a noncitizen had come to light, and he was  
11 consequently offered a discharge from the army; given the  
12 opportunity to return home, Private Serna refused the discharge,  
13 choosing to stay with his unit as it began its advance toward the  
14 Meuse River and Argonne Forest in northeastern France; and

15 WHEREAS, At Saint Mihiel, Private Serna's unit was moving  
16 through thick brush when a German machine gunner opened fire,  
17 killing 12 American soldiers; with his lieutenant's permission,  
18 Private Serna, a scout, continued forward, dodging machine-gun fire  
19 until he reached the gunner's left flank; and

20 WHEREAS, Having come through a hail of bullets unscathed,  
21 despite being hit twice in the helmet, Private Serna got close  
22 enough to lob four grenades into the machine-gun nest, killing six  
23 enemy soldiers and taking into custody the eight survivors, who  
24 quickly surrendered to the lone American soldier; and

25 WHEREAS, This encounter was followed shortly by an even more  
26 astounding feat when, during his second scouting mission in the  
27 Meuse-Argonne campaign, Private Serna captured 24 German soldiers

1 with his Enfield rifle and grenades, an episode that began when he  
2 spied a sniper walking on a trench bank; and

3       WHEREAS, Although the sniper was about 200 yards away,  
4 Private Serna shot and wounded him, then followed the wounded  
5 German's trail into a trench, where he discovered several more  
6 enemy soldiers; opening fire, Private Serna killed three of the  
7 enemy and scattered the others in that initial burst; and

8       WHEREAS, Frequently changing positions, Private Serna fooled  
9 the enemy into thinking they were under fire from several  
10 Americans, keeping up the ruse until he was close enough to lob  
11 three grenades into the German dugout; in about 45 minutes of  
12 furious action, Private Serna managed to kill 26 German soldiers  
13 and capture another 24, whom he held captive by himself until his  
14 unit arrived; and

15       WHEREAS, Enduring several months of combat action largely  
16 unharmed, Private Serna was shot in both legs by a sniper four days  
17 before the Armistice; while he was convalescing in an army hospital  
18 in France, General John J. Pershing, commander-in-chief of the  
19 American Expeditionary Forces, decorated Private Serna with the  
20 Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest American combat  
21 medal; and

22       WHEREAS, Private Serna also received two French Croix de  
23 Guerre with Palm medals, the French Medaille Militaire, the French  
24 Commemorative Medal, the Italian Cross of Merit, the World War I  
25 Victory Medal, the Victory Medal with three campaign bars, the  
26 Saint Mihiel Medal, the Verdun Medal, and two Purple Hearts; and

27       WHEREAS, Discharged from the army in 1919, Marcelino Serna

1 settled in El Paso, where he became a United States citizen, entered  
2 the civil service, and lived out his retirement years until his  
3 death in 1992; although he lived the most ordinary of lives after  
4 the war, Mr. Serna was, for a brief moment in time, an extraordinary  
5 hero whose remarkable feats of bravery under fire elevated him into  
6 the pantheon of American heroes; and

7         WHEREAS, In 1993, Texas Congressman Ronald D. Coleman  
8 introduced a measure in the 103rd Congress to waive certain  
9 statutory time limits on awarding the Medal of Honor and thus bestow  
10 on Marcelino Serna the proper recognition he so richly deserves;  
11 unfortunately, the measure did not receive a proper hearing,  
12 thereby denying the legacy of Mr. Serna its proper place in history;  
13 now, therefore, be it

14         RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas  
15 hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to  
16 reopen consideration of this case to posthumously award the Medal  
17 of Honor to World War I hero Marcelino Serna; and, be it further

18         RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official  
19 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to  
20 the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the  
21 senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the  
22 Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this  
23 resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a  
24 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.