

By: Gonzales of Hidalgo

H.R. No. 1927

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, April 21, 2011, marked the 22nd anniversary of the
2 death of United States Army Colonel James Nicholas Rowe, and many
3 residents of McAllen paused on that day to somberly reflect on his
4 heroism and remarkable achievements; and

5 WHEREAS, The son of Lee and Florence Rowe, "Nikki" Rowe was
6 born in McAllen on February 8, 1938; he graduated from McAllen High
7 School and the United States Military Academy at West Point; in
8 1963, three months after he was posted to South Vietnam as a Special
9 Forces advisor, he was taken prisoner in a firefight; he was held
10 for five years under horrific conditions but remained strong and
11 defiant, earning the nickname "Mr. Trouble" from his captors; on
12 December 31, 1968, he became one of only 34 American prisoners of
13 war to escape from the Viet Cong; and

14 WHEREAS, Colonel Rowe applied for voluntary recall to active
15 duty when he returned home and taught a POW-MIA planning and
16 training program at Fort Bragg in North Carolina; in 1971, he
17 published a bestselling, critically acclaimed account of his
18 ordeal, *Five Years to Freedom*; he left the military in 1974, and he
19 authored several other books before rejoining the army as a
20 lieutenant colonel in 1981 to head its Green Beret training program
21 at Fort Bragg; guided by his POW experiences, he developed and ran
22 the Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape program, known as
23 SERE, which is used today by other branches of the military as well;
24 and

1 WHEREAS, From 1985 until 1987, Colonel Rowe commanded Fort
2 Bragg's First Special Warfare Training Battalion; he was then
3 appointed chief of the Army Division at the Joint United States
4 Military Advisory Group headquarters in Quezon City, Philippines;
5 on April 21, 1989, he was killed in an ambush on his way to work by
6 members of the New Peoples' Army, a Communist rebel group; and

7 WHEREAS, This courageous Texan was the recipient of numerous
8 decorations, among them the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit, two
9 Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts; he received myriad nonmilitary
10 awards as well, including the American Patriot Award and George
11 Washington Honor Medal from the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge
12 and the Outstanding Young Man of America award; in McAllen, Second
13 Street and VFW Post No. 2369 were renamed in his honor, and James
14 Nikki Rowe High School also stands as a testament to the community's
15 enduring pride in his accomplishments; and

16 WHEREAS, Nikki Rowe's patriotism, valor, and iron
17 determination remain a source of inspiration to all Americans, and
18 through his leadership in creating the SERE program, he left an
19 extraordinary legacy that continues to benefit members of our
20 nation's military around the world; now, therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
22 Legislature hereby honor the life of Colonel James "Nikki" Rowe and
23 commemorate the 22nd anniversary of his death.