

By: Stephenson

H.R. No. 601

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The family of U.S. Air Force Master Sergeant James
2 Calfee of Newgulf are gathered today in solemn remembrance of this
3 courageous Texan, who, with 11 of his comrades, gave his life for
4 his country on March 11, 1968, in the Vietnam War, and whose heroism
5 has been posthumously recognized with the Silver Star; and

6 WHEREAS, James Henry Calfee was born in Newgulf in 1932; in
7 November 1967, he was one of a select number of highly skilled
8 members of the 1st Combat Evaluation Group (CEVG) who were
9 assigned, under civilian cover, to staff a radar installation on a
10 mountaintop in Laos that was known as Lima Site 85; this top secret
11 facility enabled the air force to conduct all-weather bombing raids
12 on North Vietnam; and

13 WHEREAS, Although Master Sergeant Calfee was an expert in the
14 technology used at the site, he was originally not slated to go on
15 the mission because of a medical condition; he insisted so strongly
16 on participating, however, that his commanding officer gave him a
17 waiver; and

18 WHEREAS, The installation at Lima Site 85 soon came under
19 attack by the North Vietnamese Army, which advanced close enough to
20 launch ground assaults on the facility by late January 1968; though
21 the members of the CEVG group were technicians and not combat
22 troops, they defended themselves bravely; they had been supplied
23 with M-16 rifles after their arrival, and Master Sergeant Calfee
24 and Chief Master Sergeant Richard L. Etchberger, who had weapons

1 experience, trained the other men in the rifle's use; and

2 WHEREAS, Early on the morning of March 11, 1968, NVA
3 commandos attacked the site, and during the desperate struggle,
4 Master Sergeant Calfee was gravely wounded; in spite of his
5 injuries, he continued to engage the enemy, and by doing so, he
6 enabled some of the other men to reach safety; in the end, 12 of the
7 Americans died and 4 escaped by helicopter; and

8 WHEREAS, In addition to Master Sergeant Calfee, those who
9 fell that day were Lieutenant Colonel Bill Blanton, Chief Master
10 Sergeant Etchberger, Technical Sergeants Willis Hall, Melvin
11 Holland, Patrick Shannon, Donald Springsteadah, and Herbert Kirk,
12 and Staff Sergeants Henry Gish, Don Worley, David Price, and James
13 Davis; while the remains of three of these men were returned to the
14 United States, Master Sergeant Calfee and eight others who died
15 were eventually listed as "killed in action/body not recovered";
16 those who perished at Lima Site 85 were each posthumously awarded
17 the Bronze Star with Valor, and in 2009, Chief Master Sergeant
18 Etchberger was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor; and

19 WHEREAS, When more details of this secret operation came to
20 light, Master Sergeant Calfee's medal was upgraded to the Silver
21 Star, which was presented to his family at Barksdale Air Force Base
22 in Louisiana on October 15, 2012; the sergeant's four sisters,
23 Rosalie Bacica, Frances Arrington, Carol Turner, and Verna Yeamans,
24 as well as his nieces, Debra Morris and Julia Barta, continue to
25 honor his memory and to tell the inspiring story of the men of Lima
26 Site 85; now, therefore, be it

27 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas

H.R. No. 601

1 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Master Sergeant James
2 Calfee and commemorate his posthumous receipt of the Silver Star;
3 and, be it further

4 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
5 prepared for his family as an expression of deep appreciation for
6 his valiant service in the Vietnam War.