

By: King of Zavala

H.R. No. 1843

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The SSgt. Willie De Leon Civic Center in Uvalde is  
2 being rededicated on May 27, 2013, providing a fitting opportunity  
3 to celebrate the memory of one of that community's most decorated  
4 veterans; and

5           WHEREAS, The son of a Terlingua miner, Guillermo De Leon was  
6 born in Big Bend on June 25, 1919, and grew up in Uvalde; he gained  
7 his strong work ethic at an early age, learning the stonemason and  
8 bricklayer's trade on Civilian Conservation Corps projects in  
9 Arizona and Texas during the Great Depression; and

10           WHEREAS, Mr. De Leon was inducted into the U.S. Army in 1940,  
11 and during World War II he served in the 36th Infantry Division in  
12 North Africa, Italy, Austria, Germany, and France; early in the  
13 war, Mr. De Leon made the rank of staff sergeant, becoming one of  
14 the first Mexican American noncommissioned officers and one of the  
15 first to command Anglo troops; and

16           WHEREAS, Staff Sergeant De Leon led a squad of 12 men in the  
17 first wave of the amphibious landing at Salerno, Italy, in  
18 September 1943, wading through a hail of tracer bullets and the  
19 bodies of fallen comrades; the following year, he was a member of  
20 Company E of the 141st Infantry Regiment, the all-Mexican American  
21 unit that led the attack at the crossing of the Rapido River; in  
22 that infamous assault, 110 men started across the river, and Staff  
23 Sergeant De Leon was one of only 26 men who survived; and

24           WHEREAS, Later in the war, Staff Sergeant De Leon supervised

1 the construction of a prisoner-of-war camp and served as its  
2 warden; he mustered out at Fort Sam Houston on July 7, 1945, having  
3 earned the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart with one  
4 cluster, the American Defense Service Medal, the American Campaign  
5 Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with four battle stars,  
6 and the World War II Victory Medal; and

7 WHEREAS, Mr. De Leon returned to Uvalde, where he worked for  
8 many years in construction and built a house for himself and his  
9 family on Modesta Street; he died on August 23, 1993, and was buried  
10 with full military honors in Hillcrest Cemetery, near the final  
11 resting place of his son, who was killed in Vietnam in 1968; and

12 WHEREAS, The civic center of Uvalde was subsequently named in  
13 honor of this brave American soldier, and the occasion of the  
14 center's renovation and rededication is an appropriate time to  
15 pause and reflect on his courage, dedication, and patriotism; now,  
16 therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas  
18 Legislature hereby commemorate the rededication of the  
19 SSgt. Willie De Leon Civic Center and pay tribute to the life of  
20 Guillermo De Leon.