

By: Stephenson

H.R. No. 96

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, U.S. Army Master Sergeant Mike C. Peña of Newgulf  
2 gave his life to save his fellow soldiers during the Korean War, and  
3 his heroism was posthumously recognized with the bestowal of a  
4 Medal of Honor at a White House ceremony on March 18, 2014; and

5           WHEREAS, Born on November 6, 1924, Mike Peña was the son of  
6 Mexican immigrants Miguel and Maria Peña; in 1940, two months shy of  
7 his 16th birthday, he enlisted in the army in Houston after  
8 misrepresenting his age to recruiters; he was assigned to the 5th  
9 Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, and received training at  
10 Fort Clark in Brackettville and Fort Bliss in El Paso; just a year  
11 after his induction into the service, the Japanese surprise attack  
12 on Pearl Harbor precipitated the United States' entry into World  
13 War II; and

14           WHEREAS, Deployed to the Pacific theater in 1943, Sergeant  
15 Peña fought to liberate the Philippines from Japanese forces and  
16 later took part in the occupation of Japan with members of his  
17 division; he received an honorable discharge on October 3, 1945,  
18 and reenlisted the same day; a month earlier, on September 5, he had  
19 married his sweetheart, the former Aurora Lola Urenda, and their  
20 life together would be enriched by the birth of two sons, Michael  
21 David and Frederick William; for a time, the family resided at Camp  
22 McGill in occupied Japan before moving to Camp Carson in Colorado;  
23 and

24           WHEREAS, In late June 1950, the U.S. military was again

1 called upon when soldiers from communist North Korea invaded South  
2 Korea; Sergeant Peña volunteered to return to action, rejoining the  
3 5th Cavalry Regiment, and participated in an amphibious landing at  
4 P'ohang-dong, Korea, in July 1950; the 1st Cavalry Division was  
5 ordered to defend a 35-mile sector along the Nakdong River, which  
6 became the scene of intense fighting as enemy combatants pushed  
7 from the north; and

8         WHEREAS, On September 4, 1950, Sergeant Peña and his platoon  
9 were posted near Waegwan, when a North Korean Army battalion  
10 emerged only yards away, having advanced under the shroud of  
11 darkness and mist; the platoon opened fire but was caught off-guard  
12 by the attack and was forced to withdraw; Sergeant Peña swiftly  
13 rallied his troops and led them in a counterattack that succeeded in  
14 regaining their lost ground; and

15         WHEREAS, Sergeant Peña and his men then established a  
16 defensive perimeter and attempted to repel the North Koreans'  
17 repeated assaults, but the enemy enjoyed an overwhelming numerical  
18 advantage; when the platoon's ammunition supply began to dwindle,  
19 Sergeant Peña commanded his men to fall back and seized a machine  
20 gun to provide cover for the retreating troops; making a heroic  
21 stand, he held back the enemy singlehandedly until the early  
22 morning hours, when his position was overrun and he was fatally  
23 wounded; he died at the age of 25, on the date of his fifth wedding  
24 anniversary; and

25         WHEREAS, The outstanding service that Sergeant Peña rendered  
26 over the course of his military career brought him numerous  
27 decorations and awards, including the Distinguished Service Cross,

1 which was conferred posthumously, the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple  
2 Heart with two oak leaf clusters, and the Army Good Conduct Medal  
3 with bronze clasp and two loops; Sergeant Peña was buried with full  
4 military honors at Cedarvale Cemetery in Bay City; and

5 WHEREAS, For his extraordinary gallantry and immeasurable  
6 sacrifice, Americans owe Master Sergeant Mike C. Peña a debt that  
7 the passage of time can never diminish; his actions represent the  
8 proudest tradition of service to country, and he is indeed  
9 deserving of our nation's supreme award for valor; now, therefore,  
10 be it

11 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 84th Texas  
12 Legislature hereby commemorate the posthumous presentation of the  
13 Medal of Honor to Master Sergeant Mike C. Peña; and, be it further

14 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
15 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
16 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Master  
17 Sergeant Mike C. Peña.