

By: Guillen

H.R. No. 2416

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, Family and friends will forever treasure their  
2 memories of Gregorio C. Barrera of Rio Grande City, who died on  
3 April 16, 2015, at the age of 98; and

4           WHEREAS, Born in Rio Grande City on March 12, 1917, to Antonio  
5 and Genoveva Barrera, Gregorio Barrera was a proud veteran of the  
6 U.S. Army who survived one of the most harrowing episodes in World  
7 War II, the Bataan Death March; and

8           WHEREAS, Mr. Barrera volunteered for the army in 1941, and he  
9 was already serving in the Philippines when the Japanese attacked  
10 Pearl Harbor; in April 1942, he was one of 76,000 American and  
11 Filipino soldiers who had no choice but to surrender to the Japanese  
12 Army at Bataan; the prisoners were forced to march 70 miles in six  
13 days through brutal heat with little food or water, and  
14 approximately 10,000 of them died of disease or were killed by their  
15 captors; the stronger of the survivors, including Mr. Barrera, were  
16 shipped to a POW camp in Osaka, Japan, where many more perished  
17 because of forced labor, starvation, and the denial of medical  
18 care; and

19           WHEREAS, Relying upon his strong religious faith and his  
20 indomitable will, Mr. Barrera survived until Japan was defeated and  
21 the camp was liberated in 1945; he recuperated at military  
22 hospitals in the Philippines and San Antonio before returning to  
23 civilian life in Rio Grande City, where for many years he shared the  
24 details of his ordeal with only a few people; and

1           WHEREAS, Mr. Barrera was joined in matrimony to Teresa  
2 Hernandez in 1949, and they enjoyed their lives together until her  
3 death in January 2015; he was the father of five children, Gregorio,  
4 Sylvia, and Ruben, as well as Juan Jose and Irma, who preceded him  
5 in death; later in life, he was blessed with 13 grandchildren, 17  
6 great-grandchildren, and a great-great-grandchild; and

7           WHEREAS, After working as a janitor for a time, Mr. Barrera  
8 joined the U.S. Postal Service in 1957, and he served as a postal  
9 carrier until his retirement; he was a member of the Immaculate  
10 Conception Catholic Church and the Rio Grande City chapter of the  
11 Knights of Columbus; and

12           WHEREAS, In 1988, Mr. Barrera's wartime sacrifice was  
13 recognized when the City of Rio Grande named a plaza in his honor,  
14 and in 2013, the plaza was renovated and rededicated in his honor;  
15 and

16           WHEREAS, A loving husband, a devoted father, and an American  
17 hero, Gregorio Barrera survived the darkest trials of war and came  
18 home to create a rich and fulfilling life for himself and his family  
19 and to inspire others with his bravery and determination; now,  
20 therefore, be it

21           RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 84th Texas  
22 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Gregorio C. Barrera  
23 and extend sincere condolences to the members of his family: to his  
24 children, Gregorio Barrera Jr. and his wife, Cynthia, Sylvia De La  
25 Garza and her husband, Eduardo, and Ruben Barrera and his wife,  
26 Silvestra; to his 13 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, and 1  
27 great-great-grandchild; and to his other relatives and friends;

1 and, be it further

2           RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
3 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
4 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Gregorio C.  
5 Barrera.