

By: Campbell

S.C.R. No. 44

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The Texas Legislative Medal of Honor was established
2 to recognize gallant and intrepid service by a member of the state
3 or federal military forces, and Cleto L. Rodriguez proved himself a
4 deserving recipient of this prestigious award; and

5 WHEREAS, Born in San Marcos on April 26, 1923, Cleto
6 Rodriguez lost both his parents when he was nine, and he moved to
7 San Antonio to live with relatives; he joined the United States Army
8 in 1944, becoming a private in Company B of the 148th Infantry; and

9 WHEREAS, On February 9, 1945, during the battle for Manila in
10 the Philippines, Private Rodriguez and his unit were advancing on
11 the heavily defended Paco Railroad Station when they were pinned
12 down by intense enemy fire; at that point, Private Rodriguez and
13 Private First Class John Reese took the initiative to charge the
14 enemy position; the two men reached a house 60 yards from the
15 Japanese emplacements, and from that location, under the gaze of
16 enemy gunners, they killed 35 combatants; and

17 WHEREAS, On moving closer to their objective, the pair
18 spotted Japanese reinforcements moving toward the station;
19 Privates Rodriguez and Reese killed more than 40 of the group, which
20 discouraged further attempts to reinforce the Japanese defenses;
21 Private Reese then provided covering fire as Private Rodriguez ran
22 forward and lobbed five grenades into the station doorway,
23 destroying a 20mm gun and a heavy machine gun and eliminating their
24 crews; as the pair withdrew to their own lines, Private Reese was

1 mortally wounded; and

2 WHEREAS, The bold actions of Privates Rodriguez and Reese
3 threw Japanese defenses at the station into disarray and made
4 possible the subsequent seizure of the stronghold; two days later,
5 Private Rodriguez again enabled his comrades to move forward when
6 he singlehandedly killed six more enemy soldiers and took out
7 another 20mm gun; for having materially aided the advance of U.S.
8 troops in Manila, he was awarded the Medal of Honor; and

9 WHEREAS, Upon his return to San Antonio, Cleto Rodriguez was
10 presented with the key to the city; he worked as a representative
11 for the Veterans Administration and then served in the U.S. Air
12 Force from 1952 to 1954 and in the army from 1955 to 1970, rising to
13 the rank of master sergeant before his retirement; over the years,
14 he also served his community as a member of the League of United
15 Latin American Citizens; his boyhood elementary school was renamed
16 in his honor in 1975; and

17 WHEREAS, Married to Flora Muniz in November 1945, Cleto
18 Rodriguez became the proud father of four children; he passed away
19 on December 7, 1990, and was buried at Fort Sam Houston National
20 Cemetery; the following year, a section of U.S. Route 90 in San
21 Antonio was named after him; the city has two murals featuring his
22 likeness, at the Cassiano Homes housing project and at the San
23 Antonio Central Library; and

24 WHEREAS, Cleto Rodriguez repeatedly risked his life to
25 complete his mission and save the lives of his fellow soldiers, and
26 for his remarkable heroism, he is most assuredly deserving of this
27 state's supreme military award; now, therefore, be it

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1 RESOLVED, That the 84th Legislature of the State of Texas
2 hereby direct the governor of the State of Texas to posthumously
3 award the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor to Cleto L. Rodriguez in
4 recognition of his valiant service during World War II.