

By: Rodríguez

S.C.R. No. 46

1 SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The Texas Legislative Medal of Honor was established
3 to recognize gallant and intrepid service by a member of the state
4 or federal military forces, and United States Army Private
5 Marcelino Serna proved himself a deserving recipient of this
6 prestigious honor with his heroic actions during World War I; and

7 WHEREAS, Born in Chihuahua, Mexico, in 1896, Mr. Serna came
8 to the United States as a young man and spent time in Texas, Kansas,
9 and Colorado; after the United States entered World War I in 1917,
10 he enlisted in the United States Army at the age of 20, and after
11 only three weeks of training, he was shipped overseas with the 355th
12 Infantry, 89th Division; when his superior officers in France
13 learned that he was not a United States citizen, they gave him the
14 opportunity to return home, but Private Serna chose to stay and
15 fight; and

16 WHEREAS, Private Serna quickly established himself as a
17 remarkable soldier, and on at least two occasions, he demonstrated
18 exceptional resourcefulness and courage; during an engagement near
19 the French town of Saint Mihiel, 12 members of his unit were hit by
20 fire from an enemy machine gun, and Private Serna obtained
21 permission from his lieutenant to scout out the gun emplacement on
22 his own; moving through heavy fire, and surviving two rounds that
23 were deflected by his helmet, he tossed four hand grenades into the
24 machine gun nest, killing six of the enemy; he then took the eight

1 survivors captive; and

2 WHEREAS, Shortly thereafter, during the Meuse-Argonne
3 campaign, Private Serna embarked on a second lone scouting mission;
4 he began by wounding a German sniper with a shot from 200 yards,
5 then followed the injured man into a trench; firing and hurling
6 grenades in all directions to make it seem as if he were part of a
7 larger force, he shot three German soldiers immediately, then
8 attacked an enemy dugout, felling 26 more and capturing 24; he
9 single-handedly held the prisoners at gunpoint until other members
10 of his unit arrived; and

11 WHEREAS, Private Serna continued to serve in combat until the
12 end of the war, receiving a wound in each leg, and while he was
13 recovering in a French hospital, he was presented with the
14 Distinguished Service Cross from the American commander in France,
15 General John J. Pershing; he also earned the World War I Victory
16 Medal with five stars, the Victory Medal with three campaign bars,
17 the Saint Mihiel Medal, the Verdun Medal, and two Purple Hearts; he
18 was further decorated by the governments of France, Italy, and the
19 United Kingdom, receiving two French Croix de Guerre with Palm
20 Medals, the French Medaille Militaire, the French Commemorative
21 Medal, the British Medal of Honor, and the Italian Cross of Merit;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, After returning to the United States, Mr. Serna
24 became a United States citizen in 1924 and settled in El Paso, where
25 he lived until his death in 1992; he was the most decorated Texas
26 veteran of World War I, winning every major military award short of
27 the Congressional Medal of Honor, and petitions have been put forth

1 on several occasions to grant him that commendation as well; and

2 WHEREAS, Marcelino Serna's courageous battlefield actions
3 during World War I have been recognized with a host of illustrious
4 commendations, and it is indeed appropriate that he be honored with
5 the highest military award granted by the state in which he made his
6 home; now, therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, That the 84th Legislature of the State of Texas
8 hereby direct the governor of the State of Texas to posthumously
9 award the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor to Marcelino Serna in
10 recognition of his valiant efforts during World War I.