

By: Rodríguez

S.C.R. No. 46

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 U.S. Army Private Marcelino Serna  
4 proved himself a deserving recipient of this prestigious honor with  
5 his heroic actions during World War I; and

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

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

24           WHEREAS, Shortly thereafter, during the Meuse-Argonne

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

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

21         WHEREAS, After returning to the United States, Mr. Serna  
22 became a U.S. citizen in 1924 and settled in El Paso, where he lived  
23 until his death in 1992; he was the most decorated Texas veteran of  
24 World War I, winning every major military award short of the  
25 Congressional Medal of Honor, and petitions have been put forth on  
26 several occasions to grant him that commendation as well; and

27         WHEREAS, Marcelino Serna's courageous battlefield actions

1 during World War I have been recognized with a host of illustrious  
2 commendations, and it is indeed appropriate that he be honored with  
3 the highest military award granted by the state in which he made his  
4 home; now, therefore, be it

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