

By: Dean

H.C.R. No. 122

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 Master Sergeant Travis E.
4 Watkins proved himself a deserving recipient of this prestigious
5 award for his heroism during the Korean War; and

6 WHEREAS, Born in Waldo, Arkansas, Travis Watkins grew up in
7 Troup, Texas; answering his nation's call to duty, he enlisted in
8 the U.S. Army in 1939, and he served with distinction in the Pacific
9 theater during World War II, earning the Bronze Star for his actions
10 at Guadalcanal; after the war, he was honorably discharged, and in
11 1948, he married Madie Sue Barnett; the couple became the parents of
12 two daughters; and

13 WHEREAS, During the Korean War, Master Sergeant Watkins
14 reenlisted, and he was deployed to Korea with Company H, Ninth
15 Infantry Regiment, Second Infantry Division; on August 31, 1950,
16 the company was stationed near Yongsan when an overwhelming North
17 Korean force broke through the United Nations lines, and Sergeant
18 Watkins and 30 other men found themselves under siege and cut off
19 from the rest of their unit; and

20 WHEREAS, Over the next three days, Sergeant Watkins displayed
21 both remarkable leadership and extraordinary bravery; he took
22 command, established perimeter defenses to repel the constant enemy
23 assaults, and continually exposed himself to enemy fire by moving
24 from foxhole to foxhole to give instructions and encouragement to

1 his fellow soldiers; and

2 WHEREAS, When the unit's ammunition began to run out,
3 Sergeant Watkins shot two North Korean soldiers 50 yards beyond the
4 perimeter and went out alone to retrieve their weapons and
5 ammunition; he was wounded while doing so, but still managed to fell
6 all three of his enemy attackers; he collected their weapons and
7 ammunition as well and made it back to his astonished men; and

8 WHEREAS, Later, six of the enemy began to lob grenades into
9 the American perimeter, endangering the position; Sergeant Watkins
10 stood up from his foxhole and fired his rifle at the attackers; he
11 was immediately struck by machine gun fire, but he continued
12 shooting until he had killed all six North Koreans; he then
13 collapsed, paralyzed from the waist down; and

14 WHEREAS, Despite his grave injuries, Sergeant Watkins
15 continued to encourage his men, refusing to accept any food from
16 their dwindling supply; when it became clear that help would not
17 arrive in time, he ordered his men to withdraw, and he further
18 refused to let them take him with them, since his inability to walk
19 would only slow their retreat; in the last moments of his life, he
20 wished his comrades luck and remained at his post until the end; he
21 died two days before his 30th birthday; and

22 WHEREAS, Sergeant Watkins's leadership throughout this
23 ordeal helped to keep his men alive and enabled his troops to mount
24 a strong defense that killed approximately 500 enemy soldiers; in
25 recognition of his monumental courage, President Harry S. Truman
26 posthumously awarded him the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest
27 military award; the medal was presented to his wife in a ceremony in

1 Washington, D.C., on January 9, 1951; and

2 WHEREAS, In the years since, Sergeant Watkins has been
3 further honored in the state he called home; a housing complex at
4 Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio was named in his memory in 1961, and
5 the Watkins-Logan State Veterans Home in Tyler was also named in his
6 honor in 2011; in 2000 a supply ship, the USNS *Watkins*, was
7 christened in his name; his remains are interred at Gladewater
8 Memorial Park in Gladewater; and

9 WHEREAS, During a desperate situation in a time of war,
10 Master Sergeant Travis Watkins took command, bolstered the spirits
11 of his men, and repeatedly risked his life in their behalf, making
12 the ultimate sacrifice in order that they might survive; for this
13 selfless act of heroism, it is indeed appropriate that he be honored
14 with this state's supreme military commendation; now, therefore, be
15 it

16 RESOLVED, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas
17 hereby direct the governor of the State of Texas to posthumously
18 award the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor to Travis E. Watkins in
19 recognition of his valiant service during the Korean War.