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By:  Dean H.C.R. No. 120

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Texas Legislative Medal of Honor was established to recognize gallant and intrepid service by a member of the state or federal military forces, and U.S. Army Private First Class George Benton Turner proved himself a deserving recipient of this prestigious commendation with his heroic actions during World War II; and

WHEREAS, George Turner was born in Longview in 1899, the son of Gaines and Emme Turner, and he later attended Wentworth Military Academy in Lexington, Missouri; during World War I, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, but the conflict ended before he had a chance to see action; after the war, he settled in California and married; and

WHEREAS, When the United States entered World War II, Mr. Turner answered his nation's call to duty once again and enlisted in the U.S. Army even though he was already in his forties; during training, he demonstrated his dedication to duty and his determination to prove himself in combat, and he quickly won the respect of his officers and fellow soldiers, many of whom were young enough to be his children; on several occasions, he refused a promotion, knowing it would keep him from the front lines; and

WHEREAS, By 1945, Private Turner was serving in France with the 499th Armored Field Artillery Battalion of the 14th Armored Division; on January 3, he was acting as a forward observer in the village of Philippsbourg, only a few miles from the German border, when he found himself cut off from his unit by an enemy armored infantry attack; and

WHEREAS, After encountering an Allied infantry company that was retreating before the German advance, Private Turner spotted two enemy tanks and 75 German soldiers advancing up the main street of the village; despite the staggering odds, he held his ground under heavy fire and used a rocket launcher to destroy one of the tanks and to disable the other; he then removed a machine gun from a nearby half-track and used it to further disrupt the enemy onslaught; in the ensuing American counterattack, two U.S. tanks were disabled, and Private Turner again sprang into action, firing a light machine gun from the hip to hold off the Germans so that the American tank crews could escape; he attempted to rescue a soldier from one of the burning tanks but was driven back and wounded when the tank's ammunition exploded; and

WHEREAS, Despite his injuries, Private Turner refused to be evacuated, and he continued to fight until the next day; during that time, he helped drive off an enemy patrol, took part in the capture of a German position, and drove a truck through heavy fire to deliver wounded men to an aid station in the rear; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of his magnificent heroism, Private Turner was presented with the Congressional Medal of Honor by President Harry Truman on August 23, 1945; at the age of 46, he was one of the oldest individuals to receive that illustrious commendation in World War II; following his return to civilian life, he died in Encino, California, in 1963, and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, George Turner's extraordinary actions on the field of battle distinguished him as a warrior of peerless courage, and it is indeed appropriate that he be honored with the highest military award granted by the state where he was born; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 86th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby direct the governor of the State of Texas to posthumously award the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor to George Benton Turner in recognition of his valiant service during World War II.