

By: Dean

H.C.R. No. 120

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 First Class  
4 George Benton Turner proved himself a deserving recipient of this  
5 prestigious commendation with his heroic actions during World War  
6 II; and

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

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

21           WHEREAS, By 1945, Private Turner was serving in France with  
22 the 499th Armored Field Artillery Battalion of the 14th Armored  
23 Division; on January 3, he was acting as a forward observer in the  
24 village of Philippsbourg, only a few miles from the German border,

1 when he found himself cut off from his unit by an enemy armored  
2 infantry attack; and

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

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

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

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

5           RESOLVED, That the 86th 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 George Benton Turner  
8 in recognition of his valiant service during World War II.