

By: Fierro

H.R. No. 2204

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The soldiers of Company E of the Texas National
2 Guard exhibited great courage during World War II, and they are
3 truly deserving of special recognition; and

4 WHEREAS, In November 1940, the federal government mobilized
5 the Texas National Guard, and Company E was activated as part of the
6 2nd Battalion, 141st Infantry Regiment, 36th Infantry Division; in
7 an era of segregation, Company E was the only unit in the guard to be
8 made up entirely of Mexican American soldiers, though led by white
9 officers; of the more than 170 men in the company, 84 were from El
10 Paso; and

11 WHEREAS, America entered the war in December 1941, and in
12 September 1943, Company E and the 36th Division were among the first
13 Allied soldiers to fight in Europe, when they came ashore on the
14 beaches of Salerno, Italy; Company E took part in some of the
15 fiercest fighting along the Italian peninsula, at the battles at
16 San Pietro, Naples, and Anzio, and in January 1944, they arrived at
17 the banks of the Rapido River near Monte Cassino; and

18 WHEREAS, A reconnaissance team from Company E discovered that
19 the Germans on the far side of the river were heavily fortified, and
20 the men of the company then took part in a brutal battle on the night
21 of January 20; risking drowning and hypothermia as they entered the
22 swift, freezing waters of the river, they were driven back on their
23 first attempt; courageously, they reentered the water, and a few
24 men broke through the enemy's barbed wire, allowing the Allied

1 forces to continue their march toward Rome; and

2 WHEREAS, Company E continued to fight bravely through
3 northern Italy and into France and Austria at great personal cost,
4 and only a handful of the company's members returned to El Paso at
5 the end of the war; as one veteran said about the battle at the
6 Rapido River, "If you did not die, or get wounded, or get captured,
7 you were not there"; and

8 WHEREAS, At a time when Mexican Americans were often
9 discriminated against at home, the proud men of Company E answered
10 their nation's call to arms; many of them gave their lives, and the
11 legacy of their valor and devotion to duty will continue to inspire
12 generations of Texans; now, therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas
14 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the men of Company E of the Texas
15 National Guard for their courage and sacrifice during World War II.