

By: Lopez, Anchia, Minjarez, Raymond,  
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H.C.R. No. 71

Substitute the following for H.C.R. No. 71:

By: Raymond

C.S.H.C.R. No. 71

#### HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Marcelino Serna was one of the most decorated  
2 military veterans in Texas history, and his heroic actions during  
3 World War I make him a worthy candidate for the Congressional Medal  
4 of Honor, our nation's highest military award; and

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

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

22 WHEREAS, Shortly thereafter, during the Meuse-Argonne  
23 campaign, Private Serna embarked on a second lone scouting mission;  
24 he began by wounding a German sniper with a shot from 200 yards,

1 then followed the injured man into a trench; firing and hurling  
2 grenades in all directions to make it seem as if he were part of a  
3 larger force, he shot three German soldiers immediately, then  
4 attacked an enemy dugout, felling 26 more and capturing 24; he  
5 single-handedly held the prisoners at gunpoint until other members  
6 of his unit arrived; and

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

19       WHEREAS, After returning to the United States, Mr. Serna  
20 became a U.S. citizen in 1924 and settled in El Paso, where he  
21 worked for the quartermaster at Fort Bliss; he was a charter member  
22 of VFW Post No. 2753 and volunteered with veterans advocacy groups,  
23 and when he died in 1992, he was buried with full military honors at  
24 Fort Bliss; he was the most decorated Texas veteran of World War I,  
25 winning every major military award short of the Congressional Medal  
26 of Honor, and records indicate that he was denied that supreme honor  
27 only because he was a Mexican American immigrant and did not know

1 enough English to be promoted; and

2           WHEREAS, Marcelino Serna volunteered to serve our nation in  
3 combat before he was even a citizen, and he stayed to fight when he  
4 might have gone home; his courageous battlefield actions during  
5 World War I have been recognized with a host of illustrious  
6 commendations, and he truly warrants the highest honor that can be  
7 bestowed on a member of the armed forces of the United States; now,  
8 therefore, be it

9           RESOLVED, That the 87th Legislature of the State of Texas  
10 hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to bestow on  
11 Marcelino Serna the Congressional Medal of Honor; and, be it  
12 further

13           RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official  
14 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to  
15 the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of  
16 Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the  
17 members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that  
18 this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record  
19 as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.