

By: Kitzman

H.R. No. 327

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The House of Representatives of the State of Texas
2 joins the citizens of Texas in remembering the life and legacy of
3 Medal of Honor recipient Master Sergeant Roy P. Benavidez and the
4 loaning of his Medal of Honor to the new National Medal of Honor
5 Museum in Arlington; and

6 WHEREAS, A native Texan, Master Sergeant Benavidez was born
7 on August 5, 1935, in Lindenau, the son of a sharecropper; orphaned
8 at an early age and raised by relatives, he dropped out of school at
9 the age of 14 to work in the fields before enlisting in the U.S. Army
10 in June 1955; and

11 WHEREAS, While on his first tour of duty in Vietnam, this
12 admirable soldier was injured by a land mine, and though doctors
13 feared he might never walk again, Master Sergeant Benavidez
14 recovered fully and returned to Vietnam with the Green Berets, an
15 elite Special Forces unit; and

16 WHEREAS, On the morning of May 2, 1968, while assigned to the
17 Loc Ninh base in South Vietnam, then-Sergeant Benavidez learned
18 that 12 members of a Special Forces reconnaissance team were
19 surrounded by enemy troops inside Cambodia and under heavy fire;
20 this heroic Texan courageously volunteered for the evacuation
21 mission to aid in the rescue of his fellow soldiers; and

22 WHEREAS, Though intense small-arms and antiaircraft fire
23 made the rescue operation tremendously dangerous, Sergeant
24 Benavidez jumped from the helicopter into enemy gunsights; even

1 before he reached the stranded team's position, he had been wounded
2 in his right leg, face, and head, yet despite his painful injuries,
3 Sergeant Benavidez carried the wounded men to the waiting
4 helicopter and provided protective fire to cover the remaining
5 crew; and

6 WHEREAS, The mission grew more complicated as Sergeant
7 Benavidez retrieved classified documents from dead and wounded team
8 members, and he worked quickly to secure them despite sustaining
9 more severe wounds from gunshots to his abdomen and grenade
10 fragments in his back; while attempting takeoff, the pilot was
11 mortally wounded, and the helicopter crashed; despite the chaos
12 around him, Sergeant Benavidez freed those aboard from the wreckage
13 and established a defensive perimeter under increasing enemy
14 gunfire and grenade attacks; and

15 WHEREAS, Acting as a medic, directing by radio the fire from
16 gunships overhead, and even engaging in hand-to-hand combat with
17 the enemy, Sergeant Benavidez bravely weathered a harrowing six
18 hours in hell and saved the lives of eight men through his
19 leadership and action; he had been clubbed, shot, and bayoneted,
20 yet Sergeant Benavidez prevailed, and when his actions were praised
21 as awesome and extraordinary, he defined them only as duty; and

22 WHEREAS, For his exceptional valor, Sergeant Benavidez was
23 awarded the Distinguished Service Cross; then on February 24, 1981,
24 44 years ago today, Master Sergeant (Ret.) Roy P. Benavidez was
25 presented with the Congressional Medal of Honor by President Ronald
26 Reagan; and

27 WHEREAS, Even after his retirement from the military, he

1 continued to serve his country by devoting his time and energy to
2 veterans groups and by visiting schools to speak to youths on
3 critical issues such as courage, commitment, education, faith,
4 patriotism, and staying away from drug use and gangs; and

5 WHEREAS, Though this brave soldier died on November 29, 1998,
6 his widow Hilaria "Lala" Coy Benavidez and their three children,
7 son Noel and daughters Yvette and Denise, have carried on Master
8 Sergeant Benavidez's legacy by remaining active in their community
9 with various civic organizations and volunteering their time with
10 the Boy Scouts of America, which paved the way for six of Master
11 Sergeant Benavidez's grandsons to earn the rank of Eagle Scout; and

12 WHEREAS, On February 6, 2011, the late Hilaria "Lala" Coy
13 Benavidez generously loaned her husband's Medal of Honor to the
14 Ronald Regan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California, where
15 it was on display for tens of thousands of museum visitors to see
16 and learn about the life and legacy of Master Sergeant Roy P.
17 Benavidez; and

18 WHEREAS, On January 3, 2025, the children of Master Sergeant
19 Roy P. Benavidez traveled to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
20 to take part in a handoff ceremony, which consisted of the Ronald
21 Reagan Presidential Library handing over Master Sergeant Roy
22 P. Benavidez's Medal of Honor to his three children so that it can
23 return home to Texas; and

24 WHEREAS, The children of Master Sergeant Roy P. Benavidez
25 have generously loaned their father's Medal of Honor to the new
26 National Medal of Honor Museum in Arlington, where it will be one of
27 several Medals of Honor from living and deceased recipients that

1 have been either donated or loaned to the new museum and will be on
2 display for the public to see; and

3 WHEREAS, A deserving recipient of the highest and most
4 prestigious military decoration of valor, Roy Benavidez
5 demonstrated extraordinary courage in the line of duty, and he will
6 forever be remembered with great admiration; now, therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 89th Texas
8 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life and legacy of Master
9 Sergeant Roy P. Benavidez and extend to his family sincere
10 appreciation for their generosity in sharing his inspiring story
11 with others; and, be it further

12 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
13 prepared for his family as an expression of deepest gratitude from
14 the Texas House of Representatives and that when the House adjourns
15 this day, it do so in memory of Master Sergeant Roy P. Benavidez and
16 his wife Lala.