



EL PASO COUNTY STATE OF TEXAS

RESOLUTION



WHEREAS, military service is one of the most admired and respected vocations any woman or man can embark upon knowing that her or his commitment is to something far greater than herself or himself, and we value such military service because it is dedicated to upholding, defending, and preserving the constitution; and

WHEREAS, while historically many were drafted into service before the military became an all-volunteer service in 1973, there were still individuals who volunteered to serve without being drafted, and women and men of all walks of life, including new immigrants, have sought to demonstrate their love, commitment, and loyalty to this country by volunteering their lives to service; and

WHEREAS, Private Marcelino Serna was one such immigrant seeking to demonstrate his love, commitment, and loyalty to his country; born in Chihuahua, Mexico, Private Serna is part of a legacy of immigrant soldiers fighting for the United States, eager to pursue the American Dream; in 1917, without hesitation, he volunteered to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces against Germany at the age of 20; and

WHEREAS, Private Serna was placed in the 355th Infantry of the 89th Division, and upon his arrival in France, when it was discovered that he was not a U.S. citizen, he was given the option to return home, however, Private Serna made the valiant decision to serve the United States, his adoptive home; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his courageous actions, Private Serna became the most decorated World War I veteran in Texas, with awards from the United States, France, Italy and the United Kingdom, which include: the World War I Victory Medal, two Purple Hearts, the French Medaille Militaire, two French Croix de Guerre, a French Medaille commemorative, the British War Medal, the Italian Croce al Merito di Guerra, the French Verdun, and the St. Mihiel Medals, as well as being posthumously awarded Texas' Lone Star Medal of Valor in 2016; and

WHEREAS, the aforementioned awards recognize Private Serna's demonstrated bravery and remarkable service to his country in World War I, during which time, as detailed in the military's official citation for his receipt of the Distinguished Service Cross and in the Texas Handbook Online, Private Serna singlehandedly fought, killed, and captured enemy fighters in the French theater; and

WHEREAS, white contemporaries of Private Serna who engaged in similar courageous acts during World War I were rightfully recognized for their valor, including with the federal Medal of Honor; however Private Serna was reportedly passed over for the Medal of Honor because he did not know enough English to be promoted; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that acts of valor performed by minority service members like Private Serna have gone unrecognized, as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020, Congress ordered the Pentagon to review records of Latino, Black, Asian, Native American and Jewish World War I soldiers to determine whether any such veteran should be awarded the Medal of Honor.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOVED by the El Paso County Judge and Commissioners, that El Paso County calls upon the United States Army to review the military service record of El Pasoan and World War I hero, Private Marcelino Serna for eligibility for the Medal of Honor pursuant to Section 548 of the FY20 National Defense Authorization Act, Public Law 116-92, and further calls upon the Secretary of the Army and Secretary of Defense to recommend that Private Serna be awarded the Medal of Honor, and finally calls upon the President of the United States to act on that recommendation and award Private Serna the Medal of Honor in recognition of his courageous acts of valor in service to the United States of America.

SIGNED, this 21st day of September 2020

Commissioner Carlos Leon, Pct. 1

Commissioner David Stout, Pct. 2

Commissioner Vincent M. Perez, Pct. 3

Commissioner Carl Robinson, Pct. 4

Ricardo A. Samaniego, County Judge