

VERONICA ESCOBAR
16TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

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AND CITIZENSHIP



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September 04, 2020

Secretary Ryan McCarthy
U.S. Department of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0101

Dear Secretary McCarthy:

I am writing to request that the United States Army review the military service record of El Paso resident and World War I hero, Private Marcelino Serna, in accordance with Section 584 of the FY20 National Defense Authorization Act, now Public Law 116-92.

Private Serna fought for the United States during World War I between April 6, 1917 and November 11, 1918. He was the first Hispanic Soldier to be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and was also awarded two Croix de Guerre with Palm by the Government of France and the Croce al Merito di Guerra by the Italian Government. During this time, Private Serna was given an opportunity to discharge, but refused in order to continue serving alongside his fellow soldiers. During his service, Private Serna repeatedly demonstrated exceptional bravery. Examples include volunteering to scout dangerous areas alone, outlasting heavy sniper fire to single-handedly capture twenty-four combatants, and exercising honorable conduct in compliance with the rules of war by keeping his prisoners from being executed by fellow American soldiers. This conduct represents the best of our military.

Private Serna is the most decorated World War I veteran in Texas and it is my understanding that he has met the criteria set forth in Section 584 that entitles him to a review for possible receipt of the Medal of Honor. I would also ask for you to carefully consider the unique and unjust social challenges Private Serna had to endure and overcome in order to serve our Nation. Despite Private Serna's heroic acts, he was told that he was ineligible for the Medal of Honor because he did not know enough English to be promoted. Records indicate that Private Serna may have been denied recognition he deserves because he was a Mexican-American immigrant. Prejudice has no place in our armed forces, and I recommend that Private Serna's record be fully and fairly reviewed for eligibility for the Medal of Honor, in recognition of his courageous acts of valor in service of America. It is long past time to right the wrongs of the past.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Veronica Escobar".

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress