

**RESOLUTION IN HONOR OF FIRST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE VETERAN EUGENE GUTIERREZ, JR.**

**WHEREAS**, Rio Grande Valley native son Eugene Gutierrez, Jr. is a World War II hero, serving in the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Service Force, also known as the Devil’s Brigade. The 1<sup>st</sup> Special Service Force was an elite U.S.-Canadian commando unit that served from 1942 to 1944. Today’s American and Canadian Special Forces trace their heritage to the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Service Force; and

**WHEREAS**, under the command of Lt. Colonel Robert T. Frederick, the 1,800-man unit, which operated mainly in Italy and southern France, accounted for 12,000 German casualties, captured more than 30,000 prisoners, had a kill ratio of 25 enemy soldiers for each Forceman killed in action, won eight U.S. campaign battle stars and played a key role in the 1944 liberation of Rome from German forces; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S.-Canadian 1<sup>st</sup> Special Service Force was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal – the highest civilian honor the United States Congress can bestow – on Tuesday, February 3, 2015 at a ceremony held at the U.S. Capitol Emancipation Hall in Washington D.C., Mr. Gutierrez and Canadian Charles Mann accepted the medal on behalf of their fellow Forcemen; and

**WHEREAS**, the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Service Force earned a reputation for being able to take impenetrable objectives when no one else could. Against all odds, they wiped out a strategic enemy defensive position high atop a mountain surrounded by steep cliffs in Italy. This mission was the basis of the 1968 motion picture titled “The Devil’s Brigade.” They fought for 99 days on the front lines at Anzio beachhead without relief and helped liberate Rome on June 4, 1944. The 1<sup>st</sup> Special Service Force went on to invade the islands of southern France on August 15, 1944, paddling in rubber boats over five hours in the dark for a surprise attack on the Germans; and

**WHEREAS**, after he was honorably discharged in 1945, Mr. Gutierrez attended Oklahoma State University and earned a Bachelor degree in Industrial Arts and a Masters degree in Education. He began his 30-year tenure with the McAllen Independent School District in 1950, teaching at Sam Houston. In 1953 he became the first Hispanic principal in the McAllen ISD, serving at Navarro elementary school for 17 years, then at Lincoln Middle School until his retirement in 1980. He and his wife of 63 years, Penny, have three children: Thomas, Margaret, and Elizabeth, and four grandchildren.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Hidalgo County Commissioners Court hereby recognizes and honors Eugene Gutierrez, Jr. for being a hero of World War II who helped free the world of tyranny as a member of the 1st Special Service Force, and salutes him for being awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for meritorious service to the United States of America.**

Dated this 3<sup>rd</sup>, day of March 2015.

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RAMON GARCIA  
County Judge

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A.C. CUELLAR, JR.  
County Commissioner, Pct. 1

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EDUARDO “EDDIE” CANTU  
County Commissioner, Pct. 2

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JOE M. FLORES  
County Commissioner, Pct.3

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JOSEPH PALACIOS  
County Commissioner, Pct. 4

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Attest: ARTURO GUAJARDO, JR.  
County Clerk