



LEAGUE of UNITED LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization, has supported military veterans for nearly 100 years. We've advocated for key legislation like The PACT Act and The Brandon Act to ensure service members receive the care and benefits they deserve. LULAC is committed to advancing the wellbeing of all veterans by advocating for access to education, affordable housing, healthcare, and other essential services.

# Marcelino Serna

## Posthumous Awarding of Medal of Honor

### Introduction

Marcelino Serna was born at the Hacienda Robinson mining camp in northern Mexico. At the age of 20, he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1916 and fought on the brutal battlefields of France during World War I.



Serna received the Distinguished Service Cross for his bravery, but racial prejudice as a Mexican immigrant and private denied him the Medal of Honor. Advocates such as LULAC, the American GI Forum, and the Hispanic Veterans Leadership Alliance, have long called for a review of Serna's case, citing his heroic feats—killing 26 Germans and capturing 32 prisoners, including 24 singlehandedly—acts more heroic than some Medal recipients. His legacy remains marred by this injustice.

### Intent

**Correct an Overdue Historical Wrong:** Ensure that Private Serna receives the Medal of Honor he earned through extraordinary valor in World War I.

**Acknowledge Hispanic American Contributions to the Military:** Recognize the sacrifices of Hispanic American service members who were historically overlooked and underrepresented in military honors.

**Reaffirm the Nation's Commitment to Fairness and Recognition:** Demonstrate the U.S. military honors service members based on merit, ensuring historical biases do not overshadow deserving heroes.

### Key Issues

**Lack of Presidential Action on Approved Award Upgrade:** The Secretary of the Army approved Private Serna's posthumous Medal of Honor upgrade in February 2024, reaffirmed by Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin in October. The award package reached President Biden by late 2024, but no action followed. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth can now either forward it to President Trump or let it stall.

**Historical Discrimination Prevented Proper Recognition:** Despite his heroism, Private Serna was denied both the Medal of Honor and opportunities for promotions, with officials citing English proficiency as a barrier.

**Comparable Acts of Heroism Were Recognized:** Private Serna's heroic actions closely parallel those of Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant Joseph B. Adkison, who only took in three German prisoners of war. Private Serna killed 26 Germans in the same battle but was not given credit for this action. The intent of the World War I Valor Medals Review Act in the FY20 NDAA was to examine clear cases of discrimination against service members who should have received the Medal of Honor.



## Proposal

### **Secure President Trump's Formal Approval:**

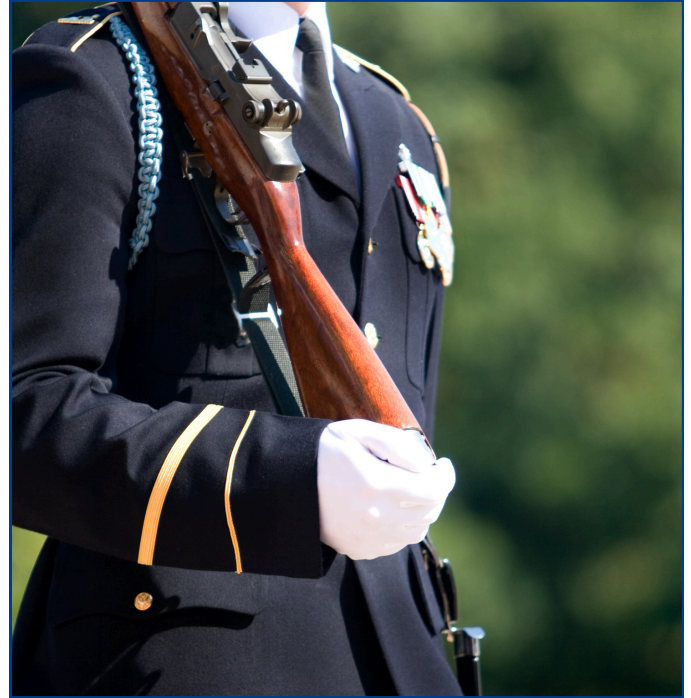
Request that President Trump officially approve Private Serna's Medal of Honor posthumous award upgrade, as the Department of Defense has already endorsed it.

### **Honor Private Serna's Legacy with a Formal Ceremony:**

Arrange for a formal Medal of Honor presentation to his surviving family members, ensuring proper recognition for his sacrifice and service.

### **Recognize and Correct a Historical Injustice:**

Acknowledge the discrimination that denied Serna the Medal of Honor and affirm the nation's commitment to honoring all military heroes fairly, regardless of ethnicity or background.



## Conclusion

Private Marcelino Serna's actions during World War I exemplified extraordinary bravery and selflessness, yet he was denied the Medal of Honor due to past discrimination. His valor and sacrifice merit the highest recognition from the United States. We urge President Trump to approve and present this long-overdue Medal of Honor to his family. This step will confirm our nation's promise to honor all military heroes who serve with valor.



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