119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

# S. _____

To designate the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Victoria, Texas, as the ''Master Sergeant Roy P. Benavidez VA Clinic''.

---

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

---

Mr. CRUZ introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

---

# A BILL

To designate the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Victoria, Texas, as the ''Master Sergeant Roy P. Benavidez VA Clinic''.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the ''Master Sergeant Roy P. Benavidez VA Clinic Act of 2026''.

**SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

Congress finds the following:

(1) Raul ''Roy'' Perez Benavidez was born on August 5, 1935, in Lindenau, Texas, in DeWitt County.

(2) The son of a sharecropper, Benavidez endured a difficult childhood. After losing both parents at a young age, he and his brother were taken in by their aunt and uncle, who raised them as their own children.

(3) Benavidez was characterized as a rambunctious kid, but his disciplined upbringing and deep Catholic faith helped shape the man he became. He always maintained a positive outlook on life and was inspired by the heroes of World War II, particularly Audie Murphy.

(4) In 1952, at the age of 17, Benavidez enlisted into the Texas National Guard during the Korean War, and, in June of 1955, began active duty in the Army.

(5) In 1959, Benavidez completed airborne training and was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

(6) In 1965, while on his first tour to South Vietnam as a military advisor, Benavidez was wounded by a landmine during a patrol. He was evacuated to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, where doc-

tors told him the damage to his spine was too severe, that he might never walk again, and he would likely be medically discharged from the Army. Against those odds, Benavidez refused to quit and was determined to return to service.

(7) In 1967, Benavidez completed special forces selection and training as a weapons expert and was assigned to Detachment B–56, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, Republic of Vietnam.

(8) On May 2, 1968, while assigned to Detachment B–56, the 33-year old Benavidez was returning from Catholic Mass at a forward operating base in Loc Ninh, Cambodia, when he heard the panicked calls for help come over the radio from a 12-man special forces reconnaissance team under attack and surrounded by a North Vietnamese infantry battalion that severely outnumbered them.

(9) Without hesitation, Benavidez voluntarily boarded a returning aircraft to assist in the pinned-down patrol's extraction attempt while carrying only an aid bag, combat knife, and his rosary.

(10) Upon realizing that all the team members were either dead or wounded and unable to move to the pickup zone, Benavidez directed the aircraft to

a nearby clearing where he jumped from the hovering helicopter, and ran approximately 75 meters under withering small arms fire to the crippled team. Prior to reaching the team's position, Benavidez was wounded in his right leg, face, and head.

(11) Despite those painful injuries, Benavidez took charge, repositioning the team members and directing their fire to facilitate the landing of an extraction aircraft and the loading of wounded and dead team members. Benavidez then threw smoke canisters to direct the aircraft to the team's position. Despite severe wounds and intense enemy fire, Benavidez carried and dragged half of the wounded team members to the awaiting aircraft.

(12) Benavidez then provided protective fire by running alongside the aircraft as it moved to pick up the remaining team members. As the enemy's fire intensified, Benavidez hurried to recover the body of the team leader and classified documents on the dead team leader. When he reached the leader's body, Benavidez was severely wounded by small arms fire in the abdomen and grenade fragments in his back.

(13) At nearly the same moment, the pilot was mortally wounded, and the helicopter crashed. Although in extremely critical condition due to his multiple wounds, Benavidez secured the classified documents and made his way back to the wreckage, where he aided the wounded out of the overturned aircraft and gathered the stunned survivors into a defensive perimeter.

(14) Under increasing enemy automatic weapons and grenade fire, Benavidez moved around the perimeter, distributing water and ammunition to his weary men, reinstilling in them a will to live and fight. Facing a buildup of enemy opposition with a beleaguered team, Benavidez mustered his strength, began calling in tactical air strikes, and directed the fire from supporting gunships to suppress the enemy's fire and permit another extraction attempt.

(15) Benavidez was wounded again in his thigh by small arms fire while administering first aid to a wounded team member just before another extraction helicopter was able to land. Benavidez's indomitable spirit kept him going as he began to ferry his comrades to the craft.

(16) On his second trip with the wounded, Benavidez was clubbed with an enemy's rifle, sus-

taining additional wounds to his head and arms before killing his adversary. He then continued under devastating fire to carry the wounded to the helicopter.

(17) Upon reaching the aircraft, Benavidez spotted and killed two enemy soldiers who were rushing from an angle that prevented the door gunner from firing upon them. With little strength remaining, he made one last trip to the perimeter to ensure that all classified material had been collected or destroyed, and to bring in the remaining wounded. Only then, in extremely serious condition from more than 37 separate wounds and loss of blood, did Benavidez allow himself to be pulled into the extraction aircraft.

(18) Presumed dead, Benavidez felt himself being placed into a body bag. Unable to speak, move, or open his eyes, he summoned the last of his strength to spit in the medic's face, desperately signaling that he was still alive.

(19) Benavidez's gallant choice to join voluntarily his comrades who were in critical straits and expose himself constantly to withering enemy fire, and his refusal to be stopped despite numerous severe wounds, saved the lives of at least eight men.

(20) In 1976, having attained the rank of Master Sergeant, Roy P. Benavidez retired from military service and returned home to El Campo, Texas, with his wife Hilaria ''Lala'' Coy Benavidez and their children.

(21) On February 24, 1981, Master Sergeant Roy P. Benavidez was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Ronald Reagan, for his fearless personal leadership, tenacious devotion to duty, and extremely valorous actions in the face of overwhelming odds during the battle on May 2, 1968.

(22) Beyond his extraordinary heroism in Vietnam, Master Sergeant Benavidez devoted time after his military service to mentor and encourage young people in the United States to build productive lives and overcome adversity.

(23) Benavidez embraced that responsibility by traveling extensively to speak at schools, with civic organizations, at military installations, at churches, with veterans' groups, at prisons, and even with gang members about faith, family, service, patriotism, and perseverance. He often told young people, ''An education is the key to success. Bad habits and bad company will ruin you.''. He was living proof that a difficult beginning does not have to determine

the course of one's life. Through his courage, perseverance, and dedication to others, he inspired young people to overcome adversity, never give up, seek purpose over destructive influences, take responsibility for their choices, and make a positive difference in their communities.

(24) In 1983, Master Sergeant Benavidez once again stood up for his fellow veterans by testifying before the House Select Committee on Aging, bringing national attention to the challenges faced by disabled beneficiaries and helping advance efforts to protect their disability benefits.

(25) Master Sergeant Roy P. Benavidez died on November 29, 1998, at age 63. He was buried by a grateful Nation with full military honors at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

**SEC. 3. DESIGNATION OF MASTER SERGEANT ROY P. BENAVIDEZ VA CLINIC IN VICTORIA, TEXAS.**

(a) DESIGNATION.—The community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located at 311 Spring Green Boulevard in Victoria, Texas, shall, after the date of the enactment of this Act, be known and designated as the ''Master Sergeant Roy P. Benavidez VA Clinic'' or the ''Master Sergeant Roy P. Benavidez Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the community-based outpatient clinic specified in subsection (a) shall be considered to be a reference to the Master Sergeant Roy P. Benavidez VA Clinic.