



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
GEORGE P. BUSH, COMMISSIONER

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PRESS RELEASE

Alfredo Gonzalez Texas State Veterans Home Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Valley's first veterans home with 160 beds for area veterans

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AUSTIN — On Saturday, June 27th, generations of veterans from the Rio Grande Valley gathered to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Texas Veterans Land Board's (VLB) Alfredo Gonzalez Texas State Veterans Home in McAllen. The McAllen home is named after U.S. Marine Corps Sergeant Alfredo "Freddy" Gonzalez, who was killed in action in Vietnam. Sgt. Gonzalez's mother, Dolia Gonzalez, was a special guest at the event.

"Texans support our veterans and here in the Valley that is especially true," said George P. Bush, Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office and Chairman of the Veterans Land Board. "We see it every day here at the Alfredo Gonzalez Texas State Veterans Home. The Veterans Land Board picked McAllen for this home because of the overwhelming support this community has shown for its veterans. That support continues to grow, making this more than just a home, but a place where honor lives."

Sgt. Gonzalez was born and raised in Edinburg. He played for his high school football team and helped his mother by working in the fields in summertime. As a teenager he enlisted in the Marine Corps, serving a tour of duty in Vietnam and then becoming a combat instructor. After learning that some of the men he trained were killed in Vietnam, he volunteered for another tour.

On Jan. 31, 1968, Sgt. Gonzalez was commanding Third Platoon, Company A, First Battalion, First Marines, First Marine Division. His platoon was under fire near Hue City when a Marine was wounded and lay helpless in an exposed position. Sgt. Gonzalez dodged intense enemy fire to rescue the man, and despite being wounded in the process, carried his fellow Marine to safety. Returning to the fight, Sgt. Gonzalez found his company pinned down by fire from a fortified machine gun bunker. He attacked the bunker with hand grenades and destroyed it. On Feb. 3, despite being wounded again, Sgt. Gonzalez refused medical treatment and continued leading his men. The next day, his company was again pinned down, suffering heavy casualties. Sgt. Gonzalez knocked out a heavily fortified enemy position with antitank rockets and gave his life in the process. He was 21 years old. On Oct. 31, 1969, President Richard M. Nixon

presented the Medal of Honor posthumously to Sgt. Gonzalez for his heroism, courage and dynamic leadership.

The Alfredo Gonzalez Texas State Veterans Home employs about 150 full-time employees, including registered nurses, licensed vocational nurses, therapists, nurses' aides, laundry and housekeeping staff, activities aides, cooks and dietary staff. The home has had a positive impact on the McAllen-area economy, paying more than \$3 million in new salaries.

"It is our privilege to serve the veterans of Texas," Bush said. "This has been a great decade, but there are more great years to come. I am confident that working together, we will meet the challenges ahead. After all, while the needs of our veterans may change, their need for our support does not."

As with all Veterans Land Board programs, Texas State Veterans Homes are self-supporting and cost Texas taxpayers virtually nothing. Because the VA subsidizes a significant portion of a veteran's cost to stay in a Texas State Veterans Home, the daily out-of-pocket rates are well below market average and include the cost of medications. A veteran currently pays \$63-\$74 a day for a semi-private room in a Texas State Veterans Home. The average cost for a semi-private room in a private Texas nursing home is about \$109 a day, which often doesn't include the cost of medications. Spouses of Texas veterans and Gold Star parents are also eligible for care in Texas State Veterans Homes.

The VLB operates a total of eight veterans homes in Amarillo, Big Spring, Bonham, El Paso, Floresville, McAllen, Temple and Tyler. Each home provides skilled, long-term nursing care, comprehensive rehabilitation programs, special diets, recreational activities, social services, a library, and a certified, secured Alzheimer's unit with its own secured outdoor courtyard.

For additional information on Texas State Veterans Homes and special home, land and home improvement loans for Texas veterans, call 1-800-252-VETS (1-800-252-8387), or visit the VLB website at www.texasveterans.com.











