

No. 2017-73

AN ACT

HB 1431

Designating that portion of State Routes 54, 901 and 2023 in Northumberland County and Schuylkill County as the Honorable Robert E. Belfanti, Jr., Memorial Highway; designating Exit 18 of State Route 43, known as the Searights Road interchange, in Fayette County as the Staff Sgt. John P. Wanto Vietnam Veteran Exit; designating Exit 15 of State Route 43, known as the Old Pittsburgh Road interchange, in Fayette County as the Lance Corporal Russell W. Naugle Vietnam Veteran Exit; designating a bridge on that portion of State Route 2003 over the Yellow Breeches Creek, South Middleton Township, Cumberland County, as the Sgt. Adam C. Schoeller Memorial Bridge; designating a portion of State Route 18 in West Fallowfield Township, Crawford County, as the Staff Sergeant James Douglas Mowris Memorial Highway; designating a portion of State Route 100 from the intersection of Main Street and Tilghman Street in Upper Macungie Township, Lehigh County, to the intersection of Claussville Road and Kernsville Road in Lowhill Township, Lehigh County, as the Captain Mark T. Resh Memorial Highway; designating a bridge on that portion of State Route 18 (College Avenue) over the Little Shenango River, Greenville Borough, Mercer County, as the Greenville Veterans Memorial Bridge; designating that portion of State Route 3078 and State Route 3090 in York County from the intersection with State Route 116 to the intersection with State Route 3042 as the Private First Class Donald R. Gise Memorial Road; designating a bridge on that portion of State Route 1005, known as Church View Road, Segment 0180, Offset 0000, over Beaver Creek, South Woodbury Township, Bedford County, as the PFC/POW William G. Koontz Memorial Bridge; and designating a bridge on that portion of State Route 588 over Interstate 376, Chippewa Township, Beaver County, as the TFC Blake T. Coble Memorial Bridge.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Honorable Robert E. Belfanti, Jr., Memorial Highway.

(a) Findings.—The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

(1) The Honorable Robert E. Belfanti, Jr., represented the 107th Legislative District, covering portions of Columbia, Montour, Northumberland and Schuylkill Counties from 1981 to 2010.

(2) During his 30 years in the House of Representatives, Representative Belfanti served on numerous committees and was chairperson of the Labor Relations Committee from 1993 to 2010.

(3) Representative Belfanti was active on numerous State boards and commissions and championed workers, small businesses, veterans and improved accessibility for the disabled.

(4) Representative Belfanti attended Mount Carmel area schools and was a lifelong scout, earning the rank of Eagle Scout in 1962 and returning to scouting as an adult as a charter member of Cub Scout Pack 3178.

(5) Representative Belfanti and his wife, Cecilia, were instrumental in bringing scouting back to the Mount Carmel area following a long

dormancy, and Representative Belfanti received numerous awards during his 25 years of service.

(6) Before becoming a State Representative, Representative Belfanti enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1967 and served a 13-month tour of duty in the Vietnam War with helicopter units that supplied troops, ammunition and medical supplies to Marines. His CH-46 helicopters, known as Sea Knights, were also the major means for rescuing and providing medivacs for the wounded.

(7) Representative Belfanti rose to the rank of sergeant before being honorably discharged in 1971. Among his decorations were two Bronze Stars with Valor, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Presidential Unit Citation, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry and the Vietnam Service Medal.

(8) Representative Belfanti was active in numerous veterans organizations and cofounded the Black Diamond Detachment of the Marine Corps League, as well as a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), AMVETS and Veterans of the Vietnam War. Representative Belfanti was named Veteran of the Year by the National War Veterans Council and also received the Patriot of the Year award.

(9) Representative Belfanti's legacy includes saving the former Shamokin State General Hospital from divestiture, the opening of State Correctional Institution at Coal Township, resolving issues related to the Centralia mine fire, the Shamokin Creek project, championing numerous abandoned mine reclamation projects and helping with many rail improvement and economic development projects in the district.

(10) Representative Belfanti was also instrumental in securing funding for the State Route 901 widening project from Locust Summit to Interstate 81, as well as the Strong Connector improvement project.

(b) Designation.—The portion of State Routes 54 and 901 in Northumberland County and Schuylkill County from the intersection of State Route 54, State Route 901 and State Route 2023, also known as the Mount Carmel Merriam Highway, in Mount Carmel Township, Northumberland County, to the intersection of State Route 901, also known as Fairgrounds Road, and High Road in Butler Township, Schuylkill County, is hereby designated as the Honorable Robert E. Belfanti, Jr., Memorial Highway.

(c) Signs.—The Department of Transportation shall erect and maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the highway to traffic in both directions on the highway.

Section 2. Staff Sgt. John P. Wanto Vietnam Veteran Exit.

(a) Findings.—The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

(1) Staff Sergeant John P. Wanto served with the United States Army, A Company, First Battalion, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division.

(2) On March 21, 1970, Staff Sergeant Wanto was killed in action in Thua Thien Province, Vietnam.

(b) Designation.—Exit 18 of State Route 43, known as the Searights Road interchange, in Fayette County is hereby designated the Staff Sgt. John P. Wanto Vietnam Veteran Exit.

(c) Signs.—The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission shall erect and maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the exit to traffic on the highway near the exit.

Section 3. Lance Corporal Russell W. Naugle Vietnam Veteran Exit.

(a) Findings.—The General Assembly finds as follows:

(1) Lance Corporal Russell W. Naugle served with the United States Marine Corps, C Company, First Battalion, First Marine Division, III Marine Amphibious Force.

(2) On February 15, 1968, Lance Corporal Naugle was killed in action in Quang Nam Province, Vietnam.

(b) Designation.—Exit 15 of State Route 43, known as the Old Pittsburgh Road interchange, in Fayette County is hereby designated the Lance Corporal Russell W. Naugle Vietnam Veteran Exit.

(c) Signs.—The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission shall erect and maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the exit to traffic in both directions on the highway.

Section 4. Sgt. Adam C. Schoeller Memorial Bridge.

(a) Findings.—The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

(1) Adam C. Schoeller was raised in South Middleton Township and graduated from Boiling Springs High School in 2008.

(2) Sgt. Schoeller served his country honorably as a United States Marine and was deployed during Operation Enduring Freedom.

(3) On January 14, 2016, Sgt. Schoeller gave his life in service to his country when his helicopter collided with another helicopter off the coast of Oahu's Waimea Bay.

(4) Sgt. Schoeller's leadership, dedication and bravery distinguish his outstanding service to his country, evidenced by the numerous honors he received during his enlistment in the United States Marine Corp, including the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Individual Air Medal, Strike/Fight Air Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Navy Unit Commendation and NATO Medal-ISAF Afghanistan.

(b) Designation.—The bridge located on State Route 2003 over the Yellow Breeches Creek, South Middleton Township, Cumberland County, is hereby designated the Sgt. Adam C. Schoeller Memorial Bridge.

(c) Signs.—The Department of Transportation shall erect and maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the bridge to traffic in both directions on the bridge.

Section 5. Staff Sergeant James Douglas Mowris Memorial Highway.

(a) Findings.—The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

(1) Staff Sergeant James Douglas Mowris, a native of Adamsville, Crawford County, enlisted in the United States Army in 1984 after graduation from Conneaut Lake High School.

(2) Over a period of nearly 20 years, Staff Sergeant Mowris honorably served his country on active duty with the United States Army and with the Army Reserve.

(3) Staff Sergeant Mowris served in operations in locations across the globe, including Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Honduras, El Salvador, Kosovo, Cuba and Afghanistan.

(4) The distinguished military career of Staff Sergeant Mowris ended on January 29, 2004, when he was killed along with seven other soldiers in an explosion during the clearing of an enemy weapons and ammunition cache in Ghazni, Afghanistan.

(b) Designation.—The section of State Route 18 in West Fallowfield Township, Crawford County, from the intersection with State Route 322 to the Crawford/Mercer County Line is designated as the Staff Sergeant James Douglas Mowris Memorial Highway.

(c) Signs.—The Department of Transportation shall erect and maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the highway to traffic in both directions on the highway.

Section 6. Captain Mark T. Resh Memorial Highway.

(a) Findings.—The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

(1) Captain Mark T. Resh, of Killen, Texas, was a native of Fogelsville, Lehigh County, and a 1996 graduate of Northwestern Lehigh High School, where he was a member of the National Honor Society, math club and student council and was captain of the varsity soccer team in his senior year.

(2) In 2001, Captain Resh graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a degree in engineering.

(3) Captain Resh served as an Apache helicopter pilot with the United States Army, 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

(4) On January 28, 2007, near An Najaf, Iraq, Captain Resh placed the helicopter he was piloting in the direct line of enemy fire so that another air crew that was under attack could maneuver out of danger. Over the next 15 minutes, he bravely flew in the face of intense enemy fire to support the coalition ground forces until his aircraft was struck by enemy fire and crashed, killing Captain Resh.

(5) Captain Resh was awarded the Purple Heart and the Silver Star for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action.

(b) Designation.—The section of State Route 100 from the intersection of Main Street and Tilghman Street in Upper Macungie Township, Lehigh County, to the intersection of Claussville Road and Kernsville Road in Lowhill Township, Lehigh County, is hereby designated as the Captain Mark T. Resh Memorial Highway.

(c) Signs.—The Department of Transportation shall erect and maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the highway to traffic in both directions on the highway.

Section 7. Greenville Veterans Memorial Bridge.

(a) Findings.—The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

(1) Greenville Borough, Mercer County, has been home to many courageous military veterans who have fought for our freedom.

(2) Every Memorial Day a ceremony is held at the bridge on State Route 18 (College Avenue) over the Little Shenango River during which

the Greenville VFW drops a wreath into the river in honor of those who have served in defense of the United States.

(b) Designation.—The bridge located on State Route 18 (College Avenue) in Greenville Borough, Mercer County, over the Little Shenango River is hereby designated the Greenville Veterans Memorial Bridge.

(c) Signs.—The Department of Transportation shall erect and maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the bridge to traffic in both directions on the bridge.

Section 8. Private First Class Donald R. Gise Memorial Road.

(a) Findings.—The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

(1) Private First Class Donald R. Gise, age 25, formerly of Spring Grove Borough, York County, was killed in action on October 4, 1968, while stationed in Mekong Delta, Vietnam, while serving as an infantryman with the United States Army.

(2) Pfc. Gise was born on December 20, 1942, and graduated from Spring Grove Area High School in 1960.

(3) Pfc. Gise was drafted into the Army in January 1968.

(4) Pfc. Gise was awarded the Bronze Star for his service and his bravery.

(5) Pfc. Gise was survived by his wife, Linda Louis Gise, whom he had married in 1963, and his son, Donald Richard Gise, who was born 22 days after Pfc. Gise was killed in action.

(b) Designation.—That portion of State Route 3078 and State Route 3090 in York County from the intersection with State Route 116 to the intersection with State Route 3042 is hereby designated the Private First Class Donald R. Gise Memorial Road.

(c) Signs.—The Department of Transportation shall erect and maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the road to traffic in both directions on the road.

Section 9. PFC/POW William G. Koontz Memorial Bridge.

(a) Findings.—The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

(1) PFC William G. Koontz of New Enterprise was drafted into the United States Army during the Korean War.

(2) PFC Koontz arrived in South Korea on March 25, 1951, and along with other new arrivals was given only five days of basic combat training before being sent to the front lines.

(3) Less than a month later on April 22, 1951, the Soviet-backed Chinese Red Army launched a massive assault against the United Nations and American forces. PFC Koontz was on the front lines that day with Company E, 24th Division, Eighth Army.

(4) Company E's location was soon overtaken by the Chinese and PFC Koontz, along with 13 other men, hid in a cave to avoid capture. After four days without food or water, the men were forced to surrender.

(5) PFC Koontz and his fellow soldiers were taken to a temporary prison camp, from which they started a month-long march north to a permanent camp in North Korea. Many of PFC Koontz's companions did not survive the journey.

(6) For 888 days, PFC Koontz endured the brutal conditions at the Chong-song prison camp, living in mud-walled huts without sanitation

and surviving on a diet consisting mostly of infested grain while forced into hard labor.

(7) On August 11, 1953, PFC Koontz was released by the Chinese and eventually returned home to Pennsylvania, where he reunited with his family and lived a full life with his wife, to whom he was married for over 50 years, two sons, grandchildren and many other relatives.

(8) For his heroism and sacrifice, PFC Koontz was awarded the Good Conduct Medal, the Asiatic Pacific Theater Ribbon, the World War II Victory Ribbon and the Army Occupation Medal (Japan).

(b) Designation.—The bridge located on State Route 1005, known as Church View Road, Segment 0180, Offset 0000, over Beaver Creek, in South Woodbury Township, Bedford County, is hereby designated the PFC/POW William G. Koontz Memorial Bridge.

(c) Signs.—The Department of Transportation shall erect and maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the bridge to traffic in both directions on the bridge.

Section 10. TFC Blake T. Coble Memorial Bridge.

(a) Findings and declarations.—The General Assembly finds and declares:

(1) Trooper First Class Blake T. Coble, a member of the Pennsylvania State Police, passed away in the line of duty at the age of 47, on October 4, 2012.

(2) Born in Pittsburgh on November 15, 1964, Trooper First Class Coble was the son of Tom and Judy Clegg Coble.

(3) Trooper First Class Coble was a member of the Pennsylvania State Police for more than 24 years, and he had been attached to the Brighton Township Barracks for nearly 20 years.

(4) A beloved family member, dedicated police officer and avowed community steward, Trooper First Class Coble exemplified the best qualities of the human experience. He generously gave of his heart and time to enhance the quality of life of his family and community.

(b) Designation.—The bridge located on State Route 588 over Interstate 376 in Chippewa Township, Beaver County, is hereby designated the TFC Blake T. Coble Memorial Bridge.

(c) Signs.—The Department of Transportation shall erect and maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the bridge to traffic in both directions on the bridge.

Section 11. Effective date.

This act shall take effect in 60 days.

APPROVED—The 22nd day of December, A.D. 2017

TOM WOLF