Ohio House of Representatives

Committee on Transportation and Public Safety

Testimony: Ranking Member Michael Sheehy, House Bill 207

Chairman Green, Vice Chair McClain, and Members of the Ohio House Committee on Transportation and Public Safety, thank you for this unique opportunity to memorialize an American hero. The Sgt. Alex Drabik Memorial Highway will honor not only his memory, but that of all Americans that risked their lives to liberate the millions being oppressed under Adolf Hitler’s brutal regime.

Following his injury at the legendary Battle of the Bulge, Sgt. Alex Drabik and the 9th Armored Division pushed closer to the original German border. With mounting pressure from the Russian army in the east, Nazi engineers began demolishing each serviceable bridge into German territory. The Allies were running out of options.

In Sgt. Drabik’s own words, “We ran down the middle of the bridge, shouting as we went. I didn't stop because I knew that if I kept moving they couldn't hit me. My men were in squad column and not one of them was hit. We took cover in some bomb craters. Then we just sat and waited for others to come. That's the way it was”

He lived a long, decorated life, having been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and a purple heart for his actions at the Battle of the Bulge. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied forces in Europe, would later make the claim that the capture of the bridge shortened the war by six months, and may well have saved 50,000 American lives.

After we’ve had the chance to hear from his family, I ask my fellow committee members to support his memory, and this historic commemoration, reaffirming Ohio as a place that raises heroes.