

House Bill 794

Proponent Testimony

Provided by SSG Goudy's Family Members - Ellen Schmidt and Chuck Baker

Chairman Green, Vice Chairman McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present this proponent testimony today on House Bill 794.

Garren Ray Goudy was born in Belmont County, Powhatan Point Ohio on February 16, 1940. He graduated from Powhatan High School in 1958. He enlisted in the U.S. Army a few months later. Garren achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant. He was a member of the 82nd Airborne, 5th Special Forces when he volunteered for Vietnam in 1966. In Vietnam he volunteered for Mobile Strike Force Command (Mike Force) and was accepted. Mike Force was a volunteer force that lived with and trained indigenous soldiers. Their mission was to act as a quick reaction force for securing, reinforcing, and recapturing Special Forces A camps, as well as conduct special reconnaissance patrols, search and rescue, and search and destroy missions. They had a critical role in the search and rescue of downed American pilots because they were mobile and in close proximity of the DMZ.

Garren volunteered for and was accepted into Military Assistance Command Advisory Studies Observation Group. MACV-SOG was formed in January 1964 with Special Forces, Navy Seals and Air Commandos who had been training infiltrators for the CIA. MACV-SOG was a top-secret joint unconventional warfare task force created by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They were controlled by the Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities at the Pentagon. This was necessary because General Westmoreland had no authority to conduct operations outside of the borders of South Vietnam. They conducted missions in South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. As a side note, MACV-SOG had a 100% casualty rate. They also received over 2000 individual awards, 10 Medals of Honor, and 23 Distinguished Services Crosses.

It was on one of these missions that Garren's team was discovered and overrun by North Vietnamese soldiers. As one of the three Americans in this battle later wrote, it was the most ferocious firefights that he participated in. Garren called in an airstrike on his own position and was wounded by shrapnel. Surviving but unable to be extracted by helicopter, he used his weapon as a crutch and walked out until they could be safely extracted.

Garren was returned to the States and was offered a medical discharge, which he refused. He was told that he couldn't return to active duty until he could jump from an airplane again. When he was wounded a piece of shrapnel had removed a portion of his calf. While hiking out and waiting to be extracted, gangrene had developed and a large portion of his calf was removed. He had a brace made for his leg and successfully rejoined his unit. He volunteered to return to Vietnam in 1968.

On November 22, 1968 Gary and 2 other Americans led a group of indigenous soldiers on an assault of Nui Coto Mountain. American forces had tried unsuccessfully to take Nui Coto since the beginning of the war. It was almost impenetrable due to its rugged terrain and a massive tunnel complex. His two fellow Americans were wounded by sniper fire. According to one of them, Garren made his way to the first American and treated his wounds. As he was making his way to the second one, he was shot and killed.

Nui Coto was finally taken in February of 1969. Today it is a war shrine to the North Vietnamese Army and open to the public.

It would truly be a honor to have the stretch of roadway outside his hometown named in his honor. We thank you for your time and consideration.