



**Representative Angie King**  
Ohio's 84<sup>th</sup> District

Chairman McClain, Vice Chair Dobos, Ranking Member Grim, and members of the House Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on House Bill 133, designating portion of highway through St. Marys Ohio as the Army Ronnie Blair Memorial Highway.

Ronnie Blair was born in Ligon, Kentucky on May 4, 1948, the son of Mrs. Ella Blair and the late Ercel Blair. In 1953, the Blair's moved to St. Marys, Ohio, taking up residence at 718 Cleveland Ave. Ronnie attended Memorial High School, graduating in 1966. After High School, he worked at the local Goodyear Tire and Rubber plant before leaving to attend Greer Technical School in Chicago. Ronnie enlisting in the Army in October of 1967.

He completed basic training at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina before heading off to Infantry AIT at Ft. Polk, Louisiana. Ronnie was then assigned to one of the Regiments of the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, garrisoned at Scofield Barracks, Hawaii. On 6, March 1968, Ronnie Blair began his tour in Vietnam as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon Squad Leader with the Division's Charlie Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment (Wolfhounds). In September, 1968, he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant.

The morning of October 10, 1968, began around 10:30 am when Alpha Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment was inserted a few kilometers northeast of the village of Bang Trang in the Hau Nghia Province, South Vietnam; in the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division's Area of Operations. The lead elements came under heavy enemy fire in a cucumber field by what was later believed to be a battalion size enemy force of Viet Cong fighters.

Several soldiers of Alpha Company were gravely wounded. Efforts to recover the fallen men proved futile even after the remainder of the Battalion took to the battlefield. After several more

casualties, Charlie Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, including Sgt. Ronnie Blair, was inserted in support of 2/12. During the heavy enemy fire, at the risk of his own life, Sgt. Blair crawled into the open field and carried two wounded soldiers to safety.

He continued providing covering fire to allow the remainder of the force to withdraw; in doing so, he was mortally wounded by small arms fire. At around 8 pm, as night fell, the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division forces withdrew to allow for heavy air strikes. On the following morning, the men of Alpha Company reentered the battlefield and recovered the remains of their fallen comrades, one being Sgt. Blair.

It is reported that as a result of the battle on October 10, 1968, approximately 100 enemy soldiers were killed and the Division destroyed large caches of weapons and ammunition. Sgt. Ronnie Blair was initially listed as Missing in Action; his mother was notified as to his status by an Army Officer and later by telegram. The status was changed to Killed in Action on October 14, 1968. On the following day, Ella Blair was notified that her son, at the age of 20, had been lost in Vietnam.

Just days later, Sgt. Blair was due for R&R back in Hawaii where he planned to meet and marry his girlfriend, Leah Miller of St. Marys. Sgt. Blair's remains were escorted home by SFC James Ferguson of the United States Army.

Sgt. Ronnie Blair was laid to rest in Resthaven Memory Gardens, just outside of St. Marys. A proper Veterans plaque marks his grave.

On Thursday, January 23, 1969, Ella Blair was presented with the Silver Star Medal which was posthumously awarded to her son, Sgt. Ronnie Blair, for Gallantry in Action.

In addition to the Silver Star Medal, Sgt. Ronnie Blair was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart Medal and a Bronze Star Medal. His name can be found on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, on the Mall in Washington DC, Panel 41 West, Line 38.

It is an honor for me to have the opportunity to acknowledge the service of this great American and fellow Ohioan. Memorializing him through naming a portion of highway through St. Marys will not only pay tribute to his extraordinary accomplishments, but also instill a sense of pride and gratitude with the community that he was raised in.

I thank you for hearing testimony on House Bill 133 and welcome any questions.

