

62nd House District

Clermont County

Columbus Office

77 S. High Street

12th Floor

Columbus, Ohio 43215-6111



Contact

(614) 466-8134

(614) 719-0000 (Fax)

Rep62@ohiohouse.gov

www.ohiohouse.gov

Jean Schmidt
State Representative

Chairman Patton, Vice Chair Schaffer, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Transportation Committee, thank you for allowing me to present sponsor testimony on HB 171, to designate a portion of State Route 28 as the Captain Louis “John” Speidel Memorial Highway.

Designating this highway is a small, but important way to remember Capt. Speidel. He was a Vietnam veteran who was unfortunately killed in action. His friends and family came to me asking if there was some way to name a portion of the road where he grew up on in his honor. I was more than happy to help.

Capt. Speidel, whom everyone called John, graduated from Milford High School in 1964 in the top 1% of his class. His esteemed record took him to West Point, where he received Airborne and Ranger training which earned him his Ranger Tab.

He graduated in 1968 and was transferred to Ft. Knox for Armor training. Once again, he graduated at the top of his class. He spent a tour in Germany before being transferred to Ft. Walters, Texas and Ft. Rucker, Alabama for helicopter flight training. On December 28, 1970, he arrived in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot, flying missions from December 1970 to April 1971.

On April 23, 1971, Capt. Speidel received a radio transmission to transport a sergeant to replace a wounded Ranger sergeant in the A Shau Valley. His helicopter was one of two choppers approaching the valley in a hot landing zone. The other was shot down while trying to land, with the crew surviving. Capt. Speidel had to attempt a much more difficult landing, crash landing on the side of the mountain. As his chopper rolled, he and his co-pilot found themselves upside down. They remained in this position for close to 48 hours, afraid to radio for help in fear of becoming POWs.

Eventually, they were rescued, but John has suffered serious injuries. After a leg amputation and the removal of part of his stomach, his prognosis initially seemed favorable despite

the possibility he'd lose his other leg. Unfortunately, Capt. Speidel succumbed to his injuries on June 25, 1971.

For his honorable service, John Speidel received a Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Air Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Viet Nam Service Medal, and Republic of Vietnamese Campaign Medal. The city of Milford and the State of Ohio will forever be grateful for the sacrifice that Capt. Speidel made for his country. Though we cannot repay him for making the ultimate sacrifice, naming a portion of this highway is but one way to recognize his service. He is truly a hero, and this dedication will help his legacy live on. Thank you for your time, and I ask for your support in passing this bill. I welcome any questions that the committee might have.