



Representative Bill Roemer
38th House District

House Transportation and Public Safety Committee
House Bill 263 Sponsor Testimony
May 4th, 2021

Chairman Baldrige, Vice Chairman McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 263. This bill designates a mile-long portion of County Road 321 in Stark County as “Sgt. Vernon R. Judd Memorial Highway.”

Vernon R. Judd was one of ten children in his family, who were raised in the small community of Elton in Stark County. He enlisted in the United States Army on January 11th, 1948. After completing basic training at Fort Jackson in South Carolina, Sgt. Judd was deployed to Korea and later Japan, returning to Korea after the start of the Korean War in the summer of 1950. There he was assigned to Company D, 89th Medium Tank Battalion, 25th Infantry Division.

On November 28th, 1950, Sgt. Judd was captured near Ipsok, North Korea, and was imprisoned in the Hofong Prisoner of War Camp (also known as Pukchin-Tarigol). While imprisoned, he suffered horrific conditions during a bitterly cold winter, and on February 15th, 1951, he died of starvation, exposure, and dysentery. Had it not been for his capture, his enlistment would have been completed just a few short weeks earlier on January 11th. He was only 22 years old.

For 67 years, the Judd family pressed on, knowing Vernon had paid this ultimate price on behalf of his country, but without having recovered his remains. It was not until July 27th, 2018, after a summit between President Trump and Chairman Kim Jong Un of North Korea, that the remains of 55 American service members killed during the Korean War were returned to the United States. Sgt. Judd was among them, and on September 24th, 2019, he was finally laid to rest with full military honors at the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery.

For his tremendous sacrifice, Sgt. Judd was awarded numerous honors, including the Purple Heart, the Prisoner of War Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the Army of Occupation Medal with a Japan clasp, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Service Medal with 3 bronze service stars, the United Nations Service Medal, and the Republic of Korea War Service Medal.

The men and women who voluntarily sacrifice their lives and the comforts of freedom on American soil deserve to be recognized and remembered for their heroism. Sgt. Judd is among many fine Ohioans who made such sacrifices, enduring the worst of conditions in defense of freedom across the world. I hope that because of the passage of House Bill 263, this community will never forget Sgt. Judd's selfless courage to heed the call of duty, and that his legacy will be preserved and honored for generations to come.

I would like to again thank Chairman Baldridge and the committee for the opportunity to testify today, and I would welcome any questions you may have at this time.