

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

Chairman Baldridge, 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 enlisted in the Army on January 11th, 1948 and was later deployed to Korea for the start of the Korean War in 1950. His unit was captured on November 28, 1950 and he was imprisoned in the Hofong Prisoner of War Camp. He died on February 15, 1951 of starvation, dysentery, and exposure due to the coldest winter on record. His enlistment would have been completed on January 11, 1951.

Vernon R. Judd was a war hero. He endured harsh conditions while defending our country and died in a prisoner of war camp under circumstances that most cannot imagine. His letters home were not about him. He always asked how the kids (his younger siblings still at home) were doing, as well as what was happening in his hometown. He asked his family to write letters to other soldiers who did not receive any correspondence from their families. Vernon cared about his small town and would put on a fireworks display on the family farm for the town of Elton every year. He cared about his town and his country. Vernon followed in his older brother's footsteps, Raymond Judd was a decorated WWII war hero.

Vernon came from a close-knit family with strong morals and values that are still evident today in the extended Judd families. I wish I could have met my uncle Bobo (his nickname) and see the man he would have become had he come home. My father was the only sibling alive when Vernon's remains were brought home. He passed away this past December, but we spoke about the memorial highway last summer and how much it would mean to him and our families. The sacrifice that Sgt. Vernon R. Judd made needs to be recognized, and for every vehicle that drives past the memorial sign to think about the freedoms we are awarded due to the many brave, fallen heroes like Vernon we have lost. I hope with the passage of House Bill 263 his legacy and all other POW/KIA's will never be forgotten.

I would like to again thank Chairman Baldridge and the committee for the opportunity to testify today.

Jennifer Judd
niece of Sgt. Vernon R. Judd