

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1407 Session of 2015

INTRODUCED BY EVERETT, WHEELAND, HENNESSEY, KOTIK, BENNINGHOFF, COHEN, ROZZI, READSHAW, BAKER, DUSH, SONNEY, REGAN, DIGIROLAMO, HARHART, CAUSER, VEREB, MARSICO, PICKETT, MURT, McNEILL, MAJOR, MILLARD, DAVIS, DONATUCCI, GROVE, HAHN, RAPP, SANKEY, COX, GOODMAN, BARRAR, PAYNE, THOMAS, M. K. KELLER, FARINA, YOUNGBLOOD, GILLEN, JOZWIAK, BRADFORD AND MICCARELLI, JUNE 25, 2015

AS AMENDED ON SECOND CONSIDERATION, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 27, 2016

AN ACT

1 Designating a bridge on State Route 2014 over the Muncy Creek in
2 Muncy Creek Township, Lycoming County, as the Private Walter
3 L. Smith Spanish-American War Memorial Bridge; AND <--
4 DESIGNATING A PORTION OF STATE ROUTE 2044 IN LYCOMING COUNTY
5 AS THE LANCE CORPORAL WILLIAM F. MERRILL VIETNAM VETERANS
6 HIGHWAY.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. Private Walter L. Smith Spanish-American War
10 Memorial Bridge.

11 (a) Findings.--The General Assembly finds and declares as
12 follows:

13 (1) Private Walter L. Smith was born on April 27, 1877,
14 in Muncy, Lycoming County. He was the son of David S. Smith,
15 a Civil War veteran, and Hannah (Colley) Smith. Private Smith
16 served in the Spanish-American War and the Philippine
17 Insurrection.

1 (2) Private Smith first entered the service at
2 Williamsport on May 7, 1898, and mustered into service May
3 12, 1898, as a private in Company D, 12th Pennsylvania
4 Volunteer Infantry. He mustered out and was honorably
5 discharged on November 1, 1898.

6 (3) Private Smith reenlisted on November 11, 1898, at
7 Philadelphia during the Time of the Peace Jubilee, with the
8 rank of Private in the U.S. Army, Company I, 1st U.S.
9 Volunteer Infantry, as a member of the foot service, heavy
10 artillery. From December 29, 1898, to September 6, 1900, he
11 was assigned to Guanajay Barracks, Cuba. He arrived in the
12 Philippines on April 15, 1901.

13 (4) On July 28, 1901, while on a supply patrol with a
14 small detachment, Private Smith bravely and selflessly
15 defended members of his company against an overwhelming
16 ambush attack by approximately 60 native insurgents at Don
17 Carlon, Samar, Philippine Islands. During the engagement, his
18 Sergeant, the only other man who was armed, was shot and
19 killed by the insurgents. As Private Smith courageously and
20 fearlessly fought alone, two unarmed soldiers were able to
21 escape and return to camp. Private Smith was soon overpowered
22 by the enemy and severely wounded, being stabbed several
23 times. He was captured and taken prisoner. The U.S. Army
24 conducted multiple searches to locate Private Smith.

25 (5) Private Walter L. Smith was listed as missing in
26 action until February 10, 1902, when the fact was
27 established, beyond a doubt, that he had met his death at the
28 hands of the insurgents on the date of his capture, July 28,
29 1901. His remains were never recovered for return home to his
30 family in Muncy.

1 (b) Designation.--The bridge on State Route 2014 over the
2 Muncy Creek in Muncy Creek Township, Lycoming County, is hereby
3 designated the Private Walter L. Smith Spanish-American War
4 Memorial Bridge.

5 (c) Signs.--The Department of Transportation shall erect and
6 maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the bridge to
7 traffic in both directions of the bridge.

8 SECTION 2. LANCE CORPORAL WILLIAM F. MERRILL VIETNAM VETERANS <--
9 HIGHWAY.

10 (A) FINDINGS.--

11 (1) LANCE CORPORAL WILLIAM FRANKLIN MERRILL WAS BORN
12 AUGUST 20, 1948, IN MUNCY, LYCOMING COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, TO
13 JOSEPH A. AND SHEILA (WOLFE) MERRILL.

14 (2) LANCE CORPORAL MERRILL WAS A RESIDENT OF MUNCY,
15 PENNSYLVANIA, BEFORE ENLISTING IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE
16 CORPS ON MAY 6, 1968, AT 20 YEARS OF AGE.

17 (3) LANCE CORPORAL MERRILL WAS ASSIGNED TO INDIA
18 COMPANY, THIRD BATTALION, FIRST MARINES IN VIETNAM AS A
19 RADIOMAN.

20 (4) ON MAY 12, 1969, WHILE ON A SEARCH AND CLEAR
21 MISSION, LANCE CORPORAL MERRILL'S COMPANY CAME UNDER HEAVY
22 ENEMY SMALL ARMS AND REPEATING FIRE.

23 (5) WITH COMPLETE DISREGARD FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL SAFETY,
24 LANCE CORPORAL MERRILL RAN ACROSS OPEN AND FIRE-SWEPT TERRAIN
25 TO RETRIEVE A FALLEN COMRADE.

26 (6) LANCE CORPORAL MERRILL IMMEDIATELY ADMINISTERED
27 FIRST AID TO THE WOUNDED MARINE AND CARRIED THE MARINE TO A
28 SAFER AREA WHERE HE COULD RECEIVE FURTHER TREATMENT, HELPING
29 TO SAVE HIS LIFE.

30 (7) ON AUGUST 7, 1969, LANCE CORPORAL MERRILL HIMSELF

1 WAS WOUNDED BUT RETURNED TO DUTY.

2 (8) ON NOVEMBER 26, 1969, THE FIRST SQUAD OF THE THIRD
3 PLATOON, INCLUDING SQUAD LEADERS AND LIEUTENANTS, WAS SENT ON
4 A SPECIAL NIGHT ACTIVITY TO CONDUCT AN AMBUSH.

5 (9) AFTER THE AMBUSH, AS NINE MARINES WERE RETURNING TO
6 THEIR COMPANY'S POSITION, A WIRE ATTACHED TO A BOOBY TRAP WAS
7 TRIPPED.

8 (10) LANCE CORPORAL MERRILL GUARDED THE DEVICE AND
9 CALLED FOR HIS SERGEANT AS THE REST OF THE MARINES MADE THEIR
10 WAY THROUGH THE DANGER AREA.

11 (11) AFTER THE OTHER MARINES HAD SAFELY CROSSED THE
12 RAVINE WHERE THE BOOBY TRAP WAS LOCATED, THE DEVICE
13 DETONATED, KILLING LANCE CORPORAL MERRILL INSTANTLY AND
14 FATALLY WOUNDING HIS SERGEANT.

15 (B) DESIGNATION.--THE SECTION OF STATE ROUTE 2044 IN
16 LYCOMING COUNTY FROM THE BRIDGE OVER GLADE RUN TO THE
17 INTERSECTION OF STATE ROUTES 405 AND 422 IS HEREBY DESIGNATED
18 THE LANCE CORPORAL WILLIAM F. MERRILL VIETNAM VETERANS HIGHWAY.

19 (C) SIGNS.--THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SHALL ERECT AND
20 MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE SIGNS DISPLAYING THE NAME OF THE HIGHWAY TO
21 TRAFFIC IN BOTH DIRECTIONS ON THE HIGHWAY.

22 Section 2 3. Effective date.

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23 This act shall take effect in 60 days.