

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 303 Session of 2017

INTRODUCED BY TOPPER, BAKER, CALTAGIRONE, CAUSER, D. COSTA, COX, DIGIROLAMO, DOWLING, ENGLISH, FREEMAN, GABLER, HAHN, A. HARRIS, HENNESSEY, HICKERNELL, IRVIN, JAMES, KAUFFMAN, KINSEY, KNOWLES, KORTZ, LONGIETTI, MARSHALL, METZGAR, MILLARD, MURT, O'NEILL, PICKETT, READSHAW, RYAN, SAINATO, SANKEY, SOLOMON, TOEPEL, WARD AND NEILSON, FEBRUARY 3, 2017

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, FEBRUARY 3, 2017

AN ACT

1 Designating a bridge on that portion of State Route 1005, known
 2 as Church View Road, Segment 0180, Offset 0000, over Beaver
 3 Creek, South Woodbury Township, Bedford County, as the
 4 PFC/POW William G. Koontz Memorial Bridge.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
 6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. PFC/POW William G. Koontz Memorial Bridge.

8 (a) Findings.--The General Assembly finds and declares as
 9 follows:

10 (1) PFC William G. Koontz of New Enterprise, was drafted
 11 into the United States Army during the Korean War.

12 (2) PFC Koontz arrived in South Korea on March 25, 1951,
 13 and along with other new arrivals was given only five days of
 14 basic combat training before being sent to the front lines.

15 (3) Less than a month later on April 22, 1951, the
 16 Soviet-backed Chinese Red Army launched a massive assault
 17 against the United Nations and American forces. PFC Koontz

1 was on the front lines that day with Company E, 24th
2 Division, Eighth Army.

3 (4) Company E's location was soon overtaken by the
4 Chinese and PFC Koontz along with 13 other men hid in a cave
5 to avoid capture. After four days without food or water, the
6 men were forced to surrender.

7 (5) PFC Koontz and his fellow soldiers were taken to a
8 temporary prison camp, from which they started a month-long
9 march north to a permanent camp in North Korea. Many of PFC
10 Koontz's companions did not survive the journey.

11 (6) For 888 days, PFC Koontz endured the brutal
12 conditions at the Chong-song prison camp, living in mud-
13 walled huts without sanitation and surviving on a diet
14 consisting mostly of infested grain while forced into hard
15 labor.

16 (7) On August 11, 1953, PFC Koontz was released by the
17 Chinese and eventually returned home to Pennsylvania, where
18 he reunited with his family and lived a full life with his
19 wife, to whom he was married for over 50 years, two sons,
20 grandchildren and many other relatives.

21 (8) For his heroism and sacrifice, PFC Koontz was
22 awarded the Good Conduct Medal, the Asiatic Pacific Theater
23 Ribbon, the World War II Victory Ribbon and the Army
24 Occupation Medal (Japan).

25 (b) Designation.--The bridge located on State Route 1005,
26 known as Church View Road, Segment 0180, Offset 0000, over
27 Beaver Creek, in South Woodbury Township, Bedford County, is
28 hereby designated the PFC/POW William G. Koontz Memorial Bridge.

29 (c) Signs.--The Department of Transportation shall erect and
30 maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the bridge to

- 1 traffic in both directions on the bridge.
- 2 Section 2. Effective date.
- 3 This act shall take effect in 60 days.