

Legislative Analysis



PFC RONALD JAMES FITCH MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

Phone: (517) 373-8080
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House Bill 4735 as reported from committee

Sponsor: Rep. Graham Filler

Committee: Transportation

Complete to 6-16-21

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4735 amend the Michigan Memorial Highway Act to designate highway US-127 from Wildcat Road to Livingston Road in Clinton County as the “PFC Ronald James Fitch Memorial Highway.”

Proposed MCL 250.1103

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

According to committee testimony and the Military Honor Wall, Ronald James Fitch was born on February 10, 1947. He was a resident of St. Johns, in Clinton County. PFC Fitch enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, completed basic training, and was assigned to 3353-Amphibious Cargo Carrier Operator as his Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). PFC Fitch was later assigned to Otter Platoon, H&S Company, 3rd Motor Transport BN, 3rd MarDiv, III MAF. He was deployed to Thua Thien Providence Vietnam in early 1967 and assigned to Operation Big Horn in April 1967.

Operation Big Horn commenced on April 4, and PFC Fitch was deployed, with his company, out of Dong Ha along the “Street Without Joy.” On April 5, a convoy with PFC Fitch was ambushed, and two resupply Otters were disabled, with five wounded. Delta tried to break through to relieve the ambush site, but withdrew to allow the enemy to penetrate through the ambush site to set up a defense perimeter. The decision was made to sweep the adjacent hamlet Ap Dong Ho to set up a secure evacuation for the wounded. Thirty meters from the hamlet, the lead platoon was met with heavy machine gun and small arm fire, along with mortars and rocket propelled grenades (RPGs). All but one in the lead platoon were killed in action. Private First Class Ronald James Fitch was 20 years of age.

Dedicating a portion of highway US-127 in Clinton County would be an appropriate way to honor his service and ultimate sacrifice for our country.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Section 2 of the Michigan Memorial Highway Act indicates that the state transportation department shall provide for the erection of suitable markers indicating the name of the highway only “when sufficient private contributions are received to completely cover the cost of erecting and maintaining those markers.” As a result, the bill has no state or local fiscal impact.

POSITIONS:

The Michigan Department of Transportation indicated a neutral position on the bill. (6-8-21)

Legislative Analyst: E. Best
Fiscal Analyst: William E. Hamilton

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