

Date of Hearing: June 13, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Laura Friedman, Chair

ACR 202 (Robert Rivas) – As Introduced June 6, 2022

SUBJECT: PFC George Howell Memorial Highway

SUMMARY: This measure would designate the portion of State Route 101 in the County of Monterey, at post marker 92.190, to the Prunedale South Road Overcrossing at post marker 94.071, as the PFC George Howell Memorial Highway.

EXISTING LAW: Assigns the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) the responsibility of operating and maintaining state highways. This includes the installation and maintenance of highway signs.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown, but the measure requests that Caltrans determine the cost of appropriate signage consistent with requirements for the state highway system, and only erect the appropriate signage upon receiving donations from non-state sources covering the cost.

COMMENTS: Private First Class George J. Howell enlisted in the United States Army at 24 years of age. Howell left Prunedale, California, for boot camp in Georgia in search of economic security for his wife and two small children, and training that might transfer to the civilian job market once his active duty enlistment was finished. The Army seemed a natural fit for Howell, as his father, who died in 2001, served in the Army during the Vietnam War and other family members had also been in the military.

Howell signed up for a three-year term on active duty, followed by reserve duty. After completing basic training, Howell's assigned unit, the 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division, was deployed from Fort Drum, New York, to Iraq. While in Iraq, Howell was assigned as a driver in the motor pool, where his division had responsibility to provide security in the volatile Kirkuk region and assist in training Iraqi security forces.

On December 21, 2007, Howell was killed when his vehicle struck a roadside bomb outside Riyadh, north of Baghdad, in a blast that injured four other soldiers, two critically. Howell was awarded a Purple Heart and the Army Service Ribbon for his commitment and sacrifice for his country.

Howell leaves behind his loving wife, Kristen, and two children, his son, Raiden, and daughter, Niya. Howell's family and friends are extremely proud of his service to his country and his desire to provide for his family. Private First Class George Howell will be missed by all who knew him.

According to the author, “ACR 202 will honor Private First Class George Howell for his heroic efforts to protect our lives as well as the freedom we enjoy every day. PFC Howell followed in the footsteps of his father, who had served in the Vietnam War. I’m proud to honor PFC George Howell and the ultimate sacrifice he made for our nation.”

Committee Comments: It is the intent of the Assembly Transportation Committee to use the Memorial Highway Naming process to honor deceased Californians who have made significant public service contributions and also to reflect the diversity of our state. Currently, most named highways in California are for fallen male public safety officers, who made the ultimate sacrifice, and for whom we are indebted. However, these names do not fully represent the wide range of types of public service contributions, as well as the gender and racial diversity of California's communities. The Assembly Transportation Committee is committed to working with the Department of Transportation in the upcoming year to improve the naming process to ensure greater equity and to better represent the diversity of California.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**Support**

None of file.

Opposition

None of file.

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