

Date of Hearing: July 3, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Laura Friedman, Chair

ACR 85 (Villapudua) – As Introduced May 24, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Master Sergeant Richard Pittman Memorial Highway

**SUMMARY:** Designates the portion of Interstate 5 between Roth Road, at postmile R19.584, and French Camp Road, at postmile R22.508, in the City of Stockton as the Master Sergeant Richard Pittman Memorial Highway. The measure would also request the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to determine the cost of appropriate signs showing this special designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources to cover that cost, to erect those signs.

**EXISTING LAW:** Assigns 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:** Richard Allan Pittman was born on May 26, 1945, in French Camp, in the County of San Joaquin and graduated from Franklin High School in the City of Stockton in 1964. Despite being legally blind in one eye, Richard was motivated to serve his country after hearing President John F. Kennedy say, “Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country,” and was determined to enlist in the military. After being declared medically unfit for combat by the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, Richard enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve in 1965 by bluffing on his eye test, enlisting in the Marine Corps later that year. After volunteering for a tour in Vietnam in 1966, Richard passed up an engineering position in order to be an infantryman.

On July 24, 1966, while Richard was serving as a lance corporal in Company I, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division, his unit was moving down a narrow jungle trail near the demilitarized zone when marines ahead of his position were attacked by a larger, concealed enemy force. Upon hearing the attack, Richard grabbed a machine gun and belts of extra ammunition and rushed ahead, firing into the enemy position, and destroying two enemy automatic weapons as he continued to advance into a withering hail of enemy mortar and small-arms fire to reach wounded marines 50 yards up the trail until, as Richard reached the position where the leading marines had fallen, he was suddenly confronted with a bold frontal attack by 30 to 40 enemy soldiers. Totally disregarding his own safety, Richard calmly established a position in the middle of the trail and raked the advancing enemy soldiers with devastating machine gun fire until his machine gun failed. Richard kept firing with a Vietnamese submachine gun and a pistol, when he ran out of ammunition, he threw a grenade, his last remaining weapon, at the retreating North Vietnamese soldiers, and then returned to his platoon. President Lyndon B. Johnson presented the Medal of Honor to Richard at the White House on May 14, 1968.

After retirement as a master sergeant on October 27, 1988, Richard continued to serve his country in a contract position at Marine Memorial Golf Course at Camp Pendleton for several

years until fully retiring in the City of Stockton. Richard passed away on October 13, 2016, in the City of Stockton. He is survived by his wife, Patricia; four daughters: Gina Pittman, Tina Pittman-Carr, Julie Pittman, and Richelle Pittman-Kiyabu; his nephew, Brian Pittman, and nine grandchildren.

In recognition of Richard Pittman's service to this country, it would be fitting to designate the portion of Interstate 5 between Roth Road and French Camp Road in the City of Stockton in his honor.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

None on file

**Opposition**

None on file

**Analysis Prepared by:** Aimee Anspach / TRANS. / (916) 319-2093