

Date of Hearing: June 21, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Laura Friedman, Chair

SCR 28 (Umberg) – As Amended April 21, 2021

**SENATE VOTE:** 38-0

**SUBJECT:** Korean War Veterans Memorial Highway

**SUMMARY:** Designates the portion of State Highway Route 37 between the Atherton Avenue undercrossing at postmile 13.773 and its junction with State Highway Route 121 at postmile 3.900 as the Korean War Veterans 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:** The Korean War was a historically significant armed conflict, fought from June 25, 1950, to July 27, 1953, that featured a coalition of 21 United Nations (UN) member countries contributing to the defense of a democratic Korea.

Reverberations of this war continue to affect global politics and the region, with no official peace treaty ever replacing the 1953 Korean War Armistice. The amount of lives lost during this conflict was appalling, with over 929,000 military casualties and over 1,732,000 civilian casualties.

Members of the United States Armed Forces made significant contributions and sacrifices throughout this conflict, committing 5,700,000 military personnel, of whom over 36,000 were killed in action. The conditions of this conflict were especially brutal, marked by freezing temperatures and a seemingly constant loss and recapturing of territory by both sides.

One hundred forty-five United States military personnel received the Congressional Medal of Honor for valor in combat and 14,388 received a Purple Heart, a statistic that personifies the extraordinary bravery and sacrifice of American military personnel throughout the conflict. Despite the historical and global significance of the Korean War, and the extraordinary bravery and sacrifice displayed by American veterans, this conflict has become discounted and colloquially known as the “Forgotten War”.

Upon returning to the United States, many veterans felt a sense of alienation and recalled going home as a “lonely” experience. After the war, many essential benefits were reduced for newly minted veterans, with the Department of Veterans Affairs sustaining a substantial budget decrease along with reductions in unemployment benefits and GI Bill benefits. The veterans’ loss of these benefits was devastating, causing hospital closures, doctors to be fired, increased wait times for services, and refusals to treat veterans’ “minor” ailments, all of which were disastrous for Korean War veterans.

Countless Korean War veterans have persevered through these hardships and have established vibrant communities in California and the United States. Current and future generations will be enriched by learning about the sacrifices made by Korean War veterans and how the Korean War and its veterans helped shape the world.

A memorial highway located in California near the same 38th parallel that demarcates North and South Korea constitutes a fitting and proper contribution to the remembrance of our Korean War veterans.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:****Support**

None on file

**Opposition**

None on file

**Analysis Prepared by:** Julia Kingsley / TRANS. / (916) 319-2093