
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2312 Session of
2024

INTRODUCED BY KEPHART, KINSEY, GUENST, SMITH, BURGOS, CAUSER,
SCHMITT, STAATS, RAPP, MOUL, DELLOSO, GLEIM, JAMES,
BERNSTINE, GILLEN, KAUFFMAN AND BANTA, MAY 21, 2024

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, MAY 21, 2024

AN ACT

1 Designating a bridge, identified as Bridge Key 11226, carrying
2 Pennsylvania Route 53 over the Clearfield Creek in Bigler
3 Township, Clearfield County, as the Sergeant John Harold
4 Branic Memorial Bridge.

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

7 Section 1. Sergeant John Harold Branic Memorial Bridge.

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

10 (1) John Harold Branic was born April 4, 1916, in
11 Madera, Clearfield County.

12 (2) Sergeant Branic enlisted in the United States Marine
13 Corps at the start of World War II after graduating high
14 school and was a member of L Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th
15 Marines.

16 (3) On August 18, 1942, the Marines from L Company, 3rd
17 Battalion, 5th Marines began a combat patrol on Guadalcanal
18 that became known as Matanikau One.

1 (4) The Marines probed six miles westward to the
2 Matanikau River where, on August 19, 1942, the Japanese
3 spotted the Marines atop Hill 73 and directed mortars and
4 small arms fire against them.

5 (5) During this attack, Sergeant Branic was killed but
6 the Marines counterattacked and succeeded in driving the
7 Japanese back.

8 (6) The location of Sergeant Branic's remains were not
9 reported to headquarters as the L Company executive officer
10 was also killed during the action.

11 (7) On August 19, 1942, Sergeant Branic was officially
12 declared dead and earned the Purple Heart posthumously,
13 although his body was never recovered and he was officially
14 listed as missing in action.

15 (8) Sergeant Branic was memorialized at Manila American
16 Cemetery on the Tablets of the Missing.

17 (9) In 1992, work commenced at the Guadalcanal Memorial
18 on the Skyline Ridge atop Hill 73 and, during the excavation,
19 the remains of a marine were found with a ring with the
20 initials J.H.B. on the band.

21 (10) The remains were recovered and transported to
22 Hawaii where, in 2004, an American researcher with the First
23 Marine Division Association reported that a Solomon Islander
24 had possession of the ring with the inscription J.H.B.

25 (11) Joint POW/MIA Accounting Agency scientists and
26 Armed Forces DNA Identification specialists used
27 mitochondrial DNA to identify the remains of Sergeant Branic
28 and he was no longer considered missing in action.

29 (12) Sergeant Branic was the first Madera resident to be
30 killed during World War II.

1 (13) On August 9, 2006, Sergeant Branich was laid to rest
2 in Arlington National Cemetery.

3 (b) Designation.--The bridge, identified as Bridge Key
4 11226, carrying Pennsylvania Route 53 over the Clearfield Creek
5 in Bigler Township, Clearfield County, is designated the
6 Sergeant John Harold Branich Memorial Bridge.

7 (c) Signs.--The Department of Transportation shall erect and
8 maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the bridge to
9 traffic in both directions on the bridge.

10 Section 2. Effective date.

11 This act shall take effect in 60 days.