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**Subject:** Testimony for HB2124 Kansas Senate Transportation Committee

March 4, 2025. 0830AM. Kansas Senate Transportation Committee. 546-S

My name is Glenn Nelson Jr., I am a retired Veteran with over 24 years of service with the Army National Guard and Active Army, a Disabled Veteran, a Lifetime member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans groups.

I am the POW/MIA Chairman for VFW Post 7774 in Wakefield, Kansas, my research and study regarding POW/MIA is ongoing. I have listened to MIA family members in person to learn what they experienced. I am not an expert..... I cannot fully understand what it was like to be a POW/MIA Family member. I am, however, an advocate who believes in remembering and honoring what POW/MIAs went thru, physical and mental abuse, sometimes torture, and many times a sense of being alone. The hardship on the families alone is more than most could imagine.

I am sure this committee is aware that Kansas has Memorial Highways for most every war in our history. In addition, numerous individuals including some Veterans, Veterans Groups, Gold Star Families, Purple Heart, Medal of Honor, Troopers, and elected officials have designated Highways and Bridges. I was very surprised when I learned Kansas does not have a Highway or Bridge designated for POW/MIAs and decided to do something about it. Many other States already have POW/MIA Memorial Highways, Bridges, Parkways, or Interchanges. Oregon, Idaho, California, Washington, Colorado, Oklahoma, Michigan, Florida, Maryland, Montana, Wyoming, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and New York to name a few.

POW/MIAs sometimes never return to their families, today we still have remains being returned from past wars with no family to greet them. Some return but their remains are never identified, some may have been captured but were not sent home after the war. Kansas Issues Ex. POW License Plates and KDOT informed me that only 14 Ex. POW's currently have those plates.

I want to share 4 stories from POW/MIAs associated with Wakefield Ks.

When I joined the VFW, I met a WWII Veteran from Wakefield, Russell Jevons. TSGT Russell Nolan Jevons was a founding member of our VFW and served in World War II, as a flight engineer and top-turret gunner in a B-17. What I didn't know until later was that his plane was shot down on his 3rd mission over France Dec. 31, 1943. The plane's nose was shot out and had 3 engines damaged. All ten crewmembers got out which was rare and 7 of the ten were captured. TSGT Jevons was one of very small % of those shot down to evade capture. Assisted by French underground, he made his way over the mountains into Spain in the dead of winter and eventually made it back home to Wakefield, Ks. He passed away and is buried in Highland, Cemetery, Wakefield, Ks. His son Keith, also a Veteran has educated us on what it was like for POW/MIA Families.

MAJOR Larry Eugene Martin is a Vietnam War MIA listed from Wakefield. CPT Martin served as electronic warfare officer flying Wild Weasel Missions during the Vietnam War. Witnesses saw only one parachute when his plane was shot down on 15 July 1968. Initially, both in the plane were listed as MIA. The Pilot survived several years as a POW but finally made it home. CPT Martin did not survive the crash. His remains were not returned and identified until Nov. 1989, but he was finally brought home and laid to rest in Highland Cemetery.

1LT William George Alsop was a co-pilot in World War II. His plane left China on a return flight over the "Hump" Jan 26, 1943, a treacherous route over the Himalayan mountains but neither his plane, nor the crew have ever been found. He was declared dead, but his remains have never been recovered and brought home.

Seaman Turk served in World War II aboard the Battleship, USS California. On Dec. 7, 1941, when it was attacked and sunk at Pearl Harbor. He was not among the survivors and was not positively identified until 2021. His family member, Carmen Eakes resides in Wakefield. He was listed as MIA until his remains were identified and brought back to Kansas and put to rest at the VA Cemetery near Manhattan Airport.

These are only 4 the stories of Kansas POW/MIA.

HonorStates.org, lists 179 POW and 1,402 MIA from Kansas, (WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam), According to Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, 1,179 are still missing/Unaccounted for from Kansas from WWII thru the Cold War. All of them have stories. Far too many family members have passed away before this action to Designate a POW/MIA Memorial Highway/Bridge in Kansas. It is long overdue. It is also the right thing to do.

Thank you again for allowing me to speak. .