



John Nygren

WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 89TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**Assembly Bill 699 Testimony
State Rep. John Nygren
December 5, 2017**

Thank you Chairman Ripp and members of the Assembly Committee on Transportation for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 699.

This bill will designate the bridge on HWY 41 that spans the Oconto River in the City of Oconto to be named the *PFC Valentine T. Warrichaiet Memorial Bridge*. Valentine was killed in action on July 9th, 1953 while serving in the United States Army and was the only citizen of the City of Oconto to be killed in action during the Korean War.

My office was approached by friends and family of Valentine who wished to have his name forever memorialized in their community. Valentine's classmates regarded him as a friend and a good team-player. He arrived in Korea in April 1953 and was assigned to Company 1, 17th Infantry Regiment of the 7th Infantry Division, a front line unit. He was acting as squad leader in the absence of his sergeant and was directing his squad of Infantrymen on "Pork Chop Hill" when he lost his life. We were also informed of the emotional heartache his family endured for months, unsure whether he was in fact alive, captured, or dead.

The designation of this bridge in honor of Private First Class Warrichaiet has overwhelming community support. We have received letters of support from the Oconto County Board, Oconto City Council, Oconto Kiwanis Club, Oconto Lions Club, Jones-Modrow-Young American Legion Post 74, AMVETS Post 63, Lester J Crane VFW Post, and Elks Lodge No. 887.

There is no fiscal amount attached to this bill as it will use funds already set aside by the Department of Transportation to pay for the sign designations.

Valentine was not only a soldier but also a son, a brother, and a friend. For his service, he was awarded the Purple Heart, the Combat Infantry Badge, the Korean Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Presidential Unit Citation, and the Republic of Korea War Service Medal. Valentine's ultimate sacrifice for his country deserves to be memorialized and commemorated.

Clyde Bridger, Vernon Warrichaiet, and Melvin Warrichaiet were instrumental in moving this bill forward and you will hear from them in a minute about Valentine's life and legacy.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before your committee today on this piece of legislation and welcome any questions you may have at this time.