
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 96 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY LANGERHOLC, JANUARY 6, 2023

REFERRED TO TRANSPORTATION, JANUARY 6, 2023

AN ACT

1 Designating a bridge, identified as Bridge Key 8537, carrying
2 Pennsylvania Route 869 over a tributary of the Little
3 Conemaugh River in Jackson Township, Cambria County, as the
4 Sergeant Vance Stephan Keslar Memorial Bridge; designating a
5 bridge, identified as Bridge Key 8392, carrying Pennsylvania
6 Route 53 over Bruebaker Run in Dean Township, Cambria County,
7 as the U.S. Army Technical Sergeant Joseph F. Johnston
8 Memorial Bridge; designating a bridge, identified as Bridge
9 Key 43267, on that portion of State Route 3041, also known as
10 Dishong Mountain Road, over U.S. Route 22 in Jackson
11 Township, Cambria County, as the Technical Sergeant Mike
12 Capelli Memorial Bridge; and making a repeal.

13 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
14 hereby enacts as follows:

15 Section 1. Sergeant Vance Stephan Keslar Memorial Bridge.

16 (a) Findings.--The General Assembly finds and declares as
17 follows:

18 (1) Sergeant Vance Stephan Keslar was born in
19 Beaverdale, Cambria County.

20 (2) Sergeant Keslar dropped out of school and joined the
21 Civilian Conservation Corps.

22 (3) Later, Sergeant Keslar joined the United States Army
23 as a private.

1 (4) Sergeant Keslar was at Schofield Barracks on
2 December 7, 1941.

3 (5) As the Japanese reached Pearl Harbor, Sergeant
4 Keslar led a charge to the ammunition depot where the group
5 was told by the supply sergeant that he had no orders to
6 release weapons.

7 (6) Sergeant Keslar and others pushed aside the supply
8 sergeant and ran into the depot, grabbing old water-cooled
9 machine guns.

10 (7) Sergeant Keslar climbed to the top of the building
11 and started firing at the Japanese forces.

12 (8) Sergeant Keslar was awarded a Bronze Star for his
13 heroic actions during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

14 (9) Sergeant Keslar returned home and enrolled in the
15 Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

16 (10) Before receiving his bachelor's degree, Sergeant
17 Keslar earned his GED.

18 (11) Sergeant Keslar passed away on July 22, 2003.

19 (b) Designation.--The bridge, identified as Bridge Key 8537,
20 carrying Pennsylvania Route 869, over a tributary of the Little
21 Conemaugh River in Jackson Township, Cambria County, is
22 designated as the Sergeant Vance Stephan Keslar Memorial Bridge.

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

26 Section 2. U.S. Army Technical Sergeant Joseph F. Johnston
27 Memorial Bridge.

28 (a) Findings.--The General Assembly finds and declares as
29 follows:

30 (1) Technical Sergeant Joseph F. Johnston was born

1 November 27, 1917, and grew up in Dean, Cambria County.

2 (2) He was a 1938 graduate of Cresson High School.

3 (3) In June 1941, Technical Sergeant Johnston enlisted
4 in the United States Army and was assigned to the 9th
5 Division, 39th Infantry Regiment where he became a technical
6 sergeant and platoon leader.

7 (4) Technical Sergeant Johnston's service took him to
8 every Atlantic theater of action including the United
9 Kingdom, North Africa and most of Western Europe.

10 (5) Technical Sergeant Johnston fought in Algeria,
11 Morocco, Tunisia, Sicily, Normandy, England, Belgium and
12 Germany and was at the invasion of Normandy on June 12, 1944.

13 (6) During the battles of Tunisia, Technical Sergeant
14 Johnston, then a corporal, took command of his platoon in the
15 absence of his platoon leader and sergeant. In blackout
16 conditions, Technical Sergeant Johnston led his platoon under
17 heavy enemy shelling and machine gun fire and through
18 difficult mountainous terrain to deliver supplies to those
19 fighting on the front lines.

20 (7) For his actions during the battles of Tunisia,
21 Technical Sergeant Johnston was awarded the Legion of Merit.

22 (8) Technical Sergeant Johnston also received a Bronze
23 Star and Sliver Star for his service to our country.

24 (9) Technical Sergeant Johnston passed away on November
25 7, 2010.

26 (b) Designation.--The bridge, identified as Bridge Key 8392,
27 carrying Pennsylvania Route 53, over Bruebaker Run in Dean
28 Township, Cambria County, is designated as the U.S. Army
29 Technical Sergeant Joseph F. Johnston Memorial Bridge.

30 (c) Signs.--The Department of Transportation shall erect and

1 maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the bridge to
2 traffic in both directions on the bridge.

3 Section 3. Technical Sergeant Mike Capelli Memorial Bridge.

4 (a) Findings.--The General Assembly finds and declares as
5 follows:

6 (1) Technical Sergeant Mike Capelli was born in Nanty
7 Glo, Cambria County, on May 15, 1918.

8 (2) He served in the United States Army during World War
9 II as part of Company I, 180th Infantry Regiment, 45th
10 Infantry Division.

11 (3) He was wounded many times and performed many acts of
12 heroism for which he was decorated during his tours of Italy,
13 Germany and France.

14 (4) On May 28, 1944, in Aprilia, Italy, Technical
15 Sergeant Capelli's squad was impeded by the enemy's machine
16 guns. Technical Sergeant Capelli deployed his men and led
17 them in an assault on the enemy's position. Although
18 outnumbered and faced with intense fire, he succeeded after
19 fierce hand-to-hand fighting in destroying the enemy
20 position. For these actions, he was awarded an Oak Leaf
21 Cluster to his Silver Star Medal.

22 (5) On January 8, 1945, in Wildenguth, France, Technical
23 Sergeant Capelli was shot and killed while organizing his men
24 during an attack by a reinforced band of German SS Troopers.

25 (6) His awards include the Silver Star with Oak Leaf
26 Cluster, Bronze Star and Purple Heart with two Oak Leaf
27 Clusters.

28 (b) Designation.--The bridge, identified as Bridge Key
29 43267, on that portion of State Route 3041, also known as
30 Dishong Mountain Road, over U.S. Route 22 in Jackson Township,

1 Cambria County, is designated as the Technical Sergeant Mike
2 Capelli Memorial Bridge.

3 (c) Signs.--The Department of Transportation shall erect and
4 maintain appropriate signs displaying the name of the bridge to
5 traffic in both directions on the bridge and both directions on
6 the crossing route.

7 Section 4. Repeals.

8 Repeals are as follows:

9 (1) The General Assembly declares that the repeal under
10 paragraph (2) is necessary to effectuate the designation
11 under section 3.

12 (2) Section 18 of the act of June 30, 2021 (P.L.339,
13 No.64), is repealed.

14 Section 5. Effective date.

15 This act shall take effect in 60 days.