



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

### *Commonwealth Transportation Board*

Shannon Valentine  
Chairperson

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*Agenda item # 6*

### RESOLUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD

December 11, 2019

#### MOTION

**Made By: Mr. Yates, Seconded By: Mr. Williams**  
**Action: Motion Carried, Unanimously**

#### **Title: Bridge Naming: “Willie “Roger” Griffith Memorial Bridge”**

**WHEREAS**, the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors wishes to honor and memorialize the life and ultimate sacrifice of Specialist 4<sup>th</sup> Class Willie “Roger” Griffith. He grew up and went to school in Tazewell County. As a soldier in the United States Army he was a member of Special Four B Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 502<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division USARV. While on a search and destroy mission in Vietnam on May 18, 1967, with his platoon under heavy fire, Specialist 4<sup>th</sup> Class Griffith charged through enemy fire to an exposed position to enable his comrades to find covered positions. He was killed in action following that act of heroism, which earned him acclaim from the United States government and from the Republic of South Vietnam; and

**WHEREAS**, Specialist 4<sup>th</sup> Class Griffith received two medals from the South Vietnamese government and at that time was one of only a few American soldiers to be awarded a medal by a foreign government. He received the Vietnamese military medal of merit and the military medal with an Oak Leaf cluster. He was also awarded a Bronze Star for valor, a Bronze Star with an Oak Leaf cluster and a Purple Heart by the United States government. He is also memorialized on the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial in Washington, DC. His name is inscribed on Panel 20E Line 28; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with § 33.2-213 of the *Code of Virginia*, the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors has requested, by resolution dated November 7, 2019, that the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), to honor and memorialize the life and ultimate sacrifice of Specialist 4<sup>th</sup> Class Willie “Roger” Griffith, name the bridge on State Route 16,

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Stoney Ridge Road, over Horsepen Creek, Tazewell County as the "Willie "Roger" Griffith Memorial Bridge"; and

**WHEREAS**, § 33.2-213 provides that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) shall place and maintain appropriate signs indicating the names of highways, bridges, interchanges, and other transportation facilities named by the CTB and requires that the costs of producing, placing, and maintaining such signs shall be paid by the localities in which they are located or by the private entity whose name is attached to the transportation facility so named; and

**WHEREAS**, by resolution, Tazewell County has agreed to pay VDOT for the costs of producing, placing, and maintaining the signs calling attention to this naming.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, pursuant to § 33.2-213 of the *Code of Virginia*, the CTB hereby names the bridge on State Route 16, Stoney Ridge Road, over Horsepen Creek, Tazewell County as the "Willie "Roger" Griffith Memorial Bridge"; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that VDOT is directed to produce, place, and maintain the signs calling attention to this naming, and secure payment from Tazewell County for these costs as required by law.

#####

## CTB Decision Brief

### Bridge Naming: “Willie “Roger” Griffith Memorial Bridge”

**Issue:** Commemorative naming of the bridge on State Route 16, Stoney Ridge Road, over Horsepen Creek, Tazewell County as the “Willie “Roger” Griffith Memorial Bridge”.

**Facts:** Tazewell County enacted a resolution on November 7, 2019 to honor the life and sacrifice of Specialist 4<sup>th</sup> Class Willie “Roger” Griffith. Mr. Griffith attended schools in Amonate, Bishop and Tazewell County, Virginia. He was a member of Special Four B Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 502<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division USARV.

On May 18, 1967, while on a search and destroy mission in Vietnam, with his platoon under heavy fire, Specialist 4<sup>th</sup> Class Willie “Roger” Griffith charged through enemy fire to an exposed position to enable his comrades to find covered positions. He was killed in action following that act of heroism which earned him acclaim from the United States government and from the Republic of South Vietnam. He received 2 medals from the South Vietnamese government and at the time was one of only a few American soldiers to be awarded a medal by a foreign government.

He received the Vietnamese military medal of merit and the military medal with an Oak Leaf cluster. An Oak Leaf cluster, which is the highest ranking cluster, is placed on military awards and decoration to denote those who have received more than one bestowal of a particular decoration. He was also awarded a Bronze Star for valor, a Bronze Star with an Oak Leaf cluster and a Purple Heart by the United States government.

Specialist 4<sup>th</sup> Class Willie “Roger” Griffith is also memorialized on the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial in Washington, DC. His name is inscribed on Panel 20E Line 28.

**Recommendations:** The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) recommends this request be approved.

**Action Required by CTB:** The *Code of Virginia* requires a majority of the CTB members to approve a resolution naming a highway or bridge, as appropriate. A resolution will be provided for the Board’s consideration.

**Result if Approved:** The bridge on State Route 16, Stoney Ridge Road, over Horsepen Creek, Tazewell County will be named as the “Willie “Roger” Griffith Memorial Bridge”. In accordance with law and by local resolution, Tazewell County agrees to pay the costs of producing, placing, and maintaining the signs calling attention to this naming.

**Options:** Approve, Deny, or Defer.

**Public Comments/Reactions:** VDOT is not aware of any opposition to this proposal.



## WILLIE "ROGER" GRIFFITH MEMORIAL BRIDGE RESOLUTION

Bridge Naming on Route 16 "Stoney Ridge Road", over Horsepen Creek in the Bishop Community of Tazewell County as the "Willie Roger Griffith Memorial Bridge".

**WHEREAS**, Willie "Roger" Griffith (July 7, 1946 – May 18, 1967), known as Roger to his family, friends and comrades attended schools in Amonate, Bishop and Tazewell High School in Tazewell, County Virginia. Mr. Griffith was a member Special Four B Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 502<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division USARV; and

**WHEREAS**, Specialist 4th Class Willie "Roger" Griffith was killed 2 months before he was old enough to vote. At the age of 20 he was killed on May 18, 1967 in Vietnam following an act of heroism which won him acclaim from the United States government and the Republic of South Vietnam; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1967 Roger's parent's Mr. & Mrs. Willie Griffith of Bishop VA, received 2 medals awarded to their son from the South Vietnamese government. The occasion at this time marked one of the few, if not the only, time a local soldier had been awarded metals by a foreign government; and

**WHEREAS**, the two medals, the Vietnamese military medal of merit and the military medal with an Oak cluster, were awarded after this description of Specialist 4th Class Griffith's heroic actions. An Oak Leaf Cluster, the highest ranking cluster, is placed on military awards and decorations to denote those who have received more than one bestowal of a particular decoration; and

**WHEREAS**, While on a search and destroy mission on May 18, 1967, with his platoon under heavy fire, Sergeant Griffith charged through enemy fire to an exposed position to enable his comrades to find covered positions; and

**WHEREAS**, SP4 Griffith was also awarded a Bronze Star for valor, a Bronze Star with an Oak Leaf cluster and a Purple Heart by the United States of America government; and

**WHEREAS**, by his courage, intrepid fighting spirit and selfless devotion to duty, SP4 Griffith contributed immeasurably to the accomplishments of his unit's mission and sustained as well as enhanced traditions of the United States Army. SP4 Griffith valiantly gave his life in service and defense of the United States of America, the Commonwealth of Virginia, Tazewell County and for his fellow soldiers; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Griffith is honored on the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington DC and his name inscribed on Panel 20E Line 28; and

**WHEREAS**, The Board of Supervisors of Tazewell County Virginia wishes to memorialize the life and ultimate sacrifice of Specialist 4th Class Willie "Roger" Griffith; and

**WHEREAS**, Section 33.2-213 of the *Code of Virginia* authorizes the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to give suitable names to state highways, bridges, interchanges, and other transportation facilities and change the names of any highways, bridges, interchanges, or other transportation facilities forming a part of the systems of state highways; and


**WHEREAS**, Section 33.2-213 provides that the Virginia Department of Transportation shall place and maintain appropriate signs indicating the names of highways, bridges, interchanges, and other transportation facilities named by the CTB and requires that the costs of producing, placing, and maintaining such signs shall be paid by the localities in which they are located.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Tazewell County, in accordance with the requirements of Section 33.2-213 of the *Code of Virginia*, does hereby request that the Commonwealth Transportation Board name the bridge on Route 16, "Stoney Ridge Road", over Horsepen Creek in the Bishop Community of Tazewell County as the "Willie "Roger" Griffith Memorial Bridge";

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Tazewell County agrees to pay the costs of producing, placing, and maintaining the signs calling attention to this naming.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** the Board of Supervisors have caused this Resolution to be duly executed on its behalf by its Chairman and attested by its Clerk

**IT IS RESOLVED** this the 7<sup>th</sup> day of November 2019



Travis Hackworth, Chairman  
Tazewell County Board of Supervisors







Esri, HERE, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community, VDOT, FFD, CO, Richmond, VA, GIS SIG, Annex, 3th floor

Notes

Location Reference:  
 VDOT Structure #1011  
 Route 16 mile marker: 77.57  
 37° 12' 24" Lat.  
 -81° 33' 39" Long.

**TAZEWELL CO. (092)**  
**Route 16 Bridge Dedication**  
**Bridge over Jacobs Fork Creek**  
**"WILLIE ROGER GRIFFITH MEMORIAL BRIDGE"**







Maintenance Division  
CTB MEETING: December 11, 2019

Tazewell County  
Proposed Bridge Naming:  
**“Willie Roger Griffith  
Memorial Bridge”**