

Local veteran seeks to rename U.S. Highway 52

By David Broyles

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World War II Anzio Beachhead veteran Clyde Easter is dusting off his desk, rolling up his sleeves and going to bat again on behalf of fellow veterans. He is literally picking up where he left off on efforts to have U.S. Highway 52 named “Veterans Memorial Highway.”

Easter, a Carroll native, served with the Third Infantry Division in Europe. He was wounded twice on the Anzio Beachhead and is a recipient of The Purple Heart and an Oak Leaf Cluster.

He previously worked with the United States Post Office to produce stamps honoring the Purple Heart and Audie Murphy as well as the District of Columbia Monuments Commission in the building of the World War II Memorial. He is a life member of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1115.

According to the resolution of support passed years ago by Hillsville Town Council, the effort is critical to preserve the memory of “all veterans of all wars, those that survive and those that gave their lives for the freedom we all enjoy.” The earlier resolution accurately forecasted a time when war veterans rapidly disappear from society’s landscape, “leaving fewer standard bearers to carry the torch of remembrance.”

Easter said the earlier effort included resolutions of support from Hillsville, Wytheville, Bland and Carroll counties and was completed more than a decade ago. Easter said he was successful in getting each county and town which U.S. 52 passes in Virginia to adopt resolutions of support. Information supplied by Easter indicates the procedure following resolutions of support calls for them to be sent to appropriate Virginia Department of Transportation resident engineers. They are then sent to Richmond for review. A favorable review would cause the proposal to be sent to the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

At the time Easter told the Boards he spoke with “sacrifice is meaningless without remembrance.” He said early estimates on the cost for the signs was \$1,600. He put the project on hold due to the health of his late wife, Ethel.

“I put it under the paperwork my desk,” said Easter. “Recently I dusted off my briefcase, got out all the paperwork and I thought I’d try to get it passed if I can.”

From what I’m getting from the counties and towns, the catch will be the money for the signs. Some of the estimates now say the signs will cost about \$30,000, which is more than I can afford to put into the project by myself.”

Easter said many veterans still remember his earlier efforts to have the highway renamed.

He said so far many of the Towns and Counties remain steadfast in supporting the effort.

His next plan of attack is to get an updated estimate on the cost for the signage. He said he has considered placing ads in newspapers for the next step, which is seeking funding.

“Early on people were very much in support with this. Every county I went to passed a resolution right off. Back then, I had hoped Federal funding for this would be out there and that would help foot the bill. I found out differently. I’m finding it’s going to be harder to bring this along than when I started,” Easter said.

He noted the earlier effort had garnered the support of local politicians including former Congressman Rick Boucher.

Interested persons may contact Easter by calling 276-728-7293.

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