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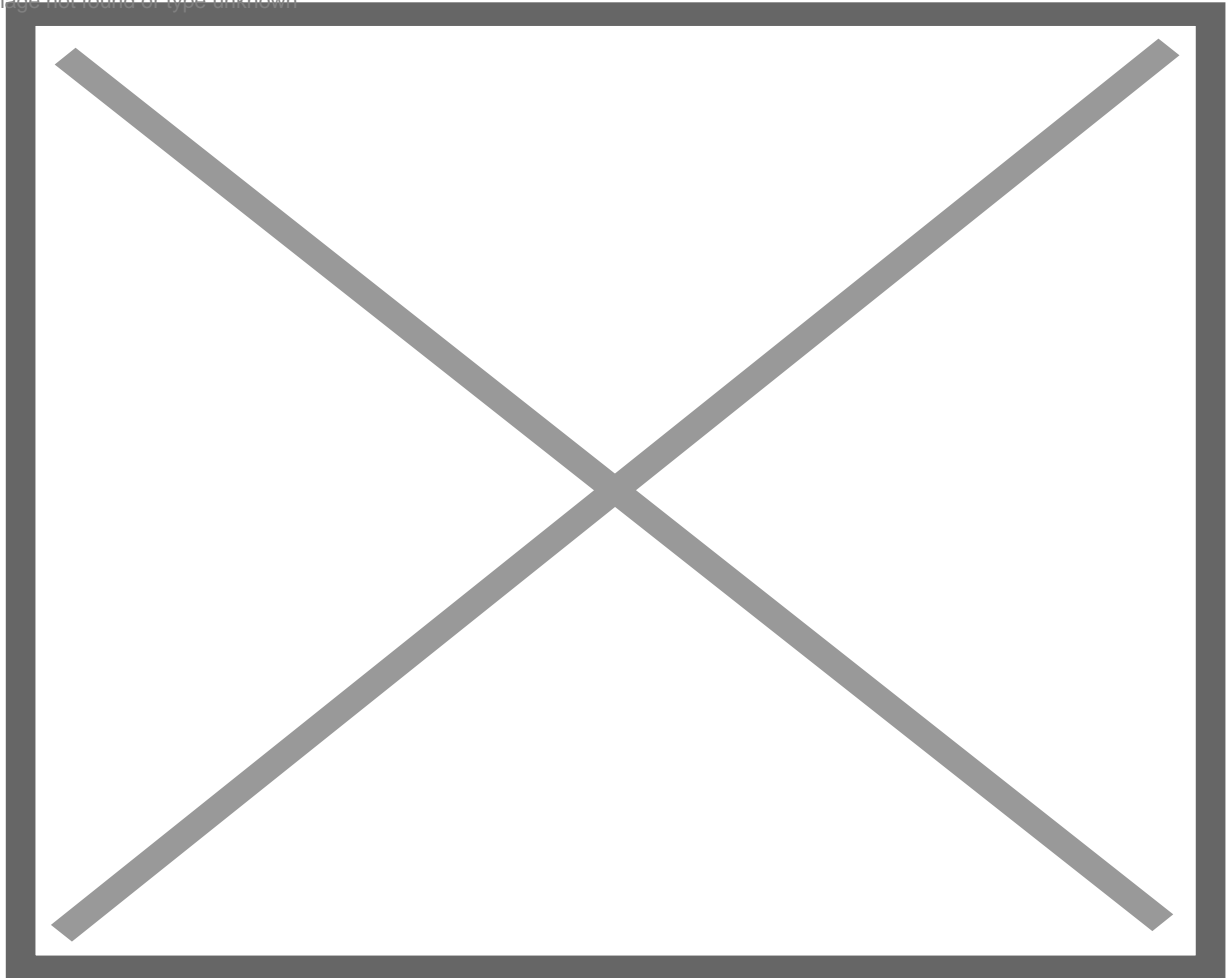
Bill to Honor Fallen Virgin Islands Veteran Kendall Emanuel George Advances in Senate

George's family shares emotional memories, urges bill approval

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USMC Corporal Kendall Emanuel George. By. VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND

Nearly three weeks after this year's commemoration of Veterans Day, a bill to honor a Virgin Islands serviceman who died in the Vietnam War is now making its way through the Senate.

Corporal Kendall Emanuel George was serving in the U.S. Marine Corps when he was killed on December 2, 1966, at the young age of 24. If successful, Bill 35-0109 will have Route 107, from Coral Bay to Lameshur Bay in St. John, named "Kendall Emanuel George Drive" South.

The legislation to honor Corporal George was proposed by Sen. Dwayne DeGraff, himself a veteran. "What has he done?" Senator DeGraff asked rhetorically. "He lost his life to preserve democracy, and to keep America and the Virgin Islands homeland safe. You need to state no more," the senator declared. Mr. DeGraff shared that Corporal George's birthday falls on the same date as Veteran's Day, a factoid he called "fitting."

During last Tuesday's hearing of the Committee on Government Operations, Veterans Affairs and Consumer Protection, lawmakers listened to glowing testimony from several members of the late corporal's family, including his sister Geneva Paris. She told senators that "the memory of my beloved brother's untimely passing remains etched in my heart." Thankful for the decision to celebrate his service, she assured "I approve and encourage renaming the route."

Corporal George's brother, Henry Powell, remembered his late sibling fondly. "He was a man of honor. His word could be trusted. He was also a man of integrity...He was also a loyal man. I think that's why he joined the Marine Corps."

V.I. Office of Veterans Affairs Director Patrick Farrell expressed his immense support for the bill and advised that, "by approving this proposal, we affirm our collective gratitude for those who have given their all in service to our nation... We will be embarking on a significant tribute to a hero whose bravery echoes through the archives of history... We will not only be paying homage to a fallen soldier, but we will also be reinforcing the values of sacrifice, patriotism, and unity that formed the core of our society."

The bill, if enacted into law, would appropriate \$10,000 to the Department of Public Works to erect signage along the relevant section of road in St. John. Corporal George, who died in the Quan Tin province of South Vietnam, was interred at the Emmaus Moravian Cemetery on St. John 57 years ago.

Senator Ray Fonseca suggested to the committee that funding should be set aside for the upkeep and maintenance of the grave. "Because it is not very often that we get to honor and commend the veteran that gave the ultimate sacrifice," he said.