

PA10-69

SB214

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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2010**

**VOL.53
PART 16
4949 – 5314**

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Seeing no objection, would the Clerk please call
Calendar 523?

THE CLERK:

On page 31, Calendar 523, Substitute for Senate
Bill Number 214, AN ACT NAMING THE STATE MILITARY
TRAINING FACILITY CAMP NIAN TIC, favorable report of
the Committee on Public Safety.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Jutila, of the 37th, you have the
floor.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move acceptance of the joint committee's
favorable report and passage of the bill, in
concurrence with the Senate.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Question before the Chamber is acceptance of the
joint committee's favorable report and passage of the
bill, in concurrence with the Senate.

Please proceed.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This bill would permanently change the name of
the military training facility in Niantic to "Camp

Niantic." This would change the current policy which is to name the camp after the sitting governor. The bill enjoys the support of the local VFW, the local American Legion, as well as the local Veterans' Council.

The primary purpose of the bill is to save money and to avoid confusion that the frequent name changes have often brought forth.

the timing of this, I believe, is perfect as Governor Rell will be leaving office in January and the name of the facility will change at that time. I think it would also be an honor for her to be the last governor to have had the camp named after her. I think it's a fitting honor, giving her support, her well-know support and devotion to our troops and her frequent visits to the camp.

And I would urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Sawyer, of the 55th, you have the floor, madam.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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A question, through you, to the proponent of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Please proceed, madam.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Mr. Chairman, in the case of this particular facility, it has -- you said it has a long history. Could you please describe when its history, when it -- how long it's been in the state and how long it's been used as a training facility? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Jutila.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Oh, my apologies. I apologize. I went to the Chairman of the committee and I believe I should redirect my question to the Representative that brought out the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Sawyer, would you please restate your question.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

I'll restate the question. Thank you.

Could you please describe the history of the camp

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and what it's been used for through the years, Mr.
Speaker?

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

And you'd like that directed to whom, madam?

REP. SAWYER (55th):

The gentleman who brought out the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Thank you.

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, the camp first opened in 1881 and it
has been constantly since that time a state military
training facility.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you.

And in the -- could you please describe the
modern usage for this particular facility, through
you, Mr. Speaker?

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

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Through you, Mr. Speaker, the usage at the camp continues to be a military reservation and training facility for the Connecticut National Guard.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And is it also being used for any other functions, through you, Mr. Speaker?

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes, it is. There is a building on the grounds that the National Guard has been so good as to make available to the town for meetings to be held there. There are sometimes picnics on the grounds by civic groups, such as the volunteer fire department. I've attended many of them, as a volunteer firefighter.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And with this change, does any of that change?

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Does that -- is there a shift, through you,
Mr. Speaker?

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no, it will result in
no change at all to any operations of the camp.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And does the military -- what was the military's
reaction to a historical name change, through you, Mr.
Speaker?

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge, there
has been no official position taken by the National
Guard.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Oh, thank you. That surprises me. Thank you,

Mr. Speaker.

This particular facility has gone through a significant transformation in the last 20 years. It is a magnificent piece of property that sits right on the water. It has incredible vistas, but it has gone from having literally World War II buildings that have been used for training facilities to one point where it was used as a school for children who were on the precipice of being in significant trouble with the military. And it was run as a boot camp for these particular children, during the Weicker years. The facility, then under the command of Adjutant General David Gay, obtained significant -- and I'm going to use the word "significant" -- federal funds to be able to expand the facility.

The facility now has some fantastic accommodations for overnight stay. It also has the ability to host large events, both inside and outside and still maintains the parade grounds in the center. It is used by the National Guard, certainly, for their AT, their annual trainings, their military exercises in the summer, as well as now throughout the winter, because of the types of facilities that they have.

The reason I asked the questions that I did is

because it does have a proud history and is held very dearly by the military, so I was a little surprised that they didn't take an official position because they're usually very proud of their long military traditions. But I'm guessing if they didn't, they certainly would have said something if they were opposed.

I will say that in the changing of the camp, which could happen every either four years or eight years or ten years, in the case of one long-standing governor, you would have a situation where you have a significant cost, the cost in the signage for the roads, the cost for the stationery; those types of significant costs that are borne by the state.

So Camp Niantic will now have a name that is embodied in the particular place and will now have perhaps the next chapter of its history and will have a long-standing name, and it will also save the state money.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I lend my endorsement.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Thank you.

Representative Giuliano.

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REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A question or two, through you, to the proponent of the bill, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Please proceed, madam.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, in renaming Camp Rell to Camp Niantic, I understand that there was some military consultation. Was there and also any local consultation of local officials, townspeople, people in the area? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Jutila.

REP. JUTILA (37th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, I consulted with the local American Legion, the local VFW. I revisited them a second time after they had given it -- both organizations had given it -- the name change to Camp Niantic their unanimous endorsement, and I have letters to that effect that I had submitted to the Veteran's Committee. And I revisited with them subsequently to

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update them on the status of the bill, and they reconfirmed their position on it at that time.

I've spoken with many townspeople. There's great awareness of this. It has been well publicized in local newspapers. The -- a name change has been endorsed by the regional newspaper, The New London Day, so yes, there's been much discussion about it.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. --

And, through you, I want to thank my colleague for his very expansive explanation of the name selection. My only concern was -- it has been brought to my attention that there is a recreational vehicle campground in Niantic called "Camp Niantic," and lest there be any confusion, I just wondered whether or not there was a local derivative to this decision so that such a scenic area as the town that my colleague represents, there should not be any undue confusion wrought by this, what will be a now-permanent name change.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague

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for the explanation.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Does the other Camp Niantic allow tanks?

Further on the bill?

If not, staff and guests please retire to the well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the chamber. The House taking a roll call vote. Members to the chamber, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Have all members voted? Have all members voted?

Please check the board and make sure your vote is properly cast.

If all members have voted, the machine will be locked.

Will the Clerk please take a tally.

Representative Johnston, for what purpose do you rise, sir?

REP. JOHNSTON (51st):

Mr. Speaker, as hard as it is to believe, I don't think my green light has been exercised enough this session, and it does not appear to be properly

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working. If I can be recorded in the affirmative?

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Johnston shall be recorded in the affirmative.

Representative Dillon, of the 92nd.

REP. DILLON (92nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the affirmative.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

Representative Dillon, in the affirmative.

Further? Further?

If not, the Clerk please announce a tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill 214, in concurrence with the Senate.

Total Number Voting	143
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Necessary for Passage	72
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Those voting Yea	141
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Those voting Nay	2
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Those absent and not voting	8
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DEPUTY SPEAKER ALTOBELLO:

This bill passed, in concurrence with the Senate.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 212?

THE CLERK:

On page 36, Calendar 212, substitute for House

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**SELECT
COMMITTEE
ON VETERANS'
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12 February 25, 2010
cp/gbr SELECT COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' 9:30 A.M.
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Just a quick question, out of the 60, 34 cases were diverted, do you know what category the other 26 fell into which didn't require or prevented them from being diverted?

COMMISSIONER PATRICIA REHMER: I don't have that information, Representative Graziani, but I know we have it, and I can get that for you.

REP. GRAZIANI: Yeah. That will be helpful so we can see where the statistics lie --

COMMISSIONER PATRICIA REHMER: Sure.

REP. GRAZIANI: -- in category, most importantly.

COMMISSIONER PATRICIA REHMER: Right.

REP. GRAZIANI: So we can get a sense of feel, you know, moving forward. So if you can pass that information on to the committee, that would be terrific, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER PATRICIA REHMER: Sure. I'm sure we have that.

REP. GRAZIANI: Thank you.

Any other questions from the committee members?

If not, thank you very much, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER PATRICIA REHMER: Thank you.

REP. GRAZIANI: Next we have Representative Ed Jutila from the 37th District.

REP. JUTILA: Thank you, Chairman Graziani, members of the committee.

For the record, I'm Ed Jutila, State

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Representative for the 37th District, and I'm here to testify in support of Senate Bill 214, AN ACT NAMING THE STATE MILITARY TRAINING FACILITY CAMP NIANTIC. And first let me thank you for raising the bill and giving me this opportunity to speak today. I appreciate that.

This bill would permanently change the name of the National Guard military training facility in Niantic, currently known as "Camp Rell," and the proposed name change would be to make it "Camp Niantic." And my intent would be to have this occur upon Governor Rell's leaving office in January. And this would change the current policy, which is to name the camp after whoever the sitting governor is. The primary purpose would be to save the state some money and eliminate the confusion that is sometimes caused by the frequent name changes.

And I'm pleased to inform you that the bill enjoys tremendous support down in my district, and I have letters from the local VFW and from the local American Legion expressing their unanimous support for the bill and for the particular name "Camp Niantic." I also am including with my testimony a copy of an editorial from our regional newspaper, The New London Day, in support of this change.

And I've also indicated that I would certainly be open to other ideas from this committee if the committee does not choose to name the camp permanently "Camp Niantic," perhaps, you know, after a highly decorated and deserving war hero, and, to that end, I have also included a letter to the editor of The Day suggesting, in the alternative, that we permanently name the camp after Colonel Robert Nett, who, as a Medal of Honor winner, certainly fits that description of decorated war hero.

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As a result of the frequent name changes over the years, many members of the military have experienced some frustration and confusion when trying to locate or identify the training facility where they had once trained, because it now has a new name.

Above all, given the current budget deficit, this just seems like a common sense way to save some money. It may not be a tremendous amount of money, but I think all of the taxpayers are looking to us to find every way that we can to save and -- and reduce the deficit. And I have some preliminary estimates from the OFA that would indicate that this could save possibly a few thousand dollars. That's not an official estimate at this point, and I've heard estimates from other people that are much higher than that.

And the savings would come from having to change all the signs every time the governor's office changes hands, as well as letterheads, maps and -- and things of that nature. And, again, I believe this is the perfect time to pass this legislation, as Governor Rell will be leaving office in January, and, again, the bill should have an effective date the day after her current term ends.

So, simply put, we'd just like to see a name that will give the camp more of a sense of permanency. That's one of the things that -- that many of the veterans have expressed to me, eliminate the confusion and save some money in a time when every -- every dollar is needed.

I can tell you just a little bit of the history. A gentleman friend of mine in town named Jim Littlefield, who's a local historian,

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archeologist and high school teacher, gave me a little bit of the history. And one of the things that he noted is that the camp, throughout -- throughout the years of its entire existence, has frequently been referred to as Camp Niantic as an informal name, and, in fact, I have a brochure that the American Legion is using right now as part of their fundraising that shows a picture from the 19th century, the early days of the camp, and the caption is "Camp Niantic." That's actually what they called it back then.

I -- I also have a letter from a woman in town whose family actually owned the property that the camp now sits on, Flora Storrs. And she's quite an elderly lady and someone I've known since I was a young child living actually directly across from the camp, right -- right across from what was then -- well, I'm going to show my age, but Camp Ribicoff it -- it was back then, and, in fact, you know, the confusion, I -- I still call it often Camp Dempsey, because it was Camp Dempsey from the time I was five until I was 15, so that's permanently etched in my consciousness.

Well, Mrs. Storrs sent me a nice note. Flora Storrs, who still lives, actually, on one acre of what was the property sitting out there on the Niantic River, and she has indicated to me in her words that she's 200 percent in agreement with my proposal, and she and I had a nice conversation about this recently.

Her one suggestion is, and I think that this is a good one, that along with Camp Niantic, we include somewhere in the name "National Guard," or something to that effect, so that people will be able to distinguish this from other camps like a campground where you pull up your

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trailer or your tent, and I thought that that was a very good point that Mrs. Storrs made.

And I think with that, I'll thank the committee again for giving me an opportunity to speak and take any questions if there are any.

REP. GRAZIANI: Thank you, Ed.

Any questions from the committee members?

Representative Nicastro.

REP. NICASTRO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Representative Jutila, thank you very much for your testimony this morning. I spent 24 years at that camp, and I know exactly what you're talking about. We'd go there, and every so often it would change names. And it used to be called "Camp Niantic." You're absolutely right. And I see -- this is the time to do it. I mean, we're in the process of an election. It's no disrespect to our current governor. It's no disrespect to whoever the next governor is going to be, whoever it may be. It's just a wise move.

I think you're right. The savings, you know, they're not humongous. The savings is not humungous. But it sets a -- it sets a stage, Camp Niantic. And it says it there, and it doesn't throw people off. And I -- I strongly support this proposal, and I want to thank you for bringing it forth.

REP. JUTILA: Thank you, Representative Nicastro.

And, you know, I can tell you that, you know, for a number of years, at least for the -- the five years that I've been up here, people I

bump into all the time mention this to me, in the supermarket, on the street corner, that why don't we change it permanently to Camp Niantic. Why do we incur the costs every time the governor's office changes?

And, certainly, I -- I've been here for five years and never had any thoughts of bringing this bill up while Governor Rell was in office. We have great respect for the Governor, and I -- I hope that she, in fact, will see this as -- as a good thing and -- and support it as well.

And I just wanted to mention one more thing -- I've got to get this one in -- that I also have a letter of support in here from a local resident, another very elderly guy named George Jones, who's a great World War II sub vet and also was my Little League coach back a long time ago, so I wanted to get that in too.

REP. GRAZIANI: Thank you very much, Ed.

I know you -- you and I have had numerous discussions on this which your bringing it forward has -- stands on its own merits, so it's -- we'll try to make this permanent, obviously, so we could move forward and then get this problem -- one less problem out of the way, one less confusion out of the way going forward, so -- but thank you very much for taking the time to be here.

REP. JUTILA: Okay. Thank you, again.

REP. GRAZIANI: With that, Representative Corky Mazurek.

REP. MAZUREK: Good morning, Chairman Graziani and members of the Select Committee on Veterans'

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Any questions?

If not, thank you, Rusty.

RUSTY MEEK: Thank you.

REP. NICASTRO: Thank you very much. Have a good day.

J. Hollis of VFW.

A VOICE: (Inaudible.)

REP. NICASTRO: Good morning, sir.

JOHN HOLLIS: Good morning.

I do this quite often, I don't think I could do it near as eloquent as you did, and your points were well taken. Congratulations. Wonderful job.

A VOICE: Here, here.

JOHN HOLLIS: Good morning, members of the Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Commissioner Schwartz. Thank you for allowing me to be here.

My name is John Hollis. I'm a Navy veteran of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and I presently serve as a legislative chairman for the Department of Connecticut. I also serve with our National Legislative Committee representing Connecticut in Washington, D.C. So many times you thank us for our service and -- and let me take the opportunity to thank you for your service to the men and women that serve this great nation. This committee is doing -- does a tremendous job in advancing legislation that has such a

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Chet, thank you for serving in this body. What a wonderful job you did for us. You've been a friend of mine for many years, but we, too, of the Veterans of Foreign War support that.

And as I've said on many occasions to this committee and those that are around us today, that we see -- we received significant support and legislation, but oftentimes it gets out of this committee, goes through another committee or goes to the Senate, the House for an up and down vote, and sometimes some of these gets lost, and they don't have an understanding of the compassion that we have in this room. And I take a personal responsibility to follow this legislation throughout this process, so we can be effective in getting this signed by the Governor.

So it doesn't just end here. We need to continue to follow this legislation to -- to the very end and be there when the Governor signs it. Camp Niantic, I thought that was great, and the local VFW supported that, so we, certainly, on the state level support that.

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And, again, I want to thank you all for allowing me to testify, and I'm grateful for all you folks do, and if there's any questions, I'll be more than happy to answer it.

REP. GRAZIANI: Thank you very much, John.

But first let me -- Rusty, I'm sorry. I had to leave the room. No totally disrespect.

JOHN HOLLIS: I thought that was intentional, and I commend you.

REP. GRAZIANI: So noted in the record.

life-long consequences. The signature injury of Iraq and Afghanistan is Traumatic Brain Injury.

We must develop protocols and programs to deal properly with TBI-affected veterans. The stress of multiple deployments to combat zones, conducting warfare in urban settings 24/7 when the advantage is always with the local fighters, subjected veterans to new levels of stress and fatigue we have not experienced in prior wars. There is an absolute need to identify a new means in our criminal justice system to handle the issues that veterans are facing and help -- and help them get on the straight and narrow path, and I think it's our duty and an obligation to take care of this.

I am very supportive, and we, as veterans and a loose coalition of supportive of Senate Bill 212, THE MOTOR VEHICLE TAX. It seems like it's a common sense approach of correcting language that we thought was the original intent.

That would conclude my testimony. I'm very pleased the committee has raised these bills this year, and we look forward to pursuing them through the course of the General Assembly. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

REP. NICASTRO: Any questions?

Thank you very much for your testimony.

Is it Dan McHale?

Good morning, sir.

DANIEL MCHALE: Good morning. I come unprepared, but I did jot down some notes. I know there

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was a written testimony that was being processed, but the individual who -- who was responsible for it had some personal problems and wasn't in for the last couple of days, so I'd like to speak on -- on their behalf.

First of all, my name is Dan McHale. I'm the Transition Assistance Advisor for Connecticut regarding entitlements and benefits. I'd like to go on record to say that I support any and all legislation that would benefit the military community and the bills that are being put forth in -- in the packet for this docket. The bill that I'm here to support and to testify for is Senate Bill 214, AN ACT OF NAMING THE STATE MILITARY TRAINING FACILITY IN NIAHTIC, CONNECTICUT, CAMP RELL.

And I'm here to speak on benefit of Colonel Robert Nett. I'm sure that everybody knows that Colonel Nett was a Medal of Honor recipient and then was a Connecticut resident and was a member of the Connecticut National Guard before World War II Flying Charlie Company of the 102nd Infantry. In fact, I'm sure you're -- you're familiar with Charlie Company of the 102nd. The 102nd Infantry, at the moment, is deployed for their second time in Afghanistan, and I've had numerous conversations with the battalion commander and -- about this issue with -- with renaming Camp Rell.

Colonel Nett was a proctor of the commander of the ranger school at Fort Benning. In fact, you could probably call him "Mr. Fort Benning," the home of the infantry. He was the proctor of the ranger school, also on the OCS program, and spoke for the last 20 years at all of their commencements. There's a Nett Hall named after Colonel Nett at Fort Benning. Colonel Nett

used to travel to Connecticut all the time to attend the 102nd Infantry Association's meetings, because there were still a number of his World War II buddies there that they had -- he would come up and visit and attend the meetings.

He would also come up for parades. He was the Grand Marshall of the Veterans' Parade one year. He's marched in the Saint Patty's Day Parade. He was also inducted into the Connecticut Veterans' Hall of Fame. When he received his medal, he chose not to take the medal in Washington, D.C., instead to take it in New Haven at the Goffe Street Armory. And that just shows that -- that he always called Connecticut his home, even though he was domiciled in Fort Benning because of his association with the infantry school.

As you all know, that many of the major forts in the United States, Fort Bragg, Fort Dix, Fort Drum, Fort Hood, Fort Jackson, were all named after famous military, confederate, union, Civil War, very nonpartisan on -- on naming of the forts. And locally, and in this area too, Camp Ethan Allen is also named after an historic military figure. And right here in -- in Connecticut, Camp Hartell was named after a Medal of Honor recipient.

So I'd like to -- it's been common sense for a long time, and not to degrade anybody in the governorship or anything else, but to, to keep the fort, or Camp Rell, because we call it "Fort Connecticut", but Camp Rell as an individual's name. And I don't think there's a better person from this state, militarily-wise, that would have that honor bestowed on them besides Colonel Robert Nett. Colonel Nett always called Connecticut his home, and I think

that Connecticut can go above and beyond and put a permanent name on Camp Rell, and it should be named after Colonel Robert Nett, the Medal of Honor recipient.

I know Niantic has also been in the picture as Camp Niantic, but to do justice to this man's honor and for what everything he's done for this state, he's been a mentor to everybody who's been through the infantry school, and we call that the Infantry School for Boys, and he -- he was the major -- the major mentor down there for everybody who passes through. So I'd just like to enter that into a verbal statement, and I'll make sure that the -- the written document comes over, and I'll give it to you.

That's all I have. If there's any questions.

REP. NICASTRO: Thank you.

Were you here when Representative Jutila spoke earlier?

DANIEL MCHALE: No, I wasn't. I wasn't.

REP. NICASTRO: He brought the bill forward, talked about, you know, changing it from the governor's name to Camp Niantic, and I can understand that, like I said earlier in the day, I spent 24 summers there, and I understand.

But he also did speak about the gentleman you're speaking about now, and he had had high praise for him, and, you know, you could see that he had concerns. We're going to take a very long hard -- we're going to take a good strong look at this bill, and we're going to make sure that we do right.

We just felt, and as Representative Jutila said initially that, you know, changing it every four years, or whatever the case may be, and bouncing it back and forth, it really doesn't make a lot of sense, and there is a cost. And he said, he did state that the cost is minimal when you think about other things, you know, the cost is minimal. But it still, you know, it -- it's in Niantic and -- and it's a good name, and this gentleman's name that you're talking about, Medal of Honor, you know, Congressional Medal of Honor winner, so we're taking a good hard look at it, and we want you to know that, okay?

DANIEL MCHALE: Appreciate it.

REP. NICASTRO: Other questions from anybody?

No?

Thank you very much.

DANIEL MCHALE: Thank you very much.

REP. NICASTRO: Unless I'm wrong here, I've got Debbi Newton next.

Good morning, Deb.

DEBBI NEWTON: Good morning, sir. How are you?

REP. NICASTRO: Fine. Thank you. Nice to see you.

DEBBI NEWTON: And to the remaining members of the Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs, good morning, and thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of several important proposals before you today.

SB210 SB211
HB5261 HB5259
HB5260 HB5262

enough.

We do thank you. And I --

Do you have any questions?

REP. NICASTRO: Thanks, Debbi.

Any questions of Debbi?

Thank you, Debbi.

DEBBI NEWTON: Thank you.

REP. NICASTRO: Excellent job, as always.

Jack Monahan.

JACK MONAHAN: I'll use the command presence.

Good morning. Jack Monahan, Soldiers, Sailors and Marines Fund. I just wanted to take a moment. I hadn't intended to testify, but I -- I do want to weigh in on this issue of Camp Niantic/Camp Rell, et cetera. And I believe the initiative to make a permanent name for the facility is -- is correct and proper for any number of reasons, not the least of which is the poor -- the poor residents of the town of Niantic trying to get -- trying to keep directions straight.

SB 214

But I would offer support of the notion that it ought to be named after a permanent military individual, and there is no individual of whom I am aware that would exceed the reputation of Colonel Robert Nett.

I, personally, never served a day in the Connecticut National Guard. I am, however, a graduate of U.S. Army Officer Candidate School.

And the building at Fort Benning to which General McHale referred, Nett Hall, is named after Robert Nett, and that building is a very special building, indeed, because it is the OCS Museum and Hall of Fame.

And so certainly OCS graduates have a proud history of -- of contributing to our Army and certainly of valor and certainly a number of those people who have, indeed, earned the ultimate honor of the Congressional Medal of Honor, but the very building itself is named after Colonel Robert Nett, and so his reputation is -- is such that that name would resonate with not only those in Connecticut and the Connecticut National Guard only, but certainly anyone who has any familiarity with Fort Benning and OCS.

And I just wanted to make, make my view known that you -- you would be hard-pressed to find a better person after whom to name this facility, and certainly it would still achieve the desired effect of making the name permanent so that the budgetary issues are addressed.

And I therewith conclude my testimony unless there are questions.

REP. NICASTRO: Any questions of Mr. Monahan?

A VOICE: Is it appropriate to have an alibi?

DANIEL MCHALE: I agree with what John says, but I think the committee needs to understand that -- that the unit that Colonel Nett was in, the 102nd Infantry, is the oldest infantry still active unit in the United States. And its roots go back, and I'm sure you know this, Frank, that it goes back to 1636, some of the more famous commanders, Benedict Arnold, even

though he was a good military tactician, until he tried to sell West Point.

But you're not only going to honor Colonel Nett, but you're going to honor the 102nd Infantry also if you name Camp Rell Camp Nett, and they'll carry on that tradition. They're on their second -- second mobilization in Afghanistan, and one of the other companies, the Charlie Company, that Colonel Nett was in deployed early in 2003 to Iraq. Well, they've been over three times.

REP. NICASTRO: My intern is over there right now from last year, I understand.

We thank you very much for that.

DANIEL MCHALE: Thank you. I just wanted to make -- put that into the record.

REP. NICASTRO: Is there anybody else who'd like to speak that wasn't signed up to speak?

If not, public hearing closed.



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

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37TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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VICE CHAIRMAN
PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE

MEMBER
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Select Committee on Veterans Affairs' Public Hearing
Thursday, February 25, 2010

Testimony of State Representative Ed Jutila
In Support of SB 214 AN ACT NAMING THE STATE MILITARY TRAINING FACILITY
CAMP NIAN TIC

Senator Maynard, Representative Graziani, Members of the Select Committee on Veterans Affairs', for the record my name is Ed Jutila State Representative for the 37th District, which includes the towns of East Lyme and Salem. First let me thank the committee for raising this bill and providing us the opportunity to speak here today. This bill would permanently change the name of the military training facility in Niantic currently known as Camp Rell.

This would change the current policy, which is to name the Camp after the then sitting governor. This language is modeled after legislation that was previously introduced many years ago (1991) when many active military personnel and veterans petitioned the legislature to make such a change to no avail. The primary purpose of this bill is to save the state money and eliminate confusion that is sometimes caused by the frequent name changes.

I am pleased to inform you that this bill enjoys the support of the both the local VFW and American Legion. I am attaching letters of support from these two organizations to my testimony. I am also attaching an editorial from our regional newspaper, The Day of New London and a letter to the editor to the editor of The Day suggesting in the alternative that we permanently name the Camp after Colonel Nett. While I continue to recommend Camp Niantic, I have indicated that I welcome other possibilities such as a deserving decorated war hero.

Colonel Nett certainly fits that description. Over the years many members of the military have experienced frustration and confusion when trying to locate or identify the training facility where they had once trained.

Above all, given the current budget deficit, this seems like a common sense way to save some money. Based on preliminary estimates from the Office of Fiscal Analysis it appears the State could save several thousand dollars by not having to change camp signs, local road and highway signs, letterheads and maps which have to be changed with each new administration.

I believe this is also the perfect time to pass such legislation, as Governor Rell will be leaving office in January. The bill should be effective the day after she leaves office.

More than anything else we would just like to see a name that will give the Camp more of a sense of permanency, eliminate confusion and also save the state money in a time when every dollar is very much needed.

In closing I want thank the committee for considering this bill, and I look forward to working with the chairs and members to achieve its passage.

Again thank you for this opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions members of the committee may have.

TURNER-TINKER POST 128

INC.

16 York Ave.
Niantic, CT 06357



Telephone
739-9360

February 12, 2010

To: Ed Jutila, Representative Connecticut General Assembly

From: Tim Yuhas, Commander Tinker/Turner Post 128 American Legion Niantic

Subject: Rename Camp Rell

May it be known that Tinker/Turner Post 128 American Legion Niantic is in full support of returning the National Guard Camp at Niantic to its original name of 'CAMP NIAN TIC'.

Very respectfully,

Tim Yuhas
Commander, Tinker/Turner Post 128 American Legion Niantic

Veterans of Foreign Wars

**VFW Kari-Hill Post 5849
PO Box 194
39 Columbus Avenue
Niantic, CT 06357**

**TO: Select Committee on Veterans Affairs',
Senator Maynard, Representative Graziani,
Members of the Select Committee on Veterans Affairs'**

SB214

**FROM: VFW Kari-Hill Post 5849
Niantic, Connecticut 06357**

**SUBJECT: Support of an Act Concerning The Permanent Name Change
Of Camp Rell to Camp Niantic located in Niantic, CT.**

Dear Sirs,

For the record my name is Richard A. Bengtson. I am the Commander of Kari-Hill VFW Post 5849 in Niantic Connecticut. I ask that this letter be entered into the record as Testimony in support of an ACT CONCERNING THE PERMENENT NAME CHANGE OF CAMP RELL.

I am writing this letter on behalf of Kari-Hill VFW Post 5849 in Niantic, Connecticut and its 129 veteran members.

After discussion and poling of our membership I have been directed to write to you. We as a Veteran of Foreign Wars Post and its veteran members are in unanimous support of the proposed Act concerning the permanent name change of Camp Rell.

Our members believe that this permanent name change will serve both the soldiers' currently serving there, those who will serve there in the future as well as the many veterans that came before them. We have strong feelings about Camp Rell having a permanent name that its veterans can remember and look back on. We believe that this permanent name change will have a very positive impact on our community as well. We believe this change can promote pride in the community and give a lasting identity to this military base. We also believe eliminating the cost of the continual name changes to this base will have a positive impact on the state of Connecticut as well.

We are asking for your support and positive consideration of this proposed Act. Thank you for this opportunity to present our strong support for it.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard A. Bengtson Commander VFW Kari-Hill Post 584
PO Box 194 39 Columbus Avenue Niantic, Connecticut 06357

Richard A. Bengtson
67 Walnut Hill Road
East Lyme, Connecticut 06333

SB 214

February 20, 2010

To: Select Committee on Veterans Affairs'
From: Richard A. Bengtson
Subject: Public Hearing TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF AN
ACT CONCERNING CAMP NIANTIC

Senator Maynard , Representative Graziani, Members of the Select Committee on Veterans Affairs,' for the record my name is Richard A. Bengtson of East Lyme, CT. I am submitting this written testimony of my personal support of An Act Concerning the Permanent name Change of Camp Rell to Camp Niantic.

As a retired USAF veteran I know the personal importance my duty stations hold in the memories and honor of my service to this Great Nation. Serving at a duty station like Camp Rell as it is currently called, knowing that by the time I retire or end my service that name will no longer exist would be troubling to me.

We veterans have many memories associated with our dedicated service. How do we associate them with a duty station in Niantic CT. that has no real enduring name? I know much has also been said about the cost of continually changing the name. That too is a valid concern. Please do not forget the soldiers who serve there. Remember their proud memories of service as well in your deliberation of this issue. I believe they should be uppermost in your consideration.

I strongly support Ed Jutila and I support this proposed bill. It is time to finally take a positive action and give Camp Niantic a permanent name that both serves the many men and women stationed there and the community that has supported it for so many years.

Thank you for your positive consideration of this Bill.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard A. Bengtson
67 Walnut Hill Road East Lyme, CT 06333

It's time to rename Camp Governor

Local state rep has the right idea in wanting to end practice of naming Niantic military facility after the sitting governor.

There is no definitive history of when people started naming buildings, fields, roads and other public facilities after politicians, military veterans and other noteworthy people. Perhaps there was a Grog's Memorial Cave named in honor of the caveman who was good at lighting fires.

Usually the naming is the result of one of three things — a heroic act, a life of significant achievements, or success in getting the federal or state bucks to construct the building, field or road. A sudden and tragic death tends to generate more naming than does simply passing away of old age, thus the nation

has far more John F. Kennedy memorial schools than Gerald Ford ones.

But Connecticut has the peculiar tradition of naming a military facility after its sitting governor. So the National Guard training facility in Niantic went from Camp Rowland to Camp Rell when Gov. John G. Rowland was driven from office and eventually to prison by scandal, succeeded by his lieutenant governor, M. Jodi Rell.

Before Camp Rowland it was Camp Weicker — though some critics might argue that Camp Gov. Income Tax would have been a more apt name — and before that Camp O'Neill.

State Rep. Ed Jutila, the East Lyme lawmaker who represents Niantic, wants to end the governor-naming practice. The General Assembly should approve the proposal. Naming a public facility after someone simply for obtaining office is a dicey proposition. Better to await a lifetime of achievement before bestowing such an honor. It is doubtful there would have ever been a Camp Rowland had the naming decision awaited the culmination of the administration.

And while certainly not much money in terms of overall state spending, there is an expense attached to renaming and reprinting letterheads, signs, maps and

other materials every time there is change in governor. The periodic name change can also be confusing.

Finding a new name for the camp could provide for an interesting debate — perhaps someone who served meritoriously in the National Guard or one of the state's revolutionary era heroes.

Rep. Jutila said he would like to involve the Veterans Affairs Committee or reach out to the local VFW and American Legion for ideas. Suggestions could be sought from the public.

With a new governor set to be elected in November, this is a good time to make the switch.

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SB214[Back](#)

Article published Feb 17, 2010

Medal recipient a fine choice for camp name

Gary Thorstenson East Lyme

In the 26 years I was member of the Connecticut Army National Guard, I took pride in the unique way we named our post. It was interesting to talk to other members and see how far back they went, based on the post's name when they first joined.

However, if the state legislature feels it is time to change the name of the post to a permanent one, then it would be fitting to name the post after the late Col. Robert Nett. Col. Nett was a Connecticut native who joined the Connecticut Army National Guard before the start of World War II and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for action in the Pacific.

As a career Army officer after the war, he was offered the opportunity to receive his Medal of Honor from President Harry Truman at the White House. Then-Capt. Nett respectfully declined and chose instead to receive it at Goffe Street Armory in New Haven, where he had enlisted, and with his comrades from Co. C of the 102d Infantry Regiment, Connecticut Army National Guard.

He was a true hero and an honorable man; naming the post after him would be a fitting tribute.

Juno e-mail for cottagranny@juno.com printed on Tuesday, February 16, 2010, 1:06 PM

From: Flora Storrs <cottagranny@juno.com>
 To: COTTAGEGRANNY@JUNO.COM
 Date: Tue, 16 Feb 2010 13:03:54 -0500

SB214

REPR:ED JUTILA—DEAR ED;

IN HEARING OF YOUR QUEST TO GIVE THE NATL; GUARD
 CAMP A PERMANENT NAME—I AGREE 200%—IT SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED LONG AGO! I FEEL THE
 CAMP IS ON 'HALLOWED'
 GROUND, AND IT SHOULD BE RESPECTED SO. SO MANY MEN HAVE
 COME HERE TO TRAIN AND TO PROTECT THE U.S.A.. SOME MEN
 RETURN AND SOME NEVER RETURN. BEING SO CLOSE, WE HAVE FELT
 A PART OF WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CAMP. IT ALL GOES BACK TO
 ITS HISTORY AND OUR FAMILIES INVOLVEMENT FROM ITS BEGINNINGS.
 I HAVE PRAYED THAT SOMEONE WOULD WRITE A COMPLETE
 HISTORY OF THE CAMP AND THE NATIONAL GUARD HERE.
 AT LAST THERE IS A DEDICATED NAT;GUARD SGT. WHO IS
 WORKING ON IT. HE IS; SGT.DAVID W. MOORHEAD.
 MY IDEA OF A CAMP NAME; N.G.CAMP-NIANTIC
 —NATIONAL GUARD CAMP—CT.NAT.GUARD CAMP—NIANTIC.
 BEST WISHES AND SUCCESS THIS YEAR!
 SINCERELY, FLORA STORRS *Flora*



Gary E Waterhouse
Legislative Chair & Judge Advocate
3rd District Veterans of Foreign Wars
February 25, 2010
Select Committee on Veterans Affairs Public Hearing

A veteran owning a home valued at \$182,000 in a municipality with a .30 mill property tax rate and a \$10,000 veteran property tax exemption pays tax on \$172,000, a reduction in taxes owed of about \$300, significantly less than the benefit of the original veterans tax exemption.

The cost of providing significant veterans property tax exemption has been transferred from state government to municipalities. State law allows a town, by vote of its legislative body, to completely exempt from property taxes any dwelling house acquired or, as of October 1, 1998, modified under this federal program to accommodate a veteran's special needs (CGS § 12-81(21)(C)).

The expense of veteran's property tax exemptions should be shared equally by the state and municipalities. The exemption should be of significant enough value that future generations will know that their war time military service will have life-long benefits.

S.B. No. 211 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING CRIMINAL CASES OF PERSONS WHO HAVE RETURNED FROM SERVICE WITH THE ARMED FORCES.

There is no doubt in the minds of veterans and citizens in Connecticut that we must adapt our criminal justice system to fairly and thoughtfully address the issues of veterans in our criminal courts. We learned from our mistakes with Vietnam Veterans that PTSD is real and has life-long consequences. The signature injury of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI); we must develop protocols and programs to properly deal with TBI affected veterans.

The stress of multiple deployments to combat zones, conducting warfare in urban setting 24/7 when the advantage is always with the local fighter, subjects veterans to new levels of stress and fatigue we have not experienced in past wars.

S.B. No. 212 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE MOTOR VEHICLE TAX EXEMPTION FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

Correcting the statute to include a service members spouse is a commonsense approach to making the language as effective as the original intent.

S.B. No. 214 (RAISED) AN ACT NAMING THE STATE MILITARY TRAINING FACILITY CAMP NIAN TIC.

Military tradition and heritage should not be changed without good reason. Naming the Military Facility in Niantic after the Governor seems popular with veterans and the people.

S - 608

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2010**

**VOL. 53
PART 11
3251 - 3554**

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President..

That item might be marked past temporarily.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Excuse me, Senator Looney. Are we at ease, sir,
or are we --

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, Mr. President, if we might stand at ease for
just a moment. We're trying to -- we have one more
item to add to the consent calendar, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Okay, thank you.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, Mr. President, thank you. That item, Mr.
President, is on calendar page 2, top of calendar page
2, Calendar 114, Substitute for Senate Bill Number
214. Mr. President, I would move to place that item
on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

I think I might object to that one. But we'll
put that on consent.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, thank you, Mr. President, and Mr. President,

would ask the Clerk to call the consent calendar at this time. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Very good. Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on the consent calendar. Will all Senators please return to the chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate on the consent calendar. Will all Senators please return to the chamber.

Mr. President, the items placed on Consent Calendar Number 2 from Senate Agenda Number 2, Substitute for Senate Bill 330. Calling from the calendar. Calendar page 2, Calendar 114 --

THE CHAIR:

Some of the members of the chamber are trying to listen to the consent calendar. If you have conversation to be had, please take it outside. I know we're all excited. Thank you.

Mr. Clerk, please proceed.

THE CLERK:

Returning to calendar page 2, Calendar 114, Substitute for Senate Bill 214; Calendar 144, Substitute for Senate Bill 253; Calendar 157, Senate

Bill 121; calendar page 7, Calendar 377, Substitute for House Bill 5291; Calendar page 8, Calendar 398, Substitute for Senate Bill 231; calendar page 9, Calendar 442, Substitute for House Bill 5141; calendar page 10, Calendar 449, House Bill 5495; calendar page 11, Calendar 451, Substitute for House Bill 5535; Calendar 465, Substitute for House Bill 44 -- 5448; calendar page 12, Calendar 466, Substitute for House Bill 5289; Calendar 473, Substitute for House Bill 5059; Calendar 476, Substitute for House Bill 5117; calendar page 13. Calendar 478, House Bill 5290; Calendar 481, Substitute for House Bill 5119; Calendar 482, Substitute for House Bill 5120; calendar page 15, Calendar 492, Substitute for House Bill 5446; Calendar 494, House Bill 5315; Calendar 504, Substitute for House Bill 5306; calendar page 20, Calendar 532, Substitute for House Bill 5033; calendar page 21, Calendar 534, Substitute for House Bill 5543; Calendar 539, Substitute for House Bill 5350; calendar page 25, Calendar 561, Substitute for House Bill 5419; calendar page 36, Calendar 374, Substitute for House Bill 5225; calendar page 37, Calendar 415, House Bill 5131; calendar page 38, Calendar 454, Substitute for House Bill 5526.

Mr. President, that completes the items placed on Consent Calendar Number 2.

THE CHAIR:

Please call for a roll call vote. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The Senate is now voting by roll on the consent calendar. Will all Senators please return to the chamber. Senate is voting by roll on the consent calendar. Will all Senators please return to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Senators voted? If all Senators have voted, please check your vote. The machine will be locked. The Clerk will call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is adoption of Consent Calendar Number 2.

Total number voting

35

Necessary for Adoption 18

Those voting Yea 35

Those voting Nay 0

Those absent and not voting 1

THE CHAIR:

Consent calendar Number 2 passes.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I would move that any items on the consent calendar requires additional action by the House of Representatives be immediately transmitted to that chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

And also any other items acted upon today, not on the consent calendar requiring action by the House of Representatives. Also would move that those items be immediately transmitted.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, sir, so ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I would yield to any members seeking recognition for announcements or points of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

At this time, I will entertain any points of