



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE ED JUTILA

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 NIANTIC

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.

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 NIANTIC'.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Yuhas', written over a horizontal line.

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'

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

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

THE DAY EDITORIALS

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 nomenclature change can also be confusing.

Finding a new name for the camp could provide for an interesting debate — perhaps someone who served meritously 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 and reach out to the local VFW and Ainer can 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.

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

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

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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.
