

CHAPTER 174

AN ACT designating State Highway Route No. 173 between Clinton and Phillipsburg as the “173rd Airborne Brigade Highway.”

WHEREAS, The 173rd Brigade was first constituted in 1915 as the 173rd Infantry Brigade and deployed to France during World War I; and

WHEREAS, The 173rd Infantry Brigade was then designated as the 87th Reconnaissance Troop in 1942 and entered combat in 1944 during World War II in the central Europe, Rhineland, and Ardennes-Alsace operations; and

WHEREAS, In the early 1960s, as part of the Reorganization Objective Army Division plan, the 173rd Brigade was reconstituted as a separate brigade and a special airborne task force, the 173rd Airborne Brigade; and

WHEREAS, In 1963, the 173rd Airborne Brigade was activated in Okinawa and it was for the thousands of parachute jumps the brigade made that they were given the moniker “Sky Soldiers”; and

WHEREAS, The 173rd Airborne Brigade was the first Army unit sent into the republic of South Vietnam in May 1965; and

WHEREAS, During their nearly six years of continuous service during the Vietnam War, the Sky Soldiers were the first to go into War Zone D, fought bravely in the battles of the Iron Triangle, conducted the only major combat parachute jump in the Tay Ninh Area, and blocked the North Vietnamese Army’s incursions during the bloodiest fighting of the war at Dak To, culminating in the capture of Hill 875 in the fall of 1967; and

WHEREAS, For the brave service of its members during the Vietnam War, as a whole, the brigade earned four unit citations, 13 Medals of Honor, and over 130 distinguished service crosses; and

WHEREAS, In 2003, nearly 1,000 members of the 173rd Airborne Brigade participated in the initial invasion of Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom, and between 2005 and 2010 the 173rd Airborne Brigade served three tours in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom; and

WHEREAS, Today’s Sky Soldiers are based in Vicenza, Italy where they continue the tradition of heroic service and proudly represent the 173rd Airborne Brigade’s fighting spirit, ready to deploy at a moment’s notice to protect the United States and her allies; and

WHEREAS, To honor the 173rd Airborne Brigade’s many years of heroism and sacrifice in defense of our country’s freedom, it is fitting and proper for the Legislature of this State to designate State Highway Route No. 173 between Clinton in Hunterdon County and Phillipsburg in Warren County as the “173rd Airborne Brigade Highway”; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. The Commissioner of Transportation shall designate State Highway Route No. 173 between the Town of Clinton in Hunterdon County and the Town of Phillipsburg in Warren County as the “173rd Airborne Brigade Highway” and shall erect appropriate signs bearing this name.

2. No State or other public funds shall be used for producing, purchasing, or erecting signs bearing the designation established pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2015, c.174. The Commissioner of Transportation is authorized to receive gifts, grants, or other financial assistance from private sources for the purpose of funding or reimbursing the Department of Transportation for the costs associated with producing, purchasing, and erecting signs

bearing the designation established pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2015, c.174 and entering into agreements related thereto, with such private sources, including but not limited to non-governmental non-profit, educational, or charitable entities or institutions. No work shall proceed, and no funding shall be accepted by the Department of Transportation, until an agreement has been reached with a responsible party for paying the costs associated with producing, purchasing, erecting, and maintaining the signs.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 11, 2016.