



## **Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery**

Arlington National Cemetery  
Arlington, VA 22211

September 29, 2023

The Honorable Christine Wormuth  
Secretary of the Army  
100 Army Pentagon, Room 3E700  
Washington DC, 20310

Dear Madame Secretary,

The Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery (ACANC) is a congressionally mandated non-discretionary advisory committee established under Title 10 United States Code § 7723. The ACANC is chartered to make periodic reports and recommendations with respect to the administration of Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), the erection of memorials at the cemetery, and master planning for the cemetery. These recommendations compliment, not supplant, Army command and staff actions with respect to ANC. The Department of the Army provides support through Arlington National Cemetery.

The DoD, consistent with the Committee's mission and DoD policies and procedures, has authorized two subcommittees:

The Honor Subcommittee. The primary mission of this Subcommittee is to accomplish an independent assessment of methods to address the long-term future of the Army national cemeteries, including how best to extend the active burials and what ANC should focus on once all available space is used. Specifically, to assess current eligibility requirements for interment and inurnment at ANC as they affect the available space and life of active burials and ensure that recommendations serve and protect the interests of all Servicemembers and Veterans, surviving family members, and the American public. The Subcommittee's review focuses on the qualitative and quantitative benefits of the options to best honor our veterans, their families, and the Nation while maintaining the iconic nature of ANC.

The Remember and Explore Subcommittee. The primary focus of this Subcommittee is to review issues and provide recommendations to the Committee to best maintain the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Monument, accomplish an independent assessment of requests to place commemorative monuments, identify means to capture and convey the history of Arlington National Cemetery, and to improve the quality of visitors' experiences now and for generations to come.

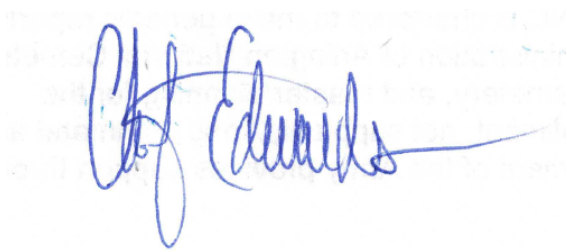
The Committee takes seriously its mandate to provide independent advice and is excited and pleased with the significant progress that continues at Arlington National Cemetery.

**Report of the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery meeting held on  
August 11, 2023**

The Committee, after thorough review and deliberation, voted unanimously on August 11, 2023 to:

- Provide Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery insights on the recommendations of the Commission on the Naming of Items of the Department of Defense that Commemorate the Confederate States of America or Any Person Who Served Voluntarily with the Confederate States of America (hereafter referred to as "Naming Commission").

Very Respectfully Yours,



Thomas "Chet" Edwards  
Co-Chair  
Advisory Committee on  
Arlington National Cemetery



James Peake  
Co-Chair  
Advisory Committee on  
Arlington National Cemetery

**Report of the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery meeting held on  
August 11, 2023**

Enclosure

Report of the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery meeting held on August 11, 2023.

**References**

(a) Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery Charter, July 31, 2022.

(b) The Naming Commission Final Report To Congress, Part III: Remaining Department of Defense Assets

(c) Public Written Comments to the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery

**Background**

(a) Upon completion of the DOD directed Zero-Based Business Review and reconstitution of the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery, the initial meeting was held on 12 November 2022. An information item at the meeting was the result of the Naming Commission recommendations for ANC and the SECDEF decision to implement those recommendations. As per Federal Advisory Committee Act rules, the meeting had been published in the Federal Register and members of the public were invited to attend virtually. On the specific Naming Commission recommendation to remove the Confederate Memorial, the committee received voluminous written input and many requests from the public to address the committee.

Because this was an information only briefing, the chair did not entertain oral comments from the public, but the matter was referred to the Remember & Explore Subcommittee which convened on 22 March 2023 and public comments were heard along with consideration of additional written input. The result of this subcommittee meeting was summarized for the full committee on 23 March 2023.

This report follows the ACANC open meeting of 11 August 2023, where, again, extensive written input was received and reviewed by the committee and additional public comment heard.

**Summary of Input Received**

(a) The written materials included 1036 pieces of communication from emails, to letters, to bound documents. Many appeared to be template form letters promulgated by organizations such as the Sons of Confederate Veterans, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Guardians of American History, and Defend Arlington.

(b) In total, the ACANC heard comments from 86 members of the public on this issue.

(c) All written and oral communications on this topic were in opposition to the

**Report of the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery meeting held on  
August 11, 2023**

removal of the Confederate Memorial. The ACANC did not receive any comments that were supportive or in favor of removal of the Confederate Memorial.

(d) The rationale given can be generally summarized in several categories:

i. There is history of the memorial being placed with the support of 3 Presidents of the United States, with the intent to promote healing and reconciliation between the North and South.

ii. The removal of the Confederate Memorial would dishonor those Confederate Soldiers buried at Arlington National Cemetery, and by extension, their descendants who have subsequently fought honorably in all of our Nation's conflicts. This may impact recruiting efforts throughout the Department of Defense.

iii. There is concern that there was a lack of public participation as the Naming Commission considered this matter.

iv. Noting that the artist/sculptor, Moses Ezekiel, who is interred in proximity to the memorial was Jewish; there were several communications suggesting that the removal would be anti-Semitic or at least insensitive to the importance to the Jewish Community.

v. This recommendation was outside of the remit of the Naming Commission.

**Committee Perspective**

(a) The Committee understands that

i. The Secretary of Defense decision has been rendered and accepted by Congress.

ii. The Section 106 Process (of which the Committee is not a formal part) is in progress.

iii. There is active litigation seeking to reverse the decision to remove the Confederate Memorial from Arlington National Cemetery.

(b) The Committee

i. Feels an obligation to make the Secretary aware of the input received.

ii. We note the committee's confidence, should the decision be reversed, in the ability of the Arlington National Cemetery staff and Army Historians to provide appropriate historical interpretation well and adequately to the Confederate Memorial as

**Report of the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery meeting held on  
August 11, 2023**

it does for so much of the history to which Arlington National Cemetery is witness. These efforts are a great addition to the experience of the more than 3 million annual Arlington National Cemetery visitors by providing historical context.

iii. We note the committee's history of reservation in expanding memorials within Arlington National Cemetery, not only to preserve burial space, but to avoid "cause themed" memorials that might invite re-contextualization in the future that would detract from those buried and honored on the hallowed grounds of Arlington National Cemetery.

iv. Arlington National Cemetery is hallowed ground and peerless in its iconic nature. As such, it is a unique National shrine. Any future decisions that could significantly impact Arlington should only be made with careful, thorough analysis based on its unique mission and place in history.

v. The Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery, as a Congressionally mandated Advisory Committee, is chartered to "provide independent advice and recommendations on matters relating to Arlington National Cemetery..." and as such, should be included in all future decisions.

## REFERENCE A

## REFERENCE B

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August 11, 2023**