



Lt Gen Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret)
President and CEO

April 19, 2019

The Honorable Mark T. Esper
Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Secretary Esper,

On behalf of the 350,000 members of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), I am writing to express our reservations regarding the eligibility changes proposed by the Advisory Committee on Arlington National Cemetery (ACANC). The recommendations restrict burial at Arlington to recipients of specific awards for service and the remaining World War II and Korean War-era veterans. However, the retiree community, whose service spans from Vietnam to present, would be ineligible for either above-ground inurnment or interment.

We appreciate the challenge of finding a solution that extends the life of Arlington National Cemetery "well into the future," and we acknowledge the work of ACANC members on their proposed changes, which you may use or amend as you establish eligibility criteria.

The exclusion of the living retiree and veteran populations is of great concern, as it breaks faith with those who are eligible today. No one can predict how Arlington will be perceived or appreciated a century from now, nor can we sacrifice the benefit of the living population of veterans to preserve burial space for those not yet born.

MOAA's position, based on the feedback from our members:

- Take no action that restricts eligibility for present-day military retirees.
- Continue sourcing funds to undertake acquisition and development of adjacent land.
- Acquire noncontiguous land to create an Arlington annex or portfolio of cemeteries.

Should eligibility restrictions be included in your revised criteria to Congress, we encourage you consider restrictions for only those born after a future date; i.e. January 1, 2021. This solution sets standards and expectations for future generations while accommodating living veterans with plans for interment at Arlington.

We appreciate your willingness to consider alternatives before submitting your final recommendations to Congress, and we request the opportunity to meet and engage directly with you on this important matter. My executive assistant, Ms. Genelle Cox, will be happy to coordinate the meeting with your staff; she can be reached at GenelleC@moaa.org or 703-838-8111. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,