

20th Air Force Association
4 Brentwood Drive, Kinnelon, NJ 07405-3106
June 10, 1999
AH 20th Air Force Veterans, Their Families, and Friends

Letter-Writing Help for the Air Force Memorial

Gentlemen:

This is written at the request of Air Force Association (AFA), to ask that you write the National Capitol Memorial Commission, National Capitol Planning Commission, and the Commission of Fine Arts in support of the plan to place the Air Force Memorial in Arlington Ridge Park. Air Force Memorial Foundation has spent over seven years obtaining necessary clearances from those agencies and now an almost totally un-opposed letter writing campaign based on half-truths is being used in an attempt to defeat that plan.

19,733 U.S. Marines died in WW II, but the AAF had 52,173 killed in combat, so AFA established a Foundation to develop a memorial honoring all who ever serve(d) in the USAF and its predecessors. The Foundation obtained a tax exemption and enabling legislation from Congress, notified senior Marine Corps leaders (no objection), obtained approval from all local reviewing authorities (the National Planning Commission first disapproved, then approved) and briefed the Marine Corps Historical Foundation (which built the Iwo Jima Memorial) and Marine Corps leadership on the design concept (again, no objection). In 1997, Congressman Solomon (R-NY)—an ex-Marine—introduced legislation prohibiting placement of any structure near the Iwo Jima Memorial and joined a local neighborhood association (Friends of Iwo Jima) in filing suit to prohibit location/construction of an AF Memorial in Arlington Ridge Park. The Federal Court of Appeals recently affirmed the Federal District Court's Summary Judgment dismissing the case, but special interest groups are spreading dis-information about the Air Force Memorial to Congress, the National Park Service, the National Capital Planning Commission, the Commission of Fine Arts, and even to Marine Corps members and veterans. A deluge of protest letters from active and retired Marines, neighborhood associations, and environmentalists is being directed at those agencies. If left un-opposed, this deluge may jeopardize the plan during the continuing review the agencies conduct, so sample letters are attached for use in reminding them that their approvals of this plan will enable the nation to appropriately honor its airmen, and should remain un-changed. Additional information is available on web site: <http://www.airforcememorial.org> or you may call the AF Memorial Foundation at (703) 247-5808. Again, now is the time to write in support of America's military airmen! Please do.

Sincerely,

Jay H. Reichbach
President cc Maj. Gen. Link (AFAssn.)
B-29 Combat Pilot, 1944-45

J. Carter Brown
THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
The Pension Building
441 F. Street, N.W., Suite 312
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Brown,

I am writing to express my support for the approved location of the Air Force Memorial. The Arlington Ridge site is significant to the men and women of the Air Force because it's several hundred yards from where the first military flight took place on the parade grounds of Fort Myer. Perhaps even more significantly, the site is also close to Arlington National Cemetery, where so many brave Air Force veterans lay in their final resting-place.

Contrary to some widely circulated reports, the site will not encroach upon the Marine Corps War Memorial. In fact, the Air Force Memorial was designed not to detract from the Iwo Jima Memorial, but to complement it, much as the Marines and the Air Force have complemented each other throughout the twentieth century in their efforts to secure America's freedom. The Air Force Memorial will be located outside the seven-and-a-half acre site of Iwo Jima, more than five hundred feet away, down a hill and behind a clump of trees.

Great care has been taken to make sure the Air Force Memorial does not infringe in any way upon the Iwo Jima Memorial. The Air Force Memorial will be no higher than 50 feet high and barely visible from the Marine Memorial. It will contain no gift shop or theater. And it was designed by James Ingo Freed, the architect whose sensitivity and aesthetic sensibility shaped the National Holocaust Memorial. Moreover, the Air Force Memorial Foundation has followed the 24 steps it takes to build a memorial in the nation's capital, to include the enabling legislation that was passed and signed into law in December 1993.

The Air Force Memorial site, which has long been planned as a memorial site by the National Park Service, was approved more than three years ago by the three stringent governing bodies that have authority over national memorial sites. In the years it took to gain approval, the Air Force Memorial faced rigorous public and professional comment. Despite its strict adherence to the approval process, a special interest group of nearby residents decided to mount the fight. In short order, they provided misinformation to the Marine Corps and members of Congress. The men and women of the United States Air Force deserve a memorial, and they deserve a memorial in a fitting place. There is simply no more fitting place than its approved site on Arlington Ridge. The Air Force Memorial will pay tribute for all eternity to those who have paid the ultimate price for their country.

Sincerely,

H. B. Gantt

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION 801 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 301
Washington, DC 20576

Dear Mr. Gantt,

I am writing to express my support for the approved location of the Air Force Memorial. The Arlington Ridge site is significant to the men and women of the Air Force because it's several hundred yards from where the first military flight took place on the parade grounds of Fort Myer. Perhaps even more significantly, the site is also close to Arlington National Cemetery, where so many brave Air Force veterans lay in their final resting-place.

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Sincerely,

U.S. Department of Interior National Park Service National Capital Region 1100 Ohio Drive, SW
Washington, DC 20242

Gentlemen:

I fully support the approved location for the Air Force Memorial. The Arlington Ridge site is significant to the Air Force because it is only several hundred yards from where the first military flight took place on the parade grounds of Ft. Myer. Perhaps even more significant, the site is also close to Arlington National Cemetery, where so many brave Air Force veterans lie in their final resting place.

I am astonished that any group would attempt to prevent what has been approved by the three agencies administering National Memorial sites, particularly in this instance, because: When I have expressed my profound gratitude to U.S. Marines for sacrifices they made in taking Iwo Jima, which saved my life as an emergency landing place after both of my B-29's right engines were shot out by enemy fire on a night mission over Kawasaki, Marines have responded, in face to face meetings, that they are eternally grateful to the Air Force for making a land invasion unnecessary. Since the guys in the ranks feel so strongly about the bond formed when we fought—and some of us died—for a common cause, an Air Force Memorial that does not compete with but is within reasonable walking distance of the seven-and-a-half acre Iwo Jima Memorial, is an appropriately located and fitting tribute to the nation's military airmen.

Special interest groups are seeking to prevent placement of the Air Force Memorial on Arlington Ridge, so I urge you to keep an open mind, assess facts objectively, and maintain the just decision you have reached. It is in the best interest of all Americans.

A Memorial at this location, planned so carefully over so many years, is the appropriate honor for past, present, and future Air Force personnel, particularly those who have made or will make the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

Sincerely,

Jay H. Reichbach

President, 20th Air Force Association

B-29 Combat Pilot 1944-45