

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

October 1, 2021

The Honorable Admiral Michelle Howard
Chair of the Naming Commission
U.S. Department of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Members 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 (The Naming Commission):

As Members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), we write today to reiterate our support for the Naming Commission's important and long-overdue mission to begin the process of renaming military installations honoring individuals who committed treason to preserve the institution of slavery in the United States. We would also like to express our deep appreciation for the efforts of the Commission to ensure robust community input for the renaming of these military installations.

This letter focuses on ensuring that Fort Lee in Central Virginia is renamed in honor of Lt. Gen. Arthur J. Gregg, a thirty-five-year veteran of the U.S. Army and celebrated military logistician who rose from private to three-star general. We believe his incredible advancement through the ranks to become one of the most highly decorated Black military officers in U.S. history represents the best of the American Armed Forces and rededicating Fort Lee as Fort Arthur J. Gregg would pay homage not only to him, but to the incredible dedication that men and women of color have shown to serving this Nation for generations.

The Armed Forces of the United States exemplify the values, identity, and diversity of our nation, and it is imperative that the names of military installations, ships, buildings, and other property reflect that as well. For far too long the contributions and sacrifices of African American servicemembers have not been adequately represented in the military. Black servicemembers have participated in every war the United States has fought since our Nation's founding and yet the dedication that these brave men and women have shown is not reflected in the names of our military institutions. It is time we rectify that injustice and honor the innumerable sacrifices of our Black servicemembers to a country that has not always shown them the same level of honor and respect. An opportune starting point for righting this historical wrong is the rededication of Fort Lee.

Fort Lee was originally dedicated in 1917 in honor of Confederate General Robert E. Lee who led the fight to preserve slavery in the United States, was notorious for the cruelty he exhibited to enslaved persons and represented the worst of America. As the Naming Commission seeks to rename Fort Lee, we can think of no better course of action than to rededicate the Fort after Lt. Gen. Gregg who started his military career at the Fort in the segregated South of the 1940's and

through hard work and perseverance rose to the rank of three-star general and exemplified the best of America.

We look forward to working with the Commission and Secretary of Defense Austin to rename military assets across the United States, beginning with the renaming of Fort Lee. Thank you for your consideration of our recommendation, and we are eager to continue working with you in this process.

Sincerely,

A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress

James E. Clyburn
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress

Mondaire Jones
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Karen Bass
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress