

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 16, 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:

You have been tasked with the critical and long-overdue responsibility of beginning the process of renaming military installations honoring individuals who took up arms against the United States to preserve the institution of slavery. This change is long overdue. 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. As we strive to form a more perfect and inclusive union, we stand ready to work with you on the rededication of these installations in honor of servicemembers and national heroes with exemplary records and outstanding character. To that end, we request that you recommend renaming Fort Lee in Central Virginia after Lt. General Arthur J. Gregg, a thirty-five-year veteran of the U.S. Army, celebrated military logistician, and outstanding role model for current and future servicemembers.

Lt. General Gregg enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1946 and rose from private to three-star general. During his time in the military, he commanded the 96th Quartermaster Direct Support Battalion,¹ the Army's largest quartermaster battalion in Vietnam;² coordinated communication between the United States and NATO as part of the Joint Petroleum Office, Logistics Directorate, U.S. European Command;³ and served as the Director of Logistics, Organization for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.⁴ Upon retiring in 1981 as the U.S. Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Lt. General Gregg was the highest-ranking minority general, and the second-highest ranking Black servicemember to date.⁵

As part of the first wave of Black officers to attend advanced training school, Lt. General Gregg broke down racial and institutional barriers throughout his time in the service. Not only did he personally participate in the desegregation of the military, he also advocated for the recruitment and commissioning of underrepresented communities, including Black and minority servicemembers. At the heart of his selfless and inclusive leadership was Lt. General Gregg's

¹ <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA326595.pdf>

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1981/07/30/general/fd8846e2-a519-498d-9016-2ecef90fa46/>

³ <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/gregg-arthur-james-1928/>

⁴ <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA326595.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1981/07/30/general/fd8846e2-a519-498d-9016-2ecef90fa46/>

belief in dignity and respect for all people and the importance of “always put[ting] the mission first.”⁶ That is why whether in Kansas, Germany, or Vietnam, he always sought to stay attuned to the needs of servicemembers, preferring to keep a “constant presence with the troops.”⁷

In recognition of his exemplary character and remarkable achievements, Lt. General Gregg has been awarded numerous honors, including the Defense Distinguished Service Medal; the Distinguished Service Medal; the Legion of Merit with two Oak Leaf Clusters; the Joint Service Commendation Medal; the Army Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters; and the Meritorious Unit Citation.⁸ In 2016, in honor of his trailblazing service in logistics, the U.S. Army established the Lt. General Arthur J. Gregg Sustainment Leadership Award, a distinction bestowed upon soldiers or civilians whose leadership improves operating efficiency, readiness levels, or demonstrates financial responsibility.⁹

Arguably one of the U.S. Army’s greatest logistics leaders, Lt. General Gregg began his career in the South at Fort Lee, a segregated base named after a man who betrayed the United States to maintain slavery and uphold institutional racism. By establishing Fort Gregg, the Army would not only honor a pioneer in military leadership and logistics, but also honor the legacy of all Black servicemembers who offered the best of themselves to a nation that did not always show them the same respect nor recognize their value.


Additionally, we had the opportunity to convene a panel of community leaders from the fourth congressional district of Virginia that houses Fort Lee. This panel included retired servicemembers such as Colonel Robert Barrett and pillars of the community such as Elli Pieklik and Walter Wontz. Members of the panel agreed that rededicating Fort Lee as Fort Gregg would meaningfully signify the commitment of our military to upholding the values of the Nation. We hope members of the Naming Commission will also consider the input of these community leaders as they make their recommendations.

We look forward to working with the Commission and Secretary of Defense Austin to rename military assets in Virginia’s Fourth Congressional District, beginning with the renaming of Fort Lee. Thank you for your consideration of my recommendation, and We are eager to hear from you how We can be of help during this process.

Sincerely,



A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress



James E. Clyburn
Member of Congress

Cc: Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin

⁶ <https://thewestsidegazette.com/lt-general-arthur-j-gregg-usa-a-soldier-mentor-and-friend/>

⁷ <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA326595.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.tmcf.org/about-us/meet-the-team/our-board/lt-general-arthur-j-gregg/>

⁹ https://www.army.mil/article/164334/army_establishes_awards_to_honor_lt_gen_r_arthur_gregg_maj_gen_harold_green