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January 14, 2020

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member Armed Services Co.
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Fax: (202) 225-3486

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

The Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) surveyed its members regarding proposed changes to eligibility criteria for burial at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) that will include military retirees for above-ground inurnment. The survey was done in response to numerous phone calls from members upset about this change. The survey question and results are as follows:

Should FRA oppose a regulation that prohibits *in ground* burial for retirees with no combat experience?

YES 54% NO 28% Undecided/Unsure/Don't care 18%

Many retirees believe that twenty or more years of arduous military service has earned them the option to be provided an in-ground burial at ANC.

Background: Acting Secretary of the Army Ryan D. McCarthy has proposed changes to eligibility criteria in September 2019, for burial at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) that will include military retirees for above-ground inurnment. The FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act directed the Secretary of the Army to revise eligibility criteria to keep the cemetery functioning as an active burial ground “well into the future” – defined as 150 years.

The next step to implement the proposed rule is notice and public comment rulemaking in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act. FRA intends to share these survey results with the ANC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christopher J. Slawinski
National Executive Director

CJS:jd:dt