

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 20, 2012

The Honorable John McHugh
Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0101

CC: The Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy

Dear Secretary McHugh:

As we near the 50th anniversary of the tragic sinking of the *USS Thresher*, we write to request your support for the building of a memorial at Arlington National Cemetery honoring her crew and all U.S. submariners lost in the line of duty.

As you know, on April 9, 1963, the *USS Thresher*, built and maintained at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, departed for her final voyage with a crew of 16 officers, 96 sailors, and 17 civilians. Early in the morning on April 10th, during a post-maintenance sea trial dive approximately 300 miles off the coast of New England, the *Thresher* experienced a mechanical failure from which she could not recover. The boat was lost along with all 129 men on board.

In April of 2013, we will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the *Thresher* incident. As we remember with profound sorrow the loss of her gallant crew we will also recall the countless lives that have been saved as a result of the important reforms that were made following this sad event. In response to the *Thresher* tragedy, the U.S. Navy instituted new regulations to ensure the health and safety of our nation's submarines. The establishment of the Submarine Safety and Quality Assurance Program (SUBSAFE) – now one of the world's most comprehensive military safety programs – has helped provide maximum protection for our Navy crews, and since that time, no SUBSAFE-certified submarine has been lost. SUBSAFE is a legacy owed to those brave individuals who perished aboard the *USS Thresher*.

As we look to the 50th anniversary of *Thresher's* tragedy and triumph, we believe a memorial at Arlington National Cemetery would be an appropriate tribute. As you know, a number of special monuments and memorials have been dedicated at Arlington, including tributes to the *USS Serpens*, the *USS Maine*, the Space Shuttles *Columbia* and *Challenger* as well as those lost during the Iran rescue mission in 1980. We believe a similar memorial to the *USS Thresher* would fit the Arlington National Cemetery's long legacy as a national shrine and a "living history of freedom...where dignity and honor rest in solemn repose."

We hope you will strongly consider this request, and we look forward to working with you to make this memorial a reality. Thank you for your consideration and your distinguished service to our nation.

Sincerely,



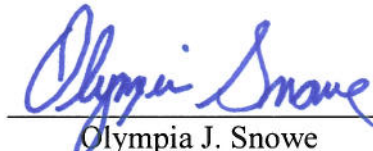
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Kelly A. Ayotte
United States Senator



Olympia J. Snowe
United States Senator