

Proposal

To the United States Commission of Fine Arts

USS Thresher (SSN-593)

Arlington National Cemetery

Commemorative Monument



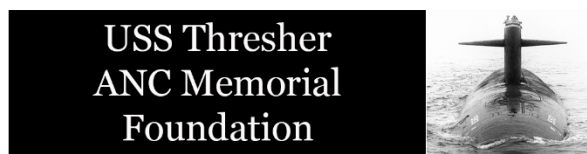
For Placement Within

Arlington National Cemetery

Submitted by

USS Thresher Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Foundation

May 28, 2019



1465 Hooksett Road Unit 239, Hooksett, NH 03106 ♦ 603.785.6464 ♦ ThresherMemorial@gmail.com

May 28, 2019

Earl A. Powell III, Chairman
United States Commission of Fine Arts
401 F Street NW, Suite 312
Washington, DC 20001-2728

Subject: Proposed USS Thresher Arlington National Cemetery Commemorative Monument

Dear Chairman Powell:

The USS Thresher ANC Memorial Foundation is pleased to join with Arlington National Cemetery leadership in submitting the USS Thresher Commemorative Monument proposal to honor the service, sacrifice and legacy of the 129 souls lost on USS Thresher (SSN -593) on 10 April 1963.

The proposed monument has been sized for placement along a walkway in a non-burial area to help preserve the limited space available for honoring individual veterans at their time of need. Funds have been raised to cover the costs of long-term monument maintenance and/or replacement.

The design of the USS Thresher ANC Commemorative Monument is identical in dimensions, material, color, font and font size to the recently erected Vietnam Helicopter Pilots & Crew Members Memorial. As shown in the artists rendition and architectural diagram, the image of the helicopter has been replaced with an image of the USS Thresher and the memorial words changed beneath it.

We look forward to working with you and your staff during the proposal review process and thank you for your consideration.

With respect and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin M. Galeaz".

Kevin M. Galeaz
President, USS Thresher ANC Memorial Foundation

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Monument Purpose

To honor the service, sacrifice and legacy of the 129 souls lost on USS Thresher (SSN -593) on 10 April 1963.

Detailed Justification

Subject: Justification for placing within Arlington National Cemetery a lasting monument to recognize the service, sacrifice and legacy of the 129 souls lost on USS Thresher (SSN -593) on 10 April 1963. The monument is requested to be placed along a walkway in a non-burial area of the cemetery.

USS Thresher, lead ship of a class of nuclear-powered attack submarines, was built at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Kittery, Maine. Commissioned in August 1961, USS Thresher was the world's most technologically advanced nuclear-powered submarine of her day. She was designed to be our Nation's silent guardian by hunting down and destroying Soviet Ballistic Missile Submarines before they could unleash their nuclear weapons on key military installations and cities across our Nation. USS Thresher was 278' 6" in length, 31' 8" in beam, and displaced 3,700 tons on the surface, and 4,300 tons submerged. Her top speed was greater than 20 knots and her maximum operational depth greater than 400 feet. USS Thresher was manned by an operational crew of 12 officers and 96 enlisted men. Duty aboard USS Thresher was a coveted assignment. The Submariners who met the stringent selection criteria were among the best the elite US Navy Submarine Force had to offer. After commissioning, USS Thresher conducted lengthy trials in the western Atlantic and Caribbean areas in 1961 and 1962, providing a thorough evaluation of her many new technological features and weapons. After the completion of these test operations, Thresher returned to her builders for maintenance.

On April 10, 1963, USS Thresher departed from the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard to perform deep-diving tests accompanied by the submarine rescue ship USS Skylark (ASR-20). In addition to her 12 officers and 96 enlisted men, the submarine carried 4 additional staff officers and 17 civilian technicians to observe her performance during the deep-diving tests. Fifteen minutes after reaching her assigned test depth, the submarine communicated with Skylark by underwater telephone, apprising the submarine rescue ship of difficulties. Garbled transmissions indicated that--far below the surface--things were going wrong. Suddenly, listeners in Skylark heard a noise "like air rushing into an air tank"--then, silence. Repeated efforts to reestablish contact with Thresher failed.

A search group was immediately formed to locate the submarine. Rescue ship Recovery (ASR-43) subsequently recovered bits of debris, including gloves and bits of internal insulation. Photographs taken by bathyscaph Trieste proved that the submarine had broken up, taking all hands on board to their deaths in deep water, approximately 220 miles east of Boston.

The loss of THRESHER was the genesis of the SUBSAFE Program. In June 1963, in the aftermath of the loss of Thresher while investigations, design reviews and testimony to congress were in

progress, the SUBSAFE Program was created. The purpose of the SUBSAFE Program is to provide maximum reasonable assurance of watertight integrity and recovery capability of a Submarine. A culture of Safety is central to the entire Navy submarine community. This starts at the designers, and includes builders, operational crews as well as maintenance organizations. The SUBSAFE Program clearly defines non-negotiable requirements, requires annual training of personnel and then ensures compliance with reviews including audits and independent oversight. The annual training requirement includes review of past failures including the loss of Thresher. To submerge, a submarine must be SUBSAFE certified. This is a process, not just a final step. SUBSAFE certification covers design, installed material, fabrication processes and as well as comprehensive testing. In these areas, documentation must be exact and based on objective quality evidence. This means that records back to original material composition as well as detailed testing results must be reviewed and retained throughout the life of a submarine.

To many the detailed requirements, rigorous training, constant review and questioning attitude, as well as the meticulous record keeping may seem excessive, but the program is successful. In the 48 years before SUBSAFE there were 16 non-combat related submarine losses, an average of one every three years. Since inception of the SUBSAFE program only one submarine, USS Scorpion SSN 589 – has been lost, and it was not a SUBSAFE certified submarine. In the 50 years since the inception of the SUBSAFE program, there has not been a loss of a single SUBSAFE certified submarine. To maintain comprehensiveness and objectivity there is an independent oversight council, tasked with ensuring effectiveness and avoiding complacency within the SUBSAFE program. When analyzing the loss of both Space Shuttles, Challenger and Columbia, the SUBSAFE program was utilized as a safety standard; if a like process had been followed those tragedies might have been avoided.

The SUBSAFE Program is the legacy of those lost on USS Thresher – and it has made a lasting significant contribution to the Submarine Force, the United States Navy and to our Nation.

Those who sailed in Thresher were true pioneers in submarine technology and were lost while testing those advances that in many ways were essential in our nation prevailing in the Cold War. No bodies were ever recovered, and they remain entombed in the crushed hull. No cemetery holds remains of any of those lost and while there are local memorials to the Thresher, there is none at the national level. They came from across America to serve our nation, and their sacrifice, service and legacy was to our nation. It is appropriate for them to be recognized at our National Cemetery. Only at Arlington National Cemetery will they be honored with others of like sacrifice and legacy for future generations to understand, admire and emulate their unselfish service.

J. Clarke Orzalli, RADM USN (ret)

Chairman SUBSAFE Oversight Council 2010-2012

USS Thresher (SSN-593) Commemorative Monument Proposed Design Concept



FIGURE 1: PROPOSED DESIGN CONCEPT

The proposed monument design possesses simple artistry and language to communicate the service, sacrifice and legacy of the 129 souls lost aboard USS Thresher (SSN-593).

Carved from Barre Granite quarried in Vermont, the monument dimensions are: 2'-8" face, 8" front nosing, 1'-9" depth, 1'-10" back, and a polished, 2'- 1 ¼" 34-degree slant face. A 4,000 psi-mix concrete footer of 3'-6" depth will support the monument to ensure long term stability.

The monument and footer are identical in dimensions and material used on the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument dedicated on April 18, 2018 at Arlington National Cemetery.

The size and proposed location along a walkway in a non-burial area will preserve limited cemetery space available within ANC for future burials.

Note that the submarine and the ocean falsely appear to be colored blue in this artist rendering. It is identical in color to the helicopter on the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument

Architectural Drawing

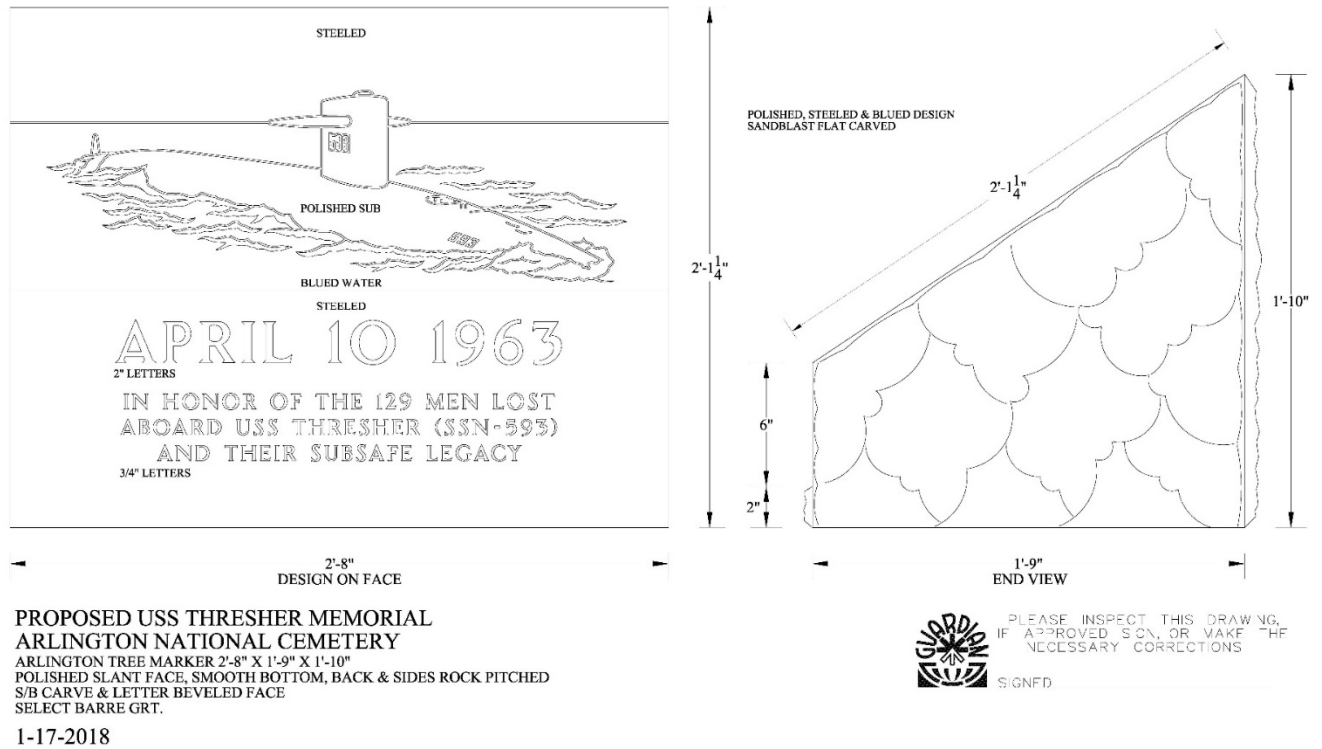


FIGURE 2: ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING

Monument Costs

The monument construction, transport, placement and installation costs are estimated to be \$4,760.

Monument design and construction will be completed by Granite Industries of Vermont. The monument transport, concrete footer, placement and installation will be completed by Kline Memorials, Manassas, Virginia.

A breakdown of the cost estimates from Granite Industries of Vermont & Kline Memorials are as follows:

| Item | Est. Cost |
|--|--------------|
| Monument design & construction | 1,670 |
| Monument transport, foundation stone, placement & installation | 3,000 |
| Total | 4,670 |

Monument Funding

The monument design, construction, placement, and all supporting activities for the installation will be paid for and sustained in perpetuity by funds that have been raised by the USS Thresher Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Foundation. The USS Thresher Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Foundation has been incorporated in the State of New Hampshire. We have been granted 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status by the IRS.

As of February 13, 2019, \$63,066 has been raised to cover all costs associated with the monument including perpetual sustainment to ensure that the monument does not become a burden to the United States taxpayers.

A self-sustaining USS Thresher ANC Memorial perpetual trust fund is being created with an initial investment of at least \$55,000 placed into a Certificate of Deposit (CD). A portion of the interest earned annually from the CD will be used to cover the annual New Hampshire Charitable Trust fee.

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Total cash donations (Bank balance) | 32,557 |
| Flipcause online fundraising balance | 30,509 |
| Total donations as of 2/13/2019 | 63,066 |
| Estimated monument design, construction, shipping & placement costs | 4,670 |
| Estimated balance available for perpetual care | 58,396 |

Proposed Location

An ANC Staff recommended location for the USS Thresher ANC Commemorative Monument has been selected along Roosevelt Drive walkway near the USS F-4 Submarine Memorial in section 2 as shown in the ANC map image and the two Google Earth images below directly beneath the white arrow.

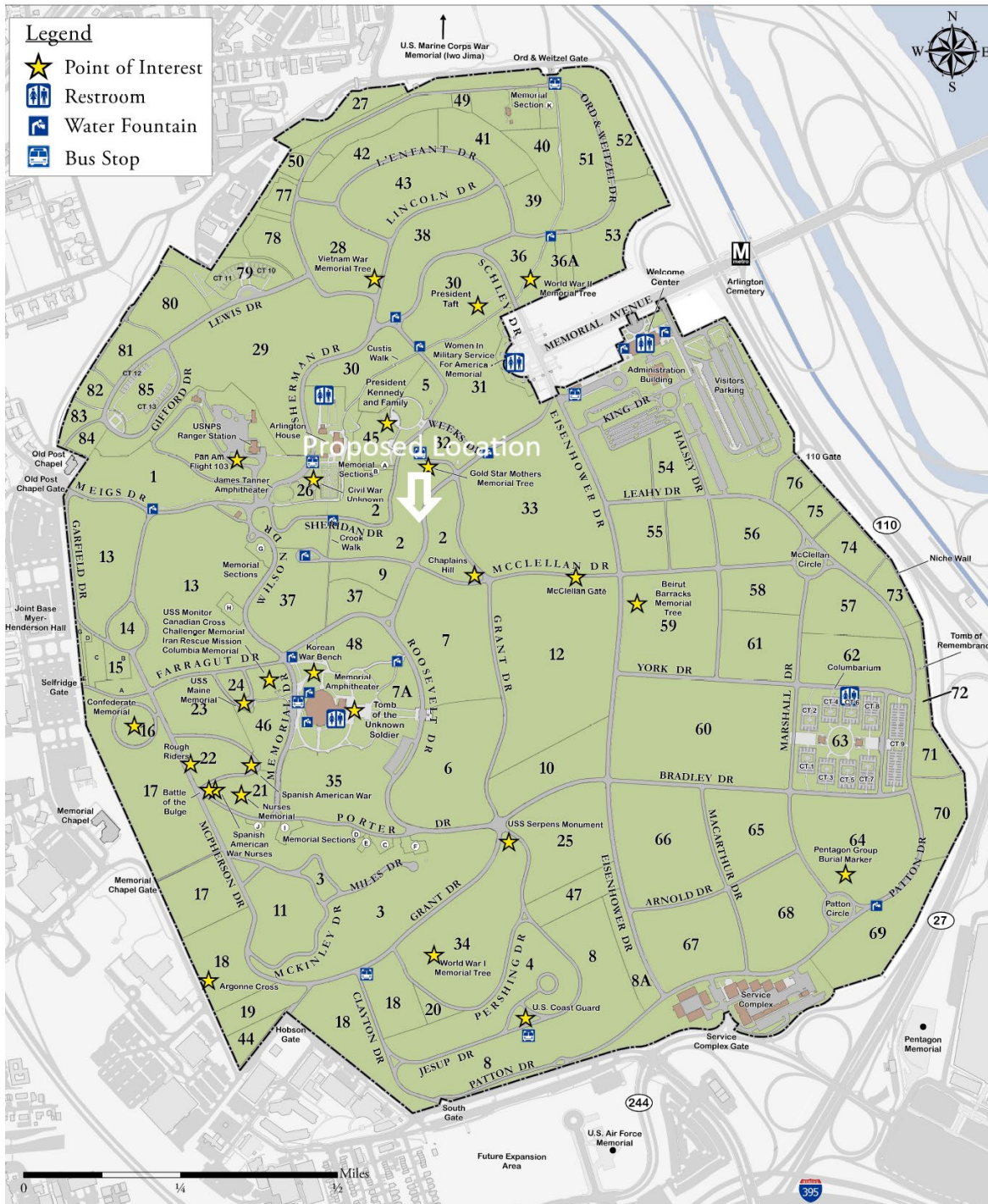


FIGURE 3: PROPOSED LOCATION SECTION 2, ANC MAP

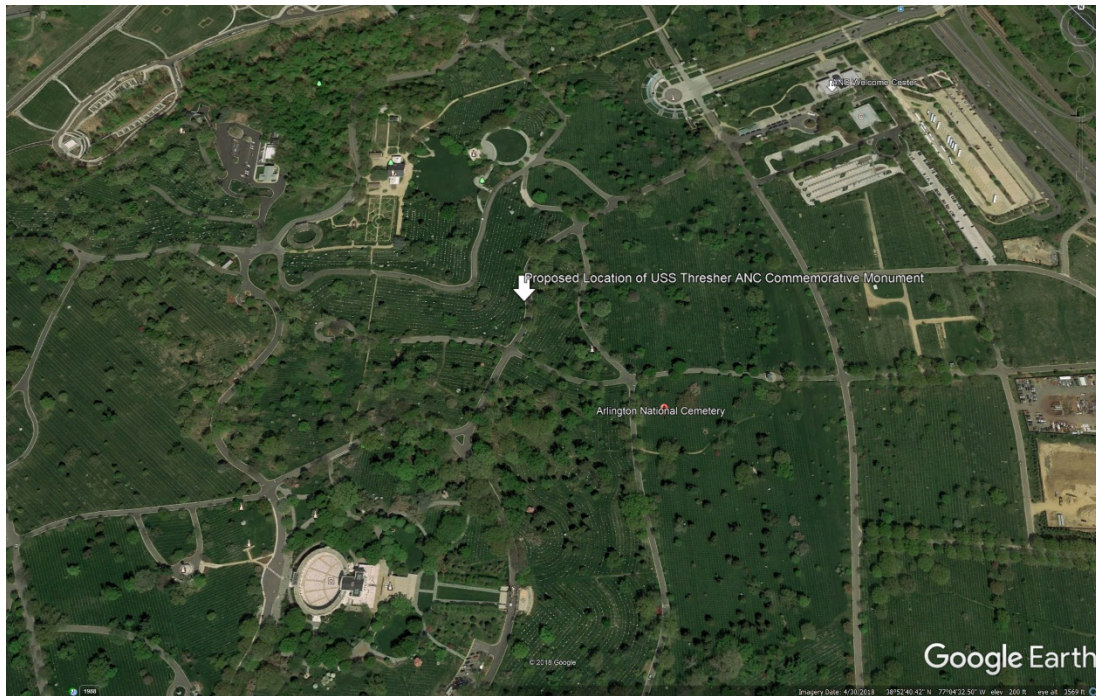


FIGURE 4: PROPOSED LOCATION IN SECTION 2

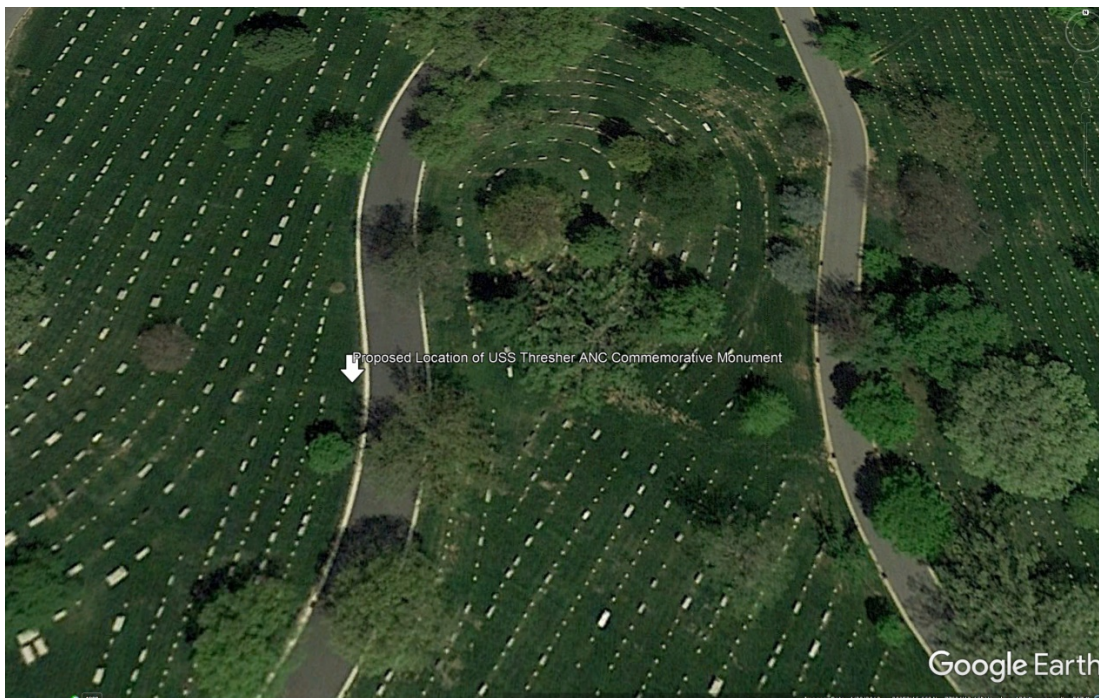


FIGURE 5: ZOOM VIEW OF PROPOSED LOCATION IN SECTION 2

Proposed Location Site Images

The USS Thresher Commemorative Monument will be centered between the two posts and placed three feet back from the chain as shown in the images below. A piece of cardboard sized to match the monument base dimensions was placed in the proposed location.



FIGURE 6: WEST VIEW



FIGURE 7: SOUTH WEST VIEW WITH USS F-4 MEMORIAL IN BACKGROUND



FIGURE 8: SOUTH VIEW WITH USS F-4 MEMORIAL IN BACKGROUND



FIGURE 9: NORTH VIEW

Appendix A: Congressional Letter

Congress of the United States Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2018

Ms. Karen Durham-Aguilera
Executive Director
Army National Military Cemeteries
Arlington National Cemetery
Arlington, VA 22211

Dear Ms. Durham-Aguilera,

This month marks the fifty-fifth anniversary of the loss of the Navy submarine USS *Thresher*, which sank during deep-diving tests off the coast of Massachusetts and took the lives of 129 crew and civilian shipyard personnel on April 10, 1963. Those who perished on the *Thresher* were some of the best and brightest in the U.S. Navy and included World War II and Korean War veterans, graduates of the U.S. Naval Academy, and participants in groundbreaking undersea Arctic missions. These patriots, who voluntarily placed themselves on the front lines of the Cold War, paid the ultimate price in service to our country.

The *Thresher* catastrophe was the first loss of a nuclear-powered submarine at sea and remains the greatest loss of life aboard a submarine. These sacrifices were not made in vain. Within two months of the sinking of *Thresher*, the Navy instituted the submarine safety program known as SUBSAFE. Whereas between 1915 and 1963, the Navy lost sixteen submarines for reasons unrelated to combat, since the creation of this rigorous program, not one SUBSAFE-certified submarine has been lost.

That means that for over fifty years, the rigorous standards and certifications implemented by the Navy in the wake of the *Thresher* tragedy have kept American submarines and their crews safe. The ripples of the SUBSAFE program even extend beyond the U.S. Navy. Following the loss of the Space Shuttle Columbia, NASA described SUBSAFE as "successful safety programs and practices that could be models for NASA." The story of *Thresher* is thus not one of loss, but one of security, perseverance, and safety for two generations of U.S. Navy submariners who followed in the footsteps of the crew of *Thresher*.


We believe it's time to recognize the sacrifice of the *Thresher* and advancements made within the U.S. Navy submarine fleet as a direct result from the lives lost. We believe it's time to honor the *Thresher* crew and shipyard personnel lost in 1963 with a memorial worthy of their legacy. We believe it's time to honor the memory of those lost and the price they paid for future generations of sailors and for the safety and security of our country with a memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.


We understand that the USS *Thresher* Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Project has submitted an application package for a modest memorial stone along a walkway at the cemetery. We wholeheartedly support this application and request that you favorably consider granting approval for such a memorial.


Based on our understanding of the memorial approval process at Arlington Cemetery, the casualty count of an event for which a memorial is being proposed is taken into account. In the historical narrative of American sacrifice for freedom and peace, the 129 lives lost on *Thresher* seems modest. In addition to those lives lost, we ask you to also consider the lives saved as a result of the catastrophe when deliberating on the memorial application. That is the true legacy of *Thresher*.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

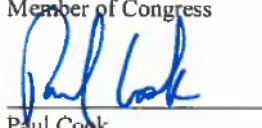
Sincerely,



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

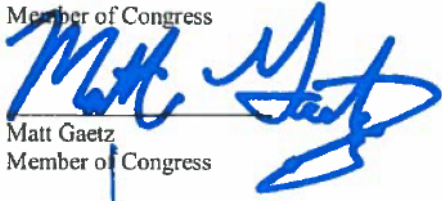

Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress

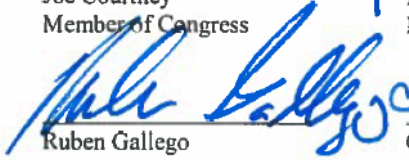

Scott Taylor
Member of Congress

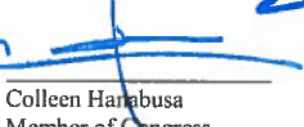

Jim Banks
Member of Congress



Paul Cook
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

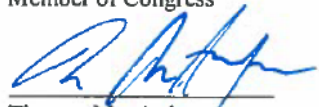

Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress



Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress


Rick Larsen
Member of Congress


Thomas MacArthur
Member of Congress

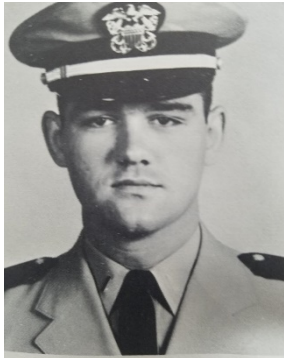

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress


Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress


Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress

Appendix B: USS Thresher Family Letters

From the Family of LTJG John Joseph Wiley



The family of LtJG John Joseph Wiley strongly supports the proposal for a memorial to be placed at Arlington National Cemetery to honor the men and legacy of the USS *Thresher* lost at sea on April 10, 1963. We feel this is important because:

- The lessons learned through this tragedy continue to drive the protocol used for submarine safety programs.
- We must never forget the human cost in defense of our nation during any period of conflict, but especially the Cold War, a period of American military history which is often overlooked.

A memorial in the nation's foremost sacred national cemetery would honor their sacrifice for our country and emphasize the point that freedom is not free - in times of contentious peace or armed conflict.

The SUBSAFE program established after the loss of the USS *Thresher* is a dynamic program that has potentially saved countless submariners from a similar disastrous accident. It is our understanding that the men of the USS *Thresher* stayed at their assigned stations while descending, making reports on the situation and the submarine's condition even though knowing that they were doomed. They displayed an outstanding example of courage and commitment to ensure the challenges they encountered would not happen again.



The tragic death of LtJG John Joseph Wiley was mourned by his hometown of Altoona, PA in 1963 and his memory as an outstanding student-athlete continues 55 years later in a scholarship at his high school, Bishop Guilfoyle High School. Like his comrades aboard the submarine, he accepted the call President Kennedy gave to the nation during his inaugural address in 1961: "And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you -- ask what you can do for your country." Just months after that address, John accepted his diploma from President Kennedy at the U.S. Naval Academy, and ironically these two Navy men both died tragically in 1963. The memorial would not only honor the USS *Thresher* men, but also be a challenge to others to do their part in keeping our nation safe and free as

President Kennedy asked of all Americans. The impact upon our family due to the USS *Thresher's* tragic loss and John's commitment, is that we have since dedicated over 100 years of serving and defending our country as U.S. Army officers and as special agents in the Federal Law Enforcement Community. John's dedication continues to inspire the younger generations of our family to serve and defend our country.

It is our sincere hope that the Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Board approves this request and moves forward in selecting a site for the USS *Thresher* Memorial. The men of the USS *Thresher* qualify for the national recognition Arlington provides.

Sincerely,

The Wiley Family

Letter from a Thresher Daughter

Lorraine C. (Lori) Arsenault

400 Main Street
Gorham, ME 04038
207-780-5142
loriaam@gmail.com

Date: July 4, 2018

Ms. Karen Durham-Aguilera
Executive Director
Army National Military Cemeteries
Arlington National Cemetery
Arlington, VA 22211-5003

RE: USS Threshers Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Project

Dear Ms. Durham-Aguilera

I ask most sincerely that you approve and recommend to the Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Dr. Mark T. Esper, the installation of a privately funded commemorative monument to USS Thresher (SSN 593) in Arlington National Cemetery. Having this monument in the most hallowed ground in the United States would serve not only the families of the crew, representing not only what we and the nation lost, but more importantly, what we have gained--the hope that this need never happen again.

As the daughter of a crew member, I proudly support the mission of the USS Thresher Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Project. This monument will be designed to perpetuate and honor the memories of the 129 patriots who perished in the worst submarine accident in United States history 55 years ago during the height of the Cold War.

My father, Tilmon J. Arsenault, was one of the men lost on April 10, 1963 along with 128 other men. I was eight years old, and along with other Thresher dependents, would come to learn throughout my life that it was a significant life-changing event for people all around the world. In response to the tragedy, the United States Navy established SUBSAFE, the Submarine Safety and Quality Assurance program that helps keep our submarines safe to this day. My hope is that such a monument to honor those sacrificed will help to promote SUBSAFE practices that could be useful in other high-risk environments.

Very Respectfully,



Lorraine C. (Lori) Arsenault
Gorham, Maine

Appendix C: Senate Letter



November 9, 2018

The Honorable Mark Esper
Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0101

CC: The Honorable Richard Spencer
Secretary of the Navy

Dear Secretary Esper:

April 10th marked the 55th anniversary of the tragic sinking of the *USS Thresher*. We urge you to authorize the building of a memorial at Arlington National Cemetery in recognition of the service and sacrifice of 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 the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, departed with a crew of 16 officers, 96 sailors, and 17 civilians. Early in the morning on April 10th, approximately 300 miles off the coast of New England, the *Thresher* experienced an incident during a post-maintenance sea trial dive from which she could not recover. Tragically, the boat was lost along with all 129 men on board.

During the 55th anniversary of the *Thresher* incident, we remember with profound sorrow the loss of her gallant crew and seek to honor their memory. We also pay tribute to the important changes that were made in submarine safety as a result of this sad and disastrous event. In response to the *Thresher* tragedy, the U.S. Navy instituted a new program 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 service members lost as a result of the *Thresher* tragedy, and has undoubtedly saved the lives of submariners who have served since.

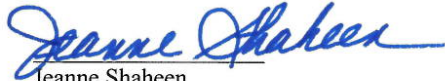
As we pass the 55th anniversary since we lost the *Thresher*, we believe a memorial at Arlington National Cemetery would be a fitting tribute to its legacy. As you know, a number of special monuments and memorials have been dedicated at Arlington, including tributes to the *USS Serpens*, the *USS Maine*, the Space Shuttles *Columbia* and *Challenger* as well as those lost during the Iran rescue mission in 1980. We believe a memorial to the *USS Thresher* would reflect 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." This memorial would serve not only to honor the sacrifice of those that lost their lives but as a reminder of the dangers that all submariners face when they volunteer for duty.

United States Senate

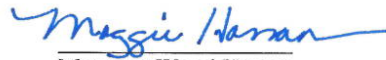
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

We hope you will strongly consider the request from the USS *Thresher* Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Project, 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, _____



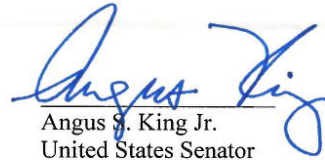
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



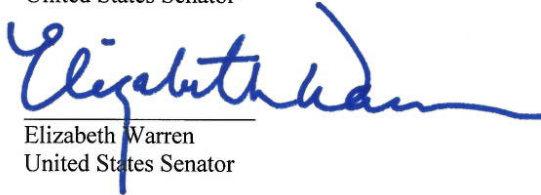
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King Jr.
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator