

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 25, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth  
Secretary of Defense  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth,

We write to express our deep concern regarding the recent deletion of important webpages and resources related to veteran history on the Department of Defense (DOD) and Arlington National Cemetery websites, including the removal of pages highlighting important aspects of American history such as Medal of Honor recipients, Navajo Code Talkers, the Iwo Jima flag raisers, Jackie Robinson, and histories of prominent Black, Hispanic, and women veterans interred at the Arlington National Cemetery. The process of restoring these webpages has been inconsistent, and it seems likely that numerous pages were removed in error and may now be permanently lost. **We strongly encourage you to prioritize the immediate restoration of the remaining webpages and resources. We urge against any future scrubbing of veteran history.**

The history of these American heroes should not be erased by the Department of Defense’s “digital content refresh.”<sup>1</sup> Removing easy access to this information diminishes the contributions these veterans made to defending and shaping our nation. To scrub the stories of these brave and proud Americans is beyond censorship; it dishonors the immense sacrifice of anyone who has ever worn the uniform. Particularly concerning is the fact that this was carried out through an artificial intelligence-powered automated review process rather than through a careful review by the Department of Defense.<sup>2</sup>

According to multiple news reports, the deletions on the DOD websites encompassed significant stories of historical importance such as the Navajo Code Talkers<sup>3</sup>, profiles of Medal of Honor recipients like Charles C. Rogers and Harold Gonsalves<sup>4</sup>, details about the 442nd Infantry Regiment—a highly decorated Japanese-American unit, biographies of notable figures like Medgar Evers and Ira Hayes, as well as educational modules on Black, Hispanic, and women

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<sup>1</sup> [Pentagon ‘DEI’ purge leads to removal of web page on Iwo Jima flag-raiser - The Washington Post](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Pentagon restores histories of Navajo Code Talkers, other Native veterans after public outcry – NBC News](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Military slices out web pages about WWII Native American code talkers to comply with Trump DEI order | The Independent](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Serving our veterans means telling their stories | Stars and Stripes](#)

veterans and military history. Even an article on Jackie Robinson's military career was taken down.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, the deletions on the Arlington National Cemetery website included three lists of "Notable Graves" that featured biographies and locations of Black, Hispanic, and female service members and public figures buried at Arlington National Cemetery.<sup>6</sup> This included General and former Secretary of State Colin Powell's information that was edited, including removing mentions of his race.<sup>7</sup> These histories were removed from the site's navigation and main links, making them harder to access.

Additionally, six educational modules, which provided resources on topics such as women's history and Medal of Honor recipients, were removed entirely from both the drop-down menu and the main Education page. Historical pages on Freedman's Village and Section 27, key aspects of Arlington's post-Civil War history, were delinked. Certain terms like "civil rights" and "racial justice" were replaced with more generalized language about "service." Black veterans have served in every American conflict, going back to the Revolutionary War, and often came home to a country that didn't see them as a whole person. Native Americans were forcibly removed from their lands and still fought to defend the United States. These facts, whether redeeming or shameful, are part of our American history and must be told.

This action goes beyond a simple administrative decision — it's a policy choice that will make our military weaker. For generations, Americans of all backgrounds have been instrumental in forging the strength and resilience that define our armed forces. Their contributions span every facet of military service, from leadership to front-line combat, from strategic planning to technological innovation. These groups have brought unique perspectives, skills, and cultural strengths that have enhanced the effectiveness of our military in countless ways.

To have a strong and prepared military, we need contributions from everyone. A force that draws on the talents and dedication of people from all walks of life is better equipped to address complex challenges in a rapidly changing world. Without the contributions of everyone, we risk becoming a less cohesive, adaptive, and effective fighting force. The strength of our military lies in its people, and it is through the contributions of all that we achieve greatness.

Just as our brave service members serve to defend *all* Americans, we must preserve *all* our history. To erase history is to diminish our strength and lose the wisdom it offers for guiding our future. Removing these resources from the Department of Defense and Arlington National Cemetery websites directly impacts our entire nation and diminishes the service and sacrifice made by these heroes. **We strongly urge you to republish the information and materials that have not yet been restored without delay. We also urge against any future attempts to**

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<sup>5</sup> [Article on Jackie Robinson's military career removed from defense department website - The Guardian](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Arlington Cemetery website removes links about Black, female veterans - The Washington Post](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Investigating claim of Colin Powell's name being removed from Arlington Cemetery website](#)

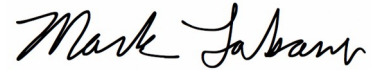
**arbitrarily scrub or censor materials that honor our nation's service members and veterans in the fullness of their history.**

Sincerely,



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Morgan McGarvey  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Disability  
and Memorial Affairs



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Mark Takano  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on  
Veterans' Affairs



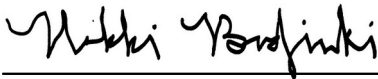
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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress



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Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Nikki Budzinski  
Member of Congress



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Andre Carson  
Member of Congress



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Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress



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Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



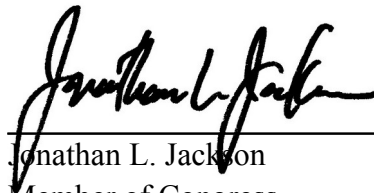
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Maggie Goodlander  
Member of Congress



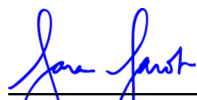
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Chrissy Houlahan  
Member of Congress



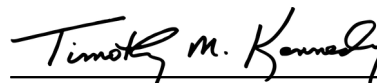
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Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



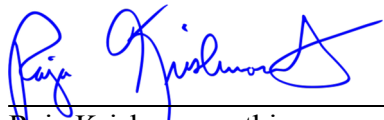
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Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress



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Timothy M. Kennedy  
Member of Congress



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Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



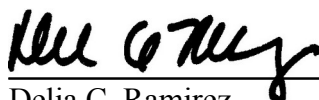
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Dave Min  
Member of Congress



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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



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Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress



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Mikie Sherrill  
Member of Congress



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Eric Sorensen  
Member of Congress



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Greg Stanton  
Member of Congress



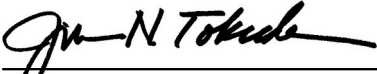
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Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress



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Shri Thanedar  
Member of Congress



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Jim Tokuda  
Member of Congress



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Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress



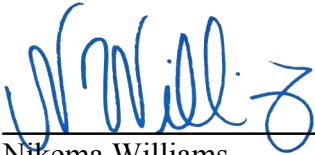
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Derek T. Tran  
Member of Congress



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Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



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Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Dr. Ronald E. Walters, Acting Under Secretary for the National Cemetery Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs