

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 21, 2025

The Honorable Robert Dalessandro  
Acting Secretary  
American Battle Monuments Commission  
2300 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 500  
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Acting Secretary Dalessandro:

We are writing today with great concern over recent reports that the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) removed two displays honoring Black soldiers at the Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial in Margraten, NL<sup>1</sup>. More than one million African Americans fought in WWII, most of whom served in segregated units. They were willing to die for a country that didn't dignify them with equal opportunities, accommodations, or recognition. Among the thousands of American soldiers laid to rest in Margraten are 172 Black servicemen<sup>2</sup>. Following a months-long crusade against diversity initiatives, including attacks on the National Museum of African American History<sup>3</sup> and the removal of slavery exhibits in some national parks<sup>4</sup>, this action marks this administration's latest attempt to erase not only Black history, but our shared American history.

In the fall of 1944, as fighting escalated and the death toll rose, 19-year-old, First Sergeant Jefferson Wiggins, a Black man from Alabama, was ordered to lead the 960<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Service Company (QMSC) with the grueling task of burying 20,000 of their fallen comrades in Margraten. They worked through the winter with only shovels and pickaxes to lay thousands of their fellow Americans to rest.

The same men who were segregated from sharing communal spaces with their White comrades in life were now tasked with honoring them in death.

One of the two removed displays characterized the dueling battlefronts Black servicemembers faced, known as the "Double V Campaign": defeating totalitarianism abroad and segregation at home. The other honored Technician Fourth Class George H. Pruitt, who drowned while trying to save a comrade in a German river. Both panels were added to the cemetery's visitor center in September 2024 and removed in March 2025. As our country commemorates its veterans this month, it is troubling to see the administration erase many of their contributions.

Please respond to the following questions by no later than **December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025**:

1. Why were the two displays removed from the Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial?
  - a. Was the removal related to the administration's anti-DEI initiatives?
2. Does the ABMC intend to erase all exhibits acknowledging the accomplishments of Black servicemen?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2025/11/13/politics/black-soldiers-world-war-ii-cemetery>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/military-history/2025/11/14/netherlands-wwii-cemetery-removes-displays-honoring-black-soldiers/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/restoring-truth-and-sanity-to-american-history/>

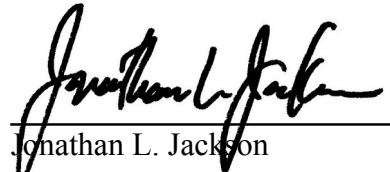
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2025/09/17/nx-s1-5540117/government-moves-to-national-scrub-park-sites-of-negative-history>

3. Does the ABMC no longer recognize the contributions made by the 960<sup>th</sup> QMSC?
  - a. Are the sacrifices of the Black servicemen buried in Margraten no longer valued by the ABMC?
4. Will the ABMC commit to putting the panels back on display?
  - a. If so, when will the panels be put back on display?

Sincerely,



Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress



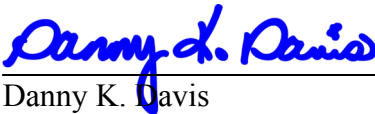
Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress



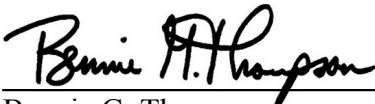
Stacey E. Plaskett  
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



Wesley Bell  
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress



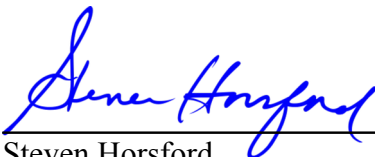
Robin L. Kelly  
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Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress



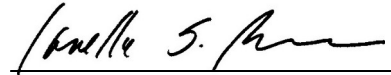
Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Janelle S. Bynum  
Member of Congress



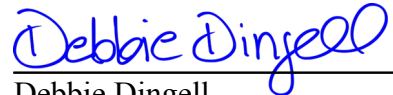
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



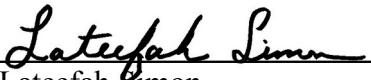
Marc A. Veasey  
Member of Congress



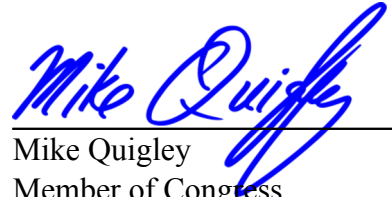
Shontel M. Brown  
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Debbie Dingell  
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Lateefah Simon  
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Mike Quigley  
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Al Green  
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Gwen S. Moore  
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Troy A. Carter, Sr.  
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Dwight Evans  
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Frederica S. Wilson  
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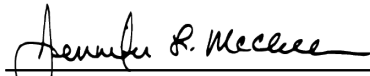
Rashida Tlaib  
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Shri Thanedar  
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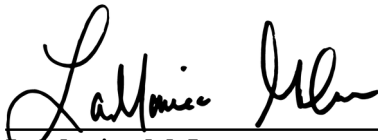
Andre Carson  
Member of Congress



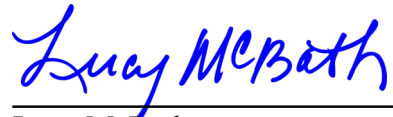
Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress



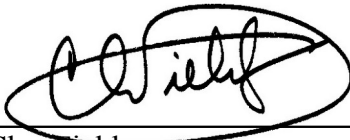
David Scott  
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LaMonica McIver  
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Lucy McBath  
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Cleo Fields  
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress