

ELIZABETH A. DIBELLA

June 28, 2018

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



PETER J. DIBELLA

RE: USS Thresher Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Project

Dear Ms. Durham-Aguilera

This is a photograph of my brother, Peter J. DiBella, a seaman aboard the U.S.S. Thresher on that most unfortunate day, April 10, 1963. He was only 19. He did not get to marry, have children or grandchildren, have his chosen career with the Navy, or even travel abroad. I continue to live a long and privileged life and realize every day that I do so because of the sacrifice made by men and women who give their lives on behalf of this country. Peter was one of those men. While I appreciate space constraints, Arlington National Cemetery must represent all lives given in service. I believe this simple monument can honorably represent these brave men, and humbly ask that you take this request under serious consideration.

I am writing today to demonstrate my support for the mission of the USS Thresher Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Project to erect a privately funded National commemorative monument to USS Thresher (SSN-593) in Arlington National Cemetery. 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.

On April 10, 1963, USS Thresher was conducting sea trials after undergoing a major maintenance period at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. During those trials, Thresher suffered an emergency from which the crew could not recover. This tragedy took the lives of 108 of the ship's force, four observing Navy officers, and 17 civilians.

In response to Thresher's loss, the Navy established a Submarine Safety and Quality Assurance (SUBSAFE) program that is charged with providing the maximum reasonable assurance that our Navy and our Nation will never have to endure such a loss. To date, no SUBSAFE certified US Navy submarine has been lost while defending our Nation.

I ask that you approve and recommend to the Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Dr. Mark T. Esper, the installation of the USS Thresher commemorative monument in the most hallowed ground in the U.S.

Very Respectfully,

Elizabeth A. DiBella
Gold Star Sister

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