

CONCERNED MWR PATRONS
P.O. Box 57, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060
www.concernedmwrpatrons.org

March 18, 2011

Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Gates,

In the current economy, the continued appropriation and expenditure of public funds to support the construction of the National Museum of the United States Army (NMUSA) without selection of an “approved site” and lack of private funding to start vertical construction in 2013 could be interpreted as an untimely waste of vital DOD funds.

Since November 2007, Concerned MWR Patrons has documented to the chain of command above Fort Belvoir and directly to the Chief of Staff, Army the significant adverse impact that an untimely and uncoordinated siting of the NMUSA on the Army’s Family, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Command (FMWRC) Golf Courses at Fort Belvoir would have on the DOD Families in Northern Virginia. In January 2008, when the Army refused to do an impact study, we completed a comprehensive “Impact Study-Fort Belvoir Golf Facility (FBGF)” and provided it to the Army in April 2008. We have had little success in trying to get visibility on this project and complete transparency as this project is being driven at the Army Secretariat without proper transparency and until recently no apparent consideration for the impact on the FMWR Programs at Fort Belvoir.

Included in the DOD 2012 Budget of the Army is a \$31 million MILCON project for Fort Belvoir – “Road and Infrastructure Improvements” to support the eventual construction of the NMUSA. This project will close indefinitely a portion of the Fort Belvoir’s Golf Courses once construction is started. The MILCON Project, if allowed to proceed on its own momentum, will adversely affect the “quality of life” of all DOD active duty and retiree families who live in Northern Virginia. The Fort Belvoir Golf Courses are the only readily accessible and economically affordable 18-hole military golf courses in Northern Virginia. This was documented in our Impact Study. Without adequate private funding to sustain vertical construction in 2013, the 2012 MILCON project will build a road or roads and extend all utilities on a portion of the golf course (effectively close 7 holes of the golf course) that will house the museum that may not be ready to sustain vertical construction. This will probably result in adverse publicity regarding the management of the NMUSA project and the Army’s concern for the “quality of life” of the Soldier.

The Army Historical Foundation (AHF) reportedly has raised approximately \$30+ million of the \$160-\$200 million private funds required to proceed with construction in 2013. However, the 2009 AHF Annual report shows only \$12.6 million in the bank or pledged. During the current recession, it is doubtful if the fundraising has improved. Where is the private support for the NMUSA? Senator John Warner told the Army in 2006, when they wanted to use an Extended Use Lease (EUL) to build the NMUSA, that if the Army wanted a National Museum, that they would have to raise private funds.

The Army has continued to spend appropriated funds on the NMUSA “preferred site” even though they do not have an “approved site” selected through the NEPA/Environmental Assessment (EA) process. The Army is approximately 3 years behind their “site selection” timeline. The draft EA published in September 2008 had such serious defects that the Army, in May 2009, awarded another EA contract. The September 2010 Draft EA finally included

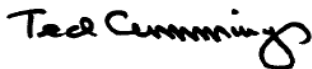
provisions to maintain the 36 hole Golf Courses by funding a Reconfiguration Project. However, there was no integrated NMUSA–Reconfiguration Project Timeline, which would insure that the reconfiguration would be completed and new holes open for play before closing any holes for MCA Infrastructure construction and vertical construction of the NMUSA. Without an Integrated Timeline, the Fort Belvoir Golf Course would be left with less than 36 holes until adequate funds are raised to start vertical construction. This would have a significant adverse impact on the Fort Belvoir’s Golf Course’s revenue and probably result in increased fees for DOD patrons. Closing a portion of the course with no prospect of starting and sustaining NMUSA Phase 1 vertical construction and no provision for uninterrupted 36 holes of golf will reflect adversely on the Army’s concern for the “quality of life” for the same Soldiers the NMUSA will honor.

We do not question the need for a NMUSA or even its final siting as these are Army determinations. However, we continue to recommend that before expending any funds on the NMUSA for “Road and Infrastructure Improvements” that the Army should:

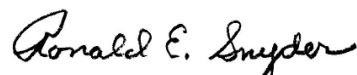
1. Demonstrate that sufficient private funds have been raised by the AHF to pay for vertical construction - Phase 1 (as defined by the Army Feasibility Study of August 2008) so that the work can be sustained without interruption.
2. Insure that the Reconfiguration Project is completed, and the new and modified holes are ready for play before closing any holes for NMUSA infrastructure or vertical construction.
3. Develop an integrated plan and phased timeline, which minimizes the impact of the NMUSA siting on the Fort Belvoir Golf Course and cost to the Army of both projects.
4. Insure that the status of AHF fundraising for the NMUSA (showing net revenues) is transparent and prominently displayed on its website and in its promotional literature.

Concerned MWR Patrons, (www.concernedmwrpatrons.com), are military veterans and FMWR patrons who since 2008 have made the above recommendations as the best choice to ensure that completion of the MWR golf facility reconfiguration and then the establishment of the NMUSA are done in a manner that reflects credit on the Army and supports “Quality of Life” of the military family.

Very Respectfully,
for the Concerned MWR PATRONS



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