

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

June 11, 2020

Dear Secretary Esper,

We write to urge you to rename two streets located at Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn that are currently named after generals of the Confederate States of America, Stonewall Jackson Drive and General Lee Avenue.

We swore an oath as public officials to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic,” and to “bear true faith and allegiance to the same.” While we were encouraged by news this week that the Army might consider renaming military installations named after Confederate generals, men who violated that oath to our country, we are similarly disturbed by recent statements by Administration officials suggesting that these names are part of a “Great American Heritage” and are “Hallowed Ground”. Shiloh, Antietam, and Gettysburg are hallowed ground, places where Americans gave their lives to end the practice of slavery in our country—bases named after men who sought to keep their fellow men and women in bondage are not. We hope that you will act swiftly to rename the streets in Fort Hamilton and all places named after Confederate figures.

It is impossible to disentangle these men’s identities as individuals from the cause they rebelled against our nation to defend. U.S. military bases and property should be named after men and women who’ve served our nation with honor and distinction, not sought to tear it apart to uphold white supremacy. And American servicemembers deserve to serve on bases that honor their ancestor’s contributions to our nation, not those who fought to hold those same ancestors in bondage. Our Armed Forces should not honor men who divided this country to defend slavery.

American history provides a proud litany of African American heroes, including many brave Brooklynites, who fought in the service of our country to uphold the core principle of democracy: that all men and women are created equal. We urge you to consider some of these men and women as suitable replacements for those who fought to uphold the lie that members of the human race are unequal. The streets of Fort Hamilton should be named after brave men and women who fought for our country and its values, not those who opposed them.

Sincerely,



Max Rose
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Ryan D. McCarthy, Secretary of the Army