



MILITARY RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
f o u n d a t i o n

Friday, June 3, 2016

Office of the Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon, Room 4D652
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing on behalf of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF) to demand that a video, which was recently posted on the U.S. Navy Facebook page, be immediately removed. The admin who posted the video on behalf of the U.S. Navy titled it: "Watch and listen as members of the U.S. Navy Ceremonial Guard use poetry in motion and words to share the meaning behind Memorial Day."

As the video depicts members of the Ceremonial Guard at Arlington National Cemetery, it states, "With each white cross there stands a reminder to us all of those who paid the ultimate price." This video clearly only honors Christian veterans – those who now lay under "each white cross" – while showing blatant disregard for the many service members of other religions, or no religion, who have bravely served this country.

As you know, not every headstone in Arlington National Cemetery bears a white cross, yet the posted video only recognizes those that do. This sends the message to all service members that their lives and sacrifices are only honorable if they are Christians. This message constitutes a wrongful endorsement of Christianity over other religions, or no religion, and, therefore, violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Further, honoring only Christian veterans violates the No Religious Test mandate of Article 6.

The number of headstones bearing crosses as compared to the number without them is immaterial. "[The State] may not prefer one religion over another or promote religion over nonbelief." *McCreary County v. ACLU*, 125 S.Ct. 2722 (2005) (O'Connor, J., concurring). Moreover, "we do not count heads before enforcing the First Amendment." *Id.*

We at MRFF demand that this video be removed immediately from the U.S. Navy Facebook page. We further demand an investigation into who posted the video and that the individual, or group of individuals, receive appropriate discipline for this constitutional violation.

Respectfully,

Tobanna Barker
MRFF Legal Affairs Coordinator
Military Religious Freedom Foundation