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December 16, 2011

The Honorable John McHugh
Secretary of the Army
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1400

Dear Secretary McHugh:

Across the nation, Memorial Rifle Squads provide an important service to our veterans. These dedicated volunteers provide a military ceremonial burial service at no charge for the family of an honorably discharged veteran. Their service is selfless, and their acts of tribute leave lasting memories for the families of the fallen. In Minnesota, the 100 members of the Memorial Rifle Squad at Fort Snelling battle bone-chilling temperatures while sacrificing their free time to travel and perform at least 50 funerals each week to honor our fallen veterans.

Memorial Rifle Squads rely on the Army to provide excess ceremonial rifles and ammunition necessary to help them perform these important duties. The Memorial Rifle Squad at Fort Snelling recently informed me of efforts underway by the Army to recoup a number of the Squad's ceremonial rifles. I ask that you take into account the sheer volume and use of the Fort Snelling Squad's ceremonial rifles and allow them to keep their current stock for the near term. Further, I respectfully request the opportunity to work with you to assess the current law that limits the number and types of rifles that can be loaned or donated to eligible organizations for funeral ceremonies. I believe we must consider the demand for each ceremonial unit when determining such limits.

Thank you for your consideration of my request. I look forward to working with you to address this issue. Should you have any questions, your staff can contact Ryan Silverberg in my office at (202) 225-2271 or ryan.silverberg@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

John Kline

JOHN KLINE
Member of Congress