My name is Robert H. Smith III.

My grandfather, Captain Robert H. Smith, U.S. Naval Academy Class of 1920, lost his life in a plane crash returning from Pearl Harbor in 1943. The nation honored him by naming a destroyer in his memory, the U.S.S. Robert H. Smith, which saw action in the Pacific in the later stages of World War II. My grandfather is buried in Arlington.

My father, Captain Robert H. Smith, Jr., U.S. Naval Academy Class of 1947, served his country for 24 years. He, too, is buried in Arlington -- and my grandmother and my mother as well, both of whom raised their families in keeping with the tradition of devoted spouses across the many generations of American military families.

I speak to you today to protest the arch that is proposed to be erected at Memorial Circle between the Lincoln Memorial and the entrance to the Cemetery. In its pompous grandiosity, this arch would constitute a desecration of one of America's most sacred spaces and forever destroy the quiet serenity of the sight lines between the Lincoln Memorial and the Cemetery. This arch would be a monument of the most regrettable irony -- a tribute to the hubris of an individual who himself avoided military service on dubious grounds and has regularly demonstrated his disrespect for the sacrifices of America's servicemen and servicewomen.

I beseech you: do not besmirch your good names by forever associating yourselves with this insult to those who are buried here, including those who are dear to me.

Thank you, Robert H. Smith III