

**Remarks by Marilyn A. Quagliotti, Major General, USA Retired on behalf of the Women In Military Service For America Memorial Foundation.**

I am here today to request your assistance and support for the WIMSA Memorial Foundation. As many of you know, the Foundation operates the Women's Memorial and Education Center. The Memorial is located on the 4.2-acre entrance to Arlington National Cemetery. The Mission of the Foundation is to recognize and honor all women who served in or with the armed forces—past, present and future; make their story a part of America's history; educate the public about the achievements and contributions of military women; and operate and maintain the Women In Military Service Memorial. The Foundation is a 501©3 nonprofit organization.

The goal of this living Memorial is to help the general public and particularly women understand the contributions of other women to our national defense. The Memorial is a powerful recruiting tool for all of the Services. The Foundation supports this mission through fund raising efforts and in the past some federal funds. From 2010 until 2016, the Foundation received no federal funding. With the loss of federal funding, fund raising efforts were not sufficient to support the Memorial's mission. The Foundation found itself in 1.1 million dollars of debt and obligations (contracts signed that could not be paid). The doors were about to close. In January 2016, new executive leaders at the Foundation began to assess the situation and were forced to make some very hard decisions. In April 2016, the leadership conducted staff layoffs. Many employees who had served the organization for over 20 years lost their jobs. Contracts were restructured to further reduce the debt. However, approximately \$300,000 dollars in debt, remains.

The current situation at the Foundation is brighter than last year but the future is not a total rosy scenario. The new leadership successfully developed and executed, with some pro bono help, a strategy to get renewed bipartisan support from Congress. The end result was \$ 5 million dollars of federal funding approved for FY 2017, with an additional \$ 5 million currently pending in FY 2018 funding bills. The initial \$ 5 million dollars will only pay for building repairs (20 years of deferred maintenance), upgrades of Information Technology and data base modernization efforts, and some salaries for remaining staff. Congress' generosity, however, is in question for FY 2019.

As such, we are asking two things from DACOWITS; first, that you support and work to secure some amount of funding in the DoD budget, in FY 2019 and beyond, to support the Mission of the Foundation; and second, that a sponsor within DoD be assigned to the WIMSA Memorial Foundation. The sponsor's role would be to ensure the survival of this tribute to the Women of the Armed Forces who have served this nation. The Memorial is unique in that it is the only Memorial and Education Center to honor women from all services during all era's.

**Fund Raising Difficulties:**

The Memorial is a "living" tribute to the women who have served and are serving. However, it does not fit into a neat category for targeted fund raising. This makes it a very special place to those of us who have served but makes it difficult to get sponsorship from big donors. It is part museum with our artifacts collection for exhibits and historical displays, it is part education center with the Research library and oral history library and program. It is part a tribute space for those who chose to tell their stories in the Register or those who attend the sponsored

programs in the theater. And of course, it is a Memorial as well. The hall of honor is dedicated space to those who paid the ultimate price for this country.

The majority of the Foundations support comes from individual donors. The largest group of donors has been World War II service women. Without a modern IT infrastructure and the current staff shortages, it is difficult to grow a new donor base. With the federal funds received, we are working hard to build that modern IT infrastructure necessary to engage a younger set of donors.

The building must be maintained and we have found that corporate donors are not interested in supporting buildings or staff but are interested in supporting “programs”. Again, staff shortages make it impossible, at this time, to sponsor “programs” that will engage corporate donations. However, the space itself is beautiful and we continue to rent the space for corporate events.

Why we believe DACOWITS and DoD should help support the WIMSA Memorial Foundation:

In April 2014, DoD submitted a report to Congress covering FY 13 Operational and Financial Support for Military Museums. According to the Report, the DoD operates 87 military museums, spanning the rich history of the U.S Military. However, none of those military museums honor all women who have served the nation from all services in all era’s. None are located in such a prominent place as the gates to Arlington National Cemetery. The DoD invested approximately \$91.1 million dollars in appropriated funds to manage and maintain military museums in FY 2013. Many of these Museums have 501© 3 foundations affiliated with them. In most cases, the affiliated foundations conduct fund raising activities in support of a specific museum for specific projects. The money raised goes to defray costs of adding new space or building out certain programs. The foundations are not responsible for managing and maintaining the military museum itself, or responsible for fund raising to keep the Museums from closing their doors.

We hope you will assist us to insure this National Treasure of the Women’s Memorial and Education Center remains a living tribute to honor all Military Women who are part of this country’s history. We appreciate the opportunity to make our case for your support and look forward to providing any additional materials you might require as you deliberate this issue. Thank you for your time and attention.