THANK YOU MG (RET) McWILLIAMS --- LEON HARRIS --- CORPORATE AND MEDIA SPONSORS --- BOARD MEMBERS OF THE ARMY WOMEN'S FOUNDATION --- I'M HONORED TO BE YOUR GUEST TODAY. YOUR OUTSTANDING PANEL SESSIONS THIS MORNING AND THE LEGACY SCHOLARSHIPS TO BE AWARDED TODAY ARE PROOF OF YOUR COMMITMENT TO ARMY WOMEN.

BY THE WAY --- GENERAL McWILLIAMS --- I HAVE A CHECK FOR YOU HERE IN SUPPORT OF THE ARMY WOMEN’S FOUNDATION --- I WAS ONCE A NON-PROFIT FUNDRAISER AND KNOW HOW TOUGH IT IS TO KEEP WORTHY PROGRAMS FUNDED.

TODAY WE HONOR VIETNAM WOMEN VETERANS. I TRACE MY OWN TIME IN UNIFORM FROM THE END OF THAT PERIOD.

AND IT ALL STARTED WITH $56 A MONTH AND A BOY.

WAIT A MINUTE --- THAT DIDN'T SOUND QUITE RIGHT. HERE’S THE BACKGROUND. MY DAD WAS A CAREER COAST GUARD NCO AFTER SERVING IN THE NAVY DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

HIS TWO UNCLES SERVED IN WORLD WAR ONE --- ONE OF THEM KILLED IN ACTION AT THE BATTLE OF CHATEAU THIERRY.

SO I UNDERSTOOD THE MILITARY LIFE AND TRADITION. BUT IT WAS TIME FOR COLLEGE --- NO REAL MONEY FOR THAT --- AND THE ARMY RESERVE WAS RECRUITING YOUNG WOMEN TO SERVE AS CLERK-TYPISTS. ASSISTING THIS EFFORT WAS MY HIGH SCHOOL GOVERNMENT TEACHER --- DAY FULLBRIGHT --- A WORLD WAR II WAC OFFICER --- WHO MARRIED AN AIR FORCE OFFICER AND WAS THE FIRST WOMAN PROMOTED TO THE RANK OF COLONEL IN THE ARMY RESERVE. DAY FULLBRIGHT WAS

TAKEN WITH GENERAL CLARKE --- ME IN THAT STARCHED CORD UNIFORM AND WHITE GLOVES! IT WAS GRADUATION, AFTER ALL! **BUT I DIGRESS. BACK TO THE BOY & $56 DOLLARS!**

ALL THESE FORCES JOINED TOGETHER TO INSPIRE 4 OTHER GIRLS IN MY HIGH SCHOOL CLASS AND MY BOYFRIEND AT THE TIME TO ENLIST. WELL, SYLVIA DELAGARZA, PEGGY ROWE, LETA BRANNAN AND RENEE ROLLING JOINED ME TO ENLIST AS WACS IN MAY 1974 --- AND MY BOYFRIEND? HE BACKED OUT. THAT YOUNG MAN IS TODAY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF A LARGE AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION --- AND I DIDN’T MARRY HIM! *(STORY RE CONTACT).*

I’LL SHARE THIS THOUGHT WITH YOU. AS AN ARMY --- WE’VE BEEN INTENSELY OCCUPIED FOR A DECADE. SO WOMEN IN THE ARMY OR IN THE MILITARY AS A SUBJECT --- WE REALLY DON’T TALK ABOUT IT MUCH. IT IS EVIDENT. RETIRED GENERAL OFFICERS AND SENIOR FIELD GRADE OFFICERS SIT AMONG YOU. I WALK THE PENTAGON HALLS --- NOW A MAJOR GENERAL AND FORMER SPECIALIST FOUR ---PASSING:

- **AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMAN WEARING AN AIR FORCE FLIGHT SUIT – LEATHER FLIGHT JACKET AND SENIOR PILOT WINGS**
- **A FEMALE MARINE AVIATOR --- AND FEMALE MARINE GUNNY**
- **AN ASIAN FEMALE NAVY LIEUTENANT WEARING GOLD DOLPHINS**
- **FEMALE SOLDIERS WEARING JUMP WINGS -- COMBAT ACTION BADGES -- AIR ASSAULT BADGES --- PILOT WINGS --- PURPLE HEARTS. AND ON THE SLEEVE OF THEIR ARMY SERVICE UNIFORMS --- A STACK OF OVERSEAS SERVICE BARS.**

AT THE CLOSE OF JANUARY 2012 – ARMY WOMEN DEPLOYED SINCE THE START OF HOSTILITIES TOTALED 84,358 FOR AC -- 28,707 FOR NATIONAL GUARD AND 25,638 FOR ARMY RESERVE FOR A TOTAL OF 138,703. MANY HAVE DEPLOYED MULTIPLE TIMES TO IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN --- AND MANY TO BOTH.

**BUT MY OPINION?** DEPLOYMENT – WARFIGHTING -- MILITARY SERVICE HAS SIMPLY BECOME A MATTER OF COURSE. IT IS JUST PART OF LIFE NOW FOR OUR WOMEN IN UNIFORM --- *BECAUSE THEY ARE JUST DOING THEIR JOB.* THE WOMEN OF WORLD WAR II --- KOREA --- AND YOU WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM --- *BECAUSE YOU JUST DID YOUR JOB* --- YOU PUT DOWN THE EARLY

PAVESTONES ON WHICH WE WALK TODAY WITHOUT THOUGHT OF HISTORY OR TALK OF BREAKING CEILINGS --- WE JUST PUT ON THE HELMET --- FLY THE HELICOPTER --- LOAD THE 9-MIL --- DRIVE THE GUN TRUCK --- REMOVE THE COMBAT-DAMAGED TISSUE --- DIRECT THE INTRA-THEATER Airlift —— WE ARE JUST DOING OUR JOB. BUT THAT WORK --- THE WARFIGHT AND SUPPORT OF IT --- IS STILL TODAY ONLY BORNE BY A MINISCULE PORTION OF OUR NATIONAL POPULATION.

**BUT YOU VIETNAM VETERANS KNOW ABOUT THAT, DON’T YOU?**
WE ARE NOW IN THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY TIMEFRAME FOR VIETNAM SERVICE. APPROXIMATELY 7,500 WOMEN SERVED IN VIETNAM AND OF THAT NUMBER, RIGHT AT 6,200 OR 83.5% WERE NURSES. LESS THAN 1,000 A YEAR SERVED AT THE HEIGHT OF THE WAR --- A VERY SMALL POPULATION --- ALL VOLUNTEERS. THAT'S THE FIRST COMPARISON OF OUR COMMON EXPERIENCE OF SERVICE --- THAT SMALL NUMBER OF WOMEN WHO VOLUNTEERED TO SERVE OUR ARMY.


AND THEY ARE IN COMBAT. ASK ILLINOIS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD LIEUTENANT COLONEL TAMMY DUCKWORTH. IN 2004 THEN-CAPTAIN DUCKWORTH --- A BLACK HAWK PILOT DEPLOYED FOR OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM --- ONE OF THE FIRST WOMEN TO FLY COMBAT
OPERATIONS. IN DECEMBER 2004 --- HER HELO WAS HIT BY AN RPG --- A ROCKET PROPELLED GRENADE. HER LOSS? BOTH LEGS AND PART OF THE USE OF HER RIGHT ARM.


ALL WARS END. DURING THE LAST TEN YEARS OF PERSISTENT COMBAT --- WOMEN HAVE HAD THEIR WAR COME TO AN END. WOMEN ON ACTIVE DUTY ROTATE TO NEW UNITS --- OR THEY LEAVE THE MILITARY. NATIONAL GUARD AND ARMY RESERVE WOMEN HAVE THEIR WAR COME TO AND END AS WELL --- THEIR DD 214 SAYS SO. THEY QUICKLY DEMOBILIZE. THEY ALL PACK DUFFLE BAGS AND BLACK FOOTLOCKERS AND RETURN --- WHERE? AND TO WHAT CIRCUMSTANCE OF LIFE?

THIS IS THE **THIRD COMMON THREAD** WE SHARE BETWEEN OUR GENERATIONS OF SERVICE: THE SUDDEN LOSS OF CAMARADERIE.

WOMEN TODAY HAVE LIVED A MUCH DIFFERENT LIFE THAN WOMEN DID IN THE 1960’s. A WOMAN SERVED IN VIETNAM AND --- WHEN HER WAR ENDED --- SHE WAS SUDDENLY PLUNGED BACK INTO A SOCIETY IN TURMOIL FROM MULTIPLE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS --- AND INTO A “NORM” OF THE WOMEN’S ROLES “EXPECTED” OF THAT DECADE. IN VIETNAM YOU’D FLOWN INTO FIRE BASES --- HOT LZ’S --- AND --- **BECAUSE YOU JUST DID YOUR JOB EVERY DAY** --- YOU PROBABLY DEVELOPED SOME PRETTY FAIR SURGICAL TECHNIQUES IF YOU WERE A NURSE. MAYBE HAD REAL DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY IN QUARTERMASTER OR ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS. IT WAS REQUIRED OF YOU --- THERE YOU WERE --- IT WAS HANDED TO YOU AND IT WAS UP TO YOU.

AND THEN YOUR WAR ENDED. SUDDENLY. IT HAPPENED FOR THE GUYS, TOO. A CO-WORKER OF A FEW YEARS AGO HAD BEEN A MARINE INFANTRYMAN IN VIETNAM. ONE FRIDAY HE WAS AT AN LP --- LISTENING POST --- IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS. WORD CAME UP THAT HIS TICKET WAS PUNCHED --- TIME WAS UP --- AND HE WAS OUT OF THERE ON THE FREEDOM BIRD! THAT WAS FRIDAY. **ON MONDAY** --- HE WAS SITTING ON THE END OF HIS BED IN MOBILE, ALABAMA. HIS FATHER WALKED IN - LOOKED AT HIM --AND SAID --- “YOU NEED TO GET A JOB.” AND WALKED OUT.

**IT HAPPENED TO YOU TOO.** YOU WERE IN PLEIKU --- OR TAY RINH --- OR CHU LAI --- AND THEN YOU WERE “BACK IN THE LAND OF THE BIG PX.” YOU HAD LIVED A LIFE NO ONE AROUND YOU COULD COMPREHEND AND NOW HAD DROPPED BACK INTO THAT MOST TRADITIONAL OF WORLDS. WHO COULD YOU TALK TO ABOUT DRY SOCKS AND THE TASTE OF A COLD BEER

YOU JUST DID YOUR JOB EVERY DAY. THEN YOUR WAR ENDED --- YOU CAME BACK --- AND WOULD NOT --- COULD NOT! --- DISCUSS WHAT YOU HAD LIVED THROUGH WITH ANYONE WHO WASN’T THERE --- WHO “DIDN’T GET IT.” THE LOSS OF CAMARADERIE.

I KNOW --- AND UNDERSTAND. AFTER THE START OF COMBAT OPERATIONS IN MARCH 2003 --- I RETURNED HOME AS COMMANDER OF AN ARMY RESERVE TERMINAL BATTALION AFTER WORKING AS PORT OPERATOR AT THE PORT OF ASH SHUAYBAH IN KUWAIT. WE DEMOBILIZED AT FORT EUSTIS VIRGINIA AND QUICKLY SCATTERED TO THE WINDS. AS ANXIOUS AS I WAS FOR THAT FREEDOM --- SEPARATION FROM MY SOLDIERS REALLY AFFECTED ME. I WAS NO LONGER AROUND MY SOLDIERS 24/7. WE FILLED SANDBAGS TO REINFORCE BUNKERS ------ DOVE INTO THOSE BUNKERS IN FULL MOPP GEAR THE NIGHT THE WAR STARTED AND THE “INCOMING” SIRENS SCREAMED --- UNLOADED 105 SHIPS AND 90,152 PIECES OF COMBAT AND SUPPORT EQUIPMENT TO SEND OUR WARFIGHTERS UP INTO IRAQ. I WAS GLAD TO RETURN TO CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT AND MY GREAT CO-WORKERS, MY LOVING FAMILY AND SUPPORTIVE FRIENDS --- HOWEVER --- THEY HADN’T BEEN WHERE I’D BEEN. HADN’T EXPERIENCED WHAT I HAD. THEY DIDN’T “GET IT.” THE LOSS OF CAMARADERIE. LIFE GOES ON EVENTUALLY. WE ARE CREATURES CAPABLE OF HEALING --- SPIRITUALLY --- PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY. LIFE GOES ON --- AND WE EVENTUALLY ADAPT AND ADJUST. MOST OF US.

MOST OF US HAVE ADJUSTED. AND THAT IS THE FOURTH COMMONALITY BETWEEN OUR GENERATIONS OF SERVICE.

THOSE WHO COULD NOT ADJUST. THOSE WHO DROPPED OUT ---

WHO WERE OVERCOME BY PTSD OR WHO DEVELOPED FULL-BLOWN MENTAL ILLNESS. THOSE WHO SELF-MEDICATED WITH ALCOHOL AND ILLEGAL DRUGS. ADD A CATEGORY OF CITIZENS NOT SEEN SINCE THE DEPRESSION OF THE 1930’S: THE HOMELESS.
THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR HOMELESS VETERANS PUTS THE TOTAL TODAY AT AROUND 67,000 --- THAT ROUGHLY 5% OF THOSE ARE FEMALE --- AND CLAIMS THAT NEARLY ONE-HALF ARE VIETNAM VETERANS. THERE ARE MANY SOCIETAL CAUSES FOR HOMELESSNESS --- BUT THESE ARE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS. DON'T FORGET THEM.

FINALLY --- THE LOSS. OUR FINAL COMMONALITY. EIGHT WOMEN WERE KILLED IN VIETNAM --- 7 WERE ARMY NURSES. TWO WERE KILLED IN A HELICOPTER CRASH --- TWO WERE KILLED IN A PLANE CRASH. ONE DIED FROM SERIOUS ILLNESS, ANOTHER FROM A STROKE. ONE – 1ST LIEUTENANT SHARON LANE --- WAS KILLED IN ACTION FROM SHRAPNEL AT THE 312TH EVAC IN CHU LAI --- JUNE 1969. THE 8TH WOMAN WAS AIR FORCE NURSE CAPTAIN THERESE KLINKER --- KILLED IN THE CRASH OF A C-5 GALAXY IN APRIL 1975 OUTSIDE SAIGON WHILE EVACUATING VIETNAMESE ORPHANS DURING OPERATION BABYLIFT. 36 WOMEN WORKING FOR VARIOUS U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ALSO PERISHED ABOARD THAT MERCY FLIGHT --- AS DID A TEACHER AND A CHILD.

LOSS . AS OF YESTERDAY --- THE DEFENSE MANPOWER DATA CENTER BREAKS DOWN ARMY FEMALE CASUALTIES IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR AS FOLLOWS:

OEF (AFGHANISTAN): DEATHS: 14 HOSTILE/8 N-h/192 WIA

OIF (IRAQ): DEATHS: 50 HOSTILE/39 N-H/546 WIA

OND (POST-COMBAT OPERATIONS IRAQ): 11 WIA.

WOMEN CIVILIANS DIED IN VIETNAM. THEY WORKED FOR THE AMERICAN RED CROSS --- ARMY SPECIAL SERVICES --- CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES --- CIA --- USAID --- U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY OFFICER IN CHARGE OF CONSTRUCTION --- TWO JOURNALISTS AND SIX MISSIONARIES.

AS WE CLOSE --- REMEMBER THE WOMEN WHO DIED IN VIETNAM --- AND THEIR BROTHERS AS WELL. LET US RECALL THE WORDS OF THE POET BINYON, WHO SAID:

“THEY SHALL GROW NOT OLD, AS WE WHO ARE LEFT GROW OLD

AGE SHALL NOT WEARY THEM, NOR THE YEARS CONDEMN

AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN, AND IN THE MORNING

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.”

WOMEN VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM WAR --- OUR HONORED GUESTS --- PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.

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I AM CLOSER TO YOUR GENERATION THAN THE GENERATION I SERVE WITH TODAY. I DID NOT KNOW YOU --- AND YET YOU

WERE MY ROLE MODELS --- MY MENTORS --- AND AFTER TODAY -- MY SISTERS. I SALUTE YOU.