



**U.S. Army Women's Foundation 4th Annual
Army Women in Transition Symposium and Hall of Fame Luncheon
Major General Janet Cobb's Keynote Address**
Held Tuesday, March 13, 2012 in the Cannon Caucus Room

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

A FRIEND AND CONTEMPORARY OF THE LEGENDS OF OUR EARLY ARMY YEARS --- BRIGADIER GENERAL ELIZABETH HOISINGTON --- BRIGADIER GENERAL MARY CLARKE -- THE 7th & 9th DIRECTORS OF THE WAC --- AND OTHERS. ONE OF MY FONDEST POSSESSIONS IS A PHOTO

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
TOTALLED **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.

THE SECOND COMMONALITY IS THE INTEGRATION OF PREVIOUSLY UNTAPPED CAPABILITIES --- IN TWO DIFFERENT FORMS. AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN TRAINED AS WAC OFFICERS AND ENLISTED WOMEN, SERVING IN BOTH WORLD WAR II AND KOREA, AND THEY CAME FORWARD TO VOLUNTEER ONCE AGAIN DURING THE VIETNAM BUILD-UP. IN 1965, ARMY NURSE **MAJOR MONICA CROSSDALE-PALMER** SERVED AT THE 85TH EVAC HOSPITAL IN QUIN HOW – EXTENDED HER TOUR --- REDEPLOYED TO SERVE AT WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER – AND VOLUNTEERED TO RETURN TO VIETNAM – WHERE SHE SERVED AS OPERATING ROOM SUPERVISOR OF THE 45TH SURGICAL HOSPITAL SEVEN MILES FROM THE CAMBODIAN BORDER. **ARMY NURSE FIRST LIEUTENANT DIANE LINDSEY** WAS AWARDED THE SOLDIER'S MEDAL FOR HEROISM IN 1969 WHEN --- WHILE ASSIGNED TO THE 95TH EVAC HOSPITAL --- SHE TALKED AN UNSTABLE SOLDIER INTO HANDING OVER A GRENADE – AFTER HE HAD PULLED THE PIN. AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE CHIEF WARRANT OFFICERS IN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE --- SUPPLY SERGEANTS --- NCOICS IN ADMINISTRATION --- AND ARMY WOMEN OTHER ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS--- **JUST BY DOING THEIR JOB EVERY DAY** --- PROMPTED PRESIDENT JOHNSON TO SIGN PUBLIC LAW 90-130 IN 1967 --- LIFTING PROMOTION LIMITATIONS FOR WOMEN --- AND PERMITTING THE APPOINTMENT OF WACS TO THE ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD. WOMEN HAD BEEN PART OF THE WAC ORGANIZED RESERVE CORPS SINCE 1949.

THE DUTY PERFORMANCE OF THE WOMEN VIETNAM VETERANS ALSO LAID THE PAVESTONES FOR THE 1970'S --- WHEN THE NATION'S LEADERS WOULD END THE DRAFT AND INSTITUTE THE "ALL-VOLUNTEER ARMY" --- A CLEAR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT SUCH A RADICAL FORCE STRUCTURE CHANGE WOULD REQUIRE WOMEN TO BE A PAVESTONE --- A BUILDING BLOCK OF THAT CHANGE. THE 1970'S SAW WOMEN ADMITTED TO ROTC PROGRAMS AND TO THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY.

I MENTIONED THAT THE SECOND COMMONALITY BETWEEN OUR GENERATIONS OF SERVICE WAS INTEGRATION OF PREVIOUSLY UNTAPPED CAPABILITIES. THE SECOND PART WAS THE FULL-BLOWN INTEGRATION OF WOMEN INTO THE ARMY RESERVE AND NATIONAL GUARD. TODAY --- MANY OF OUR ACTIVE DEPLOYED FORMATIONS --- OUR ARMY & JOINT STAFFS AT THE PENTAGON ----- AND OUR ARMY COMMANDS AROUND THE COUNTRY --- ARE STAFFED BY ARMY RESERVE AND NATIONAL GUARD GENERAL OFFICERS --- FIELD GRADE & COMPANY GRADE OFFICERS --- AND NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS.

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 HELICOPTER WAS HIT BY AN RPG --- A ROCKET PROPELLED GRENADE. HER LOSS? BOTH LEGS AND PART OF THE USE OF HER RIGHT ARM.

SHE BECAME A TIRELESS CAMPAIGNER FOR HER FELLOW WOUNDED WARRIORS --- BECAME DIRECTOR OF THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND LATER SERVED AS U.S. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS. SHE IS CURRENTLY A CANDIDATE FOR THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES --- DECLINED A MILITARY RETIREMENT AND CONTINUES TO "DRILL" EACH MONTH AS A LIEUTENANT COLONEL WITH THE ILLINOIS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD. **BECAUSE THE WOMEN OF THE ARMY RESERVE AND NATIONAL GUARD HAVE JUST DONE THEIR JOB --- THE NATION WILL NEVER AGAIN GO TO WAR WITHOUT THE RESERVE COMPONENTS.**

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 AN 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

AFTER A STEAMING JUNGLE RAIN? ABOUT THE CLINK OF LEAD TOSSED INTO METAL TRAYS IN AN OPERATING ROOM? ABOUT THE LAUGHTER FROM THE GIRLS IN YOUR TENT AS YOU "TRIED TO DO YOUR HAIR." YOU WERE BACK --- DID YOUR OLD BOYFRIEND UNDERSTAND? DID HE UNDERSTAND THAT SOME OF THE MEN IN VIETNAME WERE YOUR BROTHERS --- AND THAT MEN AND WOMEN CAN HAVE A REAL CAMARADERIE BORNE OF SHARED SACRIFICE AND RISK? DO YOU REMEMBER THE LOOKS YOU RECEIVED WHEN MEN AND WOMEN ASKED YOU ABOUT WHAT IT WAS LIKE --- FOR A WOMAN --- OVER THERE? BUT MOSTLY --- WHAT ABOUT THOSE GIRLS --- WHERE ARE THEY NOW? THAT GIRL FROM IOWA? CALIFORNIA? FROM WEST VIRGINIA? THE NURSE FROM HAWAII WHOSE WAR WAS OVER --- STILL RAN OUTSIDE WHEN SHE HEARD A HELICOPTER PASS OVERHEAD --- RAN OUTSIDE AND WAITED FOR THE BATTLE CASUALTIES. THAT'S NO APOCRYPHAL STORY --- DID YOU KNOW HER? IF YOU DIDN'T KNOW HER --- YOU UNDERSTOOD HER. YOU **WERE** HER AT SOME MOMENT IN TIME --- BACK HOME --- BASED ON THE NOISE YOU HEARD IN THE NIGHT --- THE FIREWORKS OR VEHICLE BACKFIRE --- YES --- WHEN YOU HEARD THAT STORY --- YOU "GOT IT."

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.

LOSS COORDINATES ARE LISTED FOR POWS --- MARKING THEIR LAST KNOWN LOCATION. **1959 – 1975: THOSE ARE YOUR LOSS COORDINATES.** THE YEARS THAT FRAME THE OFFICIAL START AND CONCLUSION OF THE VIETNAM WAR. THE YEARS THAT BRACKET YOUR YOUTH --- THE SPAN OF TIME THAT REFLECT NOT JUST LOSS --- LOSS OF YOUTH --- LOSS OF INNOCENCE --- BUT REPRESENT THE YEARS THAT WERE THE PAVESTONES THAT YOU PUT DOWN FOR THOSE OF US WHO HAVE FOLLOWED YOUR PATH. THE WOMEN VETERANS OF VIETNAM --- WHETHER OFFICER, ENLISTED OR WARRANT OFFICER --- A ONE-TERM ENLISTEE OR A CAREER SOLDIER --- SERVED AND PERSERVED DURING ONE OF THE MOST TUMULTOUS TIMES IN AMERICAN HISTORY. YOUR INDIVIDUAL STORY OF MILITARY SERVICE --- WHETHER TOLD IN THE OLD TRADITION OR HELD CLOSE TO YOUR OWN HEART --- IS OUR STORY TODAY. WE SHARE THE WOMEN IN MILITARY SERVICE MEMORIAL AT ARLINGTON WITH YOU. AS WE GATHER AROUND THE VIETNAM WOMEN'S MEMORIAL NEAR THE WALL --- WE SEE LIFE AFFIRMED IN THE YELLOWOOD TREES, VIBURNUM, SHADBLOW AND COTONCASTER GROWING AROUND IT. WE ARE THE LIVING --- AND WE LOOK TO LIFE AS VALIDATION OF ALL WE'VE DONE --- MARRIAGE -- - DIVORCE --- CHILDREN --- CAREER --CITIZENSHIP --- JOY AND LOSS --- BECAUSE YOU CAME HOME --- AND IN THE MANY YEARS SINCE --- **HAVE JUST DONE YOUR JOB** AND LIVED LIFE.

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.

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.