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Air Force Memorial Foundation Receives Major Gift from Eaker Estate

Arlington, VA, March 5, 1997 -- The Air Force Memorial Foundation received a gift of \$1.6 million from the estate of Ruth Apperson Eaker, the widow of the famed Air Force General Ira C. Eaker, who commanded the 8th Air Force in World War II.

Ruth Eaker, a resident of Washington, D.C., when she died on December 13, 1995, was active in civic and charitable affairs throughout the region and the nation. Her love of the Air Force was clearly reflected in her will, which included contributions to numerous Air Force-related charities, historical organizations, and foundations.

According to Gen. Russell Dougherty, USAF (Ret.), the executor of her estate, Ruth Eaker told him, "Ira and I have been able to do a lot for many worthy Air Force causes, but there is one such cause that offers the opportunity to recognize and honor all of our nation's airmen for all times -- past, present and future -- and that is the new Air Force Memorial. That's why I want to the Air Force Memorial Foundation to be the keystone of my charitable bequests."

"Mrs. Eaker was a very private individual and wouldn't want any recognition for her generosity," Dougherty said, "but airmen everywhere should know about and appreciate what she did to help make the Air Force Memorial a reality."

The Air Force Memorial will be built on Arlington Ridge adjacent to the Iwo Jima Memorial and the Netherlands Carillon nearby Arlington National Cemetery. James Ingo Freed, of New York City's famed Pei Cobb Freed Architects, is the principal architect on the project.

The fund-raising campaign is the final step in a process that included the passage of authorizing legislation in 1993, the approval of the site by the Commission of Fine Arts in Washington, D.C., in 1994, the National Capital Planning Commission in 1995, and the enthusiastic endorsement of the design concept by both commissions in 1996.

The Air Force Memorial Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax exempt organization whose objective is to site, design and construct a Memorial to all members of the Air Force and its predecessors, such as the Army Air Forces, and to highlight the aerospace technology that has been so important to the service.

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