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Air Force Memorial Will Not Encroach on Iwo Jima, Foundation Says

Arlington, VA, August 14, 1997 -- In response to Marine Corps objections to its approved site for an Air Force Memorial, the Air Force Memorial Foundation said that its Memorial will not encroach on the site of the famed Marine Corps Memorial, better known as the Iwo Jima memorial.

"There is a lot of misinformation out there," said Air Force Memorial Foundation President Robert D. Springer, "and we want to set the record straight."

At issue is the approved site of the Air Force Memorial, which is in the vicinity of the Iwo Jima memorial. In this case, however, the Air Force is going to take the low ground, over 513 feet away from Iwo Jima, down the hill and behind a group of mature trees.

In an official statement, a Marine Corps spokesman said "we are concerned about the planned site for the monument, the impact on our nation's Marine Corps War Memorial, and prefer to see it elsewhere." On Capitol Hill, Rep. Gerald B.H. Solomon, who served in the Marine Corps and chairs the House Rules Committee, has submitted legislation that would block any construction on the site "in perpetuity."

The site, along the Arlington Ridge in Arlington, VA, has long been planned as an available memorial site by the National Park Service, which has given its seal of approval to the Air Force Memorial.

"We have been at this for more than 5 years," said Springer, a retired Air Force lieutenant general. "This has been a deliberate and open process, which included the passage of enabling legislation in 1993 and numerous reviews by oversight bodies, including the Commission of Fine Arts and National Capital Planning Commission. We also briefed the Marine Corps, and there were no objections raised."

The site is close to the Fort Myer parade grounds from which Orville Wright first demonstrated flight to the military in 1908. It is also in the vicinity of a number of service

memorials, which fits in with the thematic approach taken by the National Park Service as it assisted the Memorial Foundation in selecting the site. The Netherlands Carillon is also located on the Arlington Ridge and was dedicated several months before the Iwo Jima memorial in 1954.

In response to Marine concerns, Springer said, "We agree with the need to respect the sanctity and dignity of the Iwo Jima memorial. That is why we worked so hard with the National Park Service and the approving commissions to ensure that the Air Force Memorial would complement -- and not detract from -- Iwo Jima."

To date, the Air Force Memorial Foundation has committed nearly \$1 million on a site-specific design that has won universal praise from the architectural community and the Commission of Fine Arts. Overall, the Foundation has raised \$12.5 million toward its goal of \$25-30 million, all in private donations.

The Air Force Memorial Foundation was incorporated in 1992 to establish a permanent Memorial to recognize the many significant contributions to peace and freedom rendered by the United States Air Force or its predecessors, such as the Army Air Corps. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, charitable, historical, and educational organization.

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