



April 2021

Dear Friends,

Recently, I was moved by a story related to me by highly decorated US Air Force pilot, Lt. Col. Nicole Malachowski. Malachowski was a combat fighter pilot and the first woman pilot chosen to fly in the elite Air Force demonstration team, the famed Thunderbirds.

In a speech she gave as part of the Virginia War Memorial Foundation's *Leadership in America* speaker series, she recounted how she answered a question on the USAF Academy entrance application. The question was, "If you could have dinner with anyone, living or dead, who would it be?" Her answer sent chills through me and at the same time inspired me. She said she would like to have dinner with the person who took the first bullet in the cause of freedom.

April 19, 2021 marks 246 years since "The Shot Heard Around the World" occurred at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, where the first American colonists fell to hostile British fire and the fight for American independence began. Since that fateful day, citizens and soldiers from throughout our great country have been taking bullets and making the ultimate sacrifice to secure and safeguard hard won liberties.

Just one month before the Battle of Lexington and Concord, on the eve of the American Revolution, Patrick Henry of Virginia said in his famous speech, "I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death."

Virginians have been at the forefront of every conflict since the American Revolution, laying down their lives and manifestly proving that freedom is not free.

What sometimes haunts me is the concern that future generations may not remember or grasp the significance of the sacrifices made to secure the liberties they enjoy. Shall we not remember the ultimate and selfless acts of our forebears? Will their heroism be squandered and left to erode in society's collective memory? I pray not.

The Virginia War Memorial Foundation is committed to honoring all Virginians who gave all in the cause of freedom, and we are dedicated to preserving the valor and respecting the contributions of all



veterans. As a non-profit, the Foundation raises funds to implement educational programs for students and adults across Virginia and beyond. Through the programming, displays, long-distance learning efforts, events, and recorded personal histories, every effort is made to fulfill our mission to honor veterans, preserve history, educate citizens and encourage patriotism in all.

I invite you to come to Richmond to see your Memorial. (Yes, the Memorial is open for guests.)

If, like me, you value and hold in the highest esteem the bravery, heroism, valor, and self-sacrifice of veterans and those who gave their lives for our country, then also please consider making a donation or planned gift to the Virginia War Memorial Foundation.

Thank you for your support.

David A. Christian
Member, VWMF Board of Directors

P.S. This year, we hope to raise \$110K to honor the fallen before Memorial Day. If you choose to give in honor of those who made the ultimate sacrifice, a few of my fellow Board Directors and I would like to issue a challenge to ensure your gift reaches its maximum potential. We will match every gift dollar for dollar up to \$55,000. That's a 100% return on investment. Even if you have made a gift earlier this year, your additional gift in response to this letter, will count toward the challenge.

