

**STATEMENT OF PEGGY O'DELL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR OPERATIONS,
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE
THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING S. 59, TO
DESIGNATE A DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS NATIONAL MEMORIAL
AT THE MARCH FIELD AIR MUSEUM IN RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA.**

April 23, 2013

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee to present the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 59, a bill to designate a Distinguished Flying Cross National Memorial at the March Field Air Museum in Riverside, California.

The Department would defer to the Department of Defense for a position on S. 59 since the purpose of the legislation is to honor military personnel who have been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross at a site that is not under the jurisdiction of the Department.

The Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded to a member of the United States armed forces who distinguishes himself or herself in support of operations by "heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight." It is the oldest military award in the United States for achievements in aviation. We applaud the effort of the March Field Air Museum to create a suitable memorial to the honor, bravery, and sacrifice of members of our Armed Forces who have earned this medal.

This legislation explicitly states that this memorial is not a unit of the National Park System. As this language makes clear, the use of the title "national memorial" creates a reasonable expectation among the general public that it must have an affiliation with the National Park Service, which currently administers 29 national memorials across the country. This is not the first time this issue has arisen, nor is it likely to be the last, and the Department respectfully encourages only the most thoughtful and judicious designation of any future "national" memorials or other similar sites.

That concludes my testimony Mr. Chairman. I would be pleased to respond to any questions from you and members of the committee.