Members of the War Widows’ Association, their family, friends, supporters and guests¹ will gather as they do each year for their Annual Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph on Saturday 12th November 2016 at 12.30pm. Forming up in King Charles Street at noon to walk the short distance to the Cenotaph for the Service conducted by the Association’s Padre Rev John Harrison; music is provided by the Southern Highlanders Pipe & Drums and the RAF Halton Volunteer Band. After the service lunch will be served at Sixty-One Whitehall for members and their guests.

When the Nation comes together on Sunday 13th November it will be to remember all those who have suffered or died in war, but it is essential that those left behind are not overlooked; we have a duty to ensure that Britain’s ‘Forgotten Women and men’; the War Widows’ and War Widowers are remembered; the very reason for the War Widows’ Association Service on Saturday 12th November 2016.

The War Widows’ Association Chairman Mrs Irene Wills, BEM who will be in attendance at all events commented “most Remembrance customs originate from the First World War and yet it is so hard to believe that it took around 80 years for War Widows to be ‘allowed’ to take part in the National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph. The ladies that formed the Association had a long struggle to ensure War Widow and Widowers had rightful recognition; it is through their efforts that the Saturday Association’s Remembrance Service has become an established part of the Nations Remembrance calendar.”

Mrs Wills continued “Our Service is a very important and emotional day for our members. Remaining true to our foundation as a Campaigning organisation, the Association has moved forward and can now be summed up in three words; Campaigning, Caring and Remembering. Our service is very much about Remembering and while we remember all who paid the ultimate sacrifice each member here today has very personal memories; there are so many stories to be told; for example the member who never got to celebrate her first wedding anniversary; the member who has to explain to their children why they will never know their father, it is so easy to focus on current conflicts and forget the many that have gone before; I could go on but each story is different and yet we are each united by a common bond.”

Members will also attend the Official Opening of the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on Thursday 10th November and the National Service of Remembrance on Sunday 13th November.

¹ We are unable to confirm at this time whether our Patron His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales will be in attendance.
Notes to Editors:

1. The War Widows’ Association (WWA) was founded in 1971 and achieved Registered Charity Status in 1991.

2. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is Patron of the War Widows’ Association and the President is Baroness Fookes DBE DL.

3. The War Widows’ Association Service is held each year on the Saturday immediately preceding the Sunday National Service of Remembrance. The Programme of events is as follows:
   a. 10.30 - Welcome/Comfort stop Sixty One Whitehall
   b. 11.30 - members make their way to King Charles Street
   c. 12.00 - form up to walk to the Cenotaph
   d. 12.30 - Service commences
   e. 13.15 - Reception for members and invited guests Sixty One Whitehall
   f. 14.00 - Lunch for members and invited guests Sixty One Whitehall

4. The War Widows’ Association is essentially a campaigning organisation. The day to day running of the Association is controlled by the Chairman and members of the elected Committee of Trustees. They are supported by a network of Regional Organisers who organise local events.

5. The War Widows’ Association does not have any paid staff. All of its work is completed totally by volunteers. It does not have any offices and is grateful for the support of The Royal British Legion in providing a mail room facility.

6. The War Widows’ Association has In addition to Campaigning to improve conditions for all War Widow’s it has two further pillars, Caring and Remembering;

7. The membership of the War Widows’ Association covers all parts of the United Kingdom.

8. In 2017 at their Annual General Meeting the War Widows’ Association will install a new Chairman; this will be the first time the Chairman will be from Northern Ireland.

9. The achievements of the War Widows’ Association to date can be accessed at www.warwidows.org.uk.

10. The Southern Highlanders Pipe & Drums is lead by Drum Major Paul Lumley, and the RAF Halton Volunteer Band is lead by Mr Michael Pegrum, Musical Director RAF Halton.

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