



Miramar National Cemetery Support Foundation

Contact prior to event: Bill Heard, Public Information Officer
619-757-7788 or whheard@aol.com

Contact at the event: Jon Hutchens 760-753-6094 or 760-310-7824

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

San Diego Airborne Associations to Dedicate Monument to U.S. Paratroopers at Miramar National Cemetery

Monument will honor all those who earned Paratrooper Silver Wings

Two San Diego-area veterans' associations will dedicate a monument at Miramar National Cemetery, at 11 a.m., Saturday, March 17, to honor all members of the Armed Forces who have earned the Silver Wings of U.S. Paratroopers.

The monument is sponsored by members of San Diego Chapter 28 of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Association, and the San Diego All Airborne Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association. Al Gonzalez, who served with the 82nd during the Korean War, will serve as master of ceremonies at the dedication.

Retired Army Staff Sergeant Miguel Alatorre, a decorated veteran of the 101st Airborne Division with multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, will be the featured speaker. Alatorre also is Past Commander of VFW Don Diego Post 7420 in San Diego. The dedication will be held in the cemetery's Memorial Walkway. It will be the sixth monument to be placed in the Memorial Walkway by local veterans' organizations.

"This monument commemorates all those who have graduated from jump school and earned the silver wings of a U.S. Paratrooper," said Jon Hutchens, president of Chapter 28 of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Association. "That includes members of any service – Army, Marines, Navy, or Air Force. We now have World War II, Korean War, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan veterans, as well as peacetime paratroopers who wear the Silver Wings and are interred here at Miramar."

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Pg. 2, Airborne Monument

The inscription on the three-foot-tall granite monument states, “Dedicated to the men and women of the Armed Forces that earned the parachute wings from 1941 to present. Silver Wings. Airborne all the way!” The Airborne shoulder tab also is depicted on the monument.

One man who will be specially recognized at the March 17 ceremony is John A. Short of Rancho Bernardo, a member of the 173rd Association. A “smokejumper” who fought forest fires before WWII, Short – now in his 90s – was drafted by the U.S. Army along with members of his firefighting team to teach soldiers how to jump from airplanes. He and the team were designated the 501st Test Battalion in 1941.

Members of the 173rd and 82nd veterans’ associations began raising funds to erect the monument almost two years ago, sponsoring various fund-raisers, Hutchens said. The monument is made of San Marcos Blue and San Marcos Red granite, both quarried in San Diego County.

“The Miramar National Cemetery Support Foundation coordinated closely with our two organizations during the monument project,” Hutchens said. “On behalf of the project team, we appreciate the efforts of the Foundation, without which we would have had a very difficult time.”

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Our keynote speaker for this ceremony is US Army Staff Sergeant (Ret.) Miguel Alatorre. Mr. Alatorre served with the 101st Airborne Division with multiple tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is a Wounded Warrior and the recipient of the Purple Heart, two Bronze Star medals, the US Army Commendation medal, Iraq and Afghanistan Service medals, the National Defense Service medal, and the coveted Paratrooper Wings as well as the Combat Action Badge. He was also named the 2016 All American Commander of VFW Post 4720.





AIRBORNE MONUMENT DEDICATION



Schedule of Events

MIRAMAR NATIONAL CEMETERY

1100 hours 17 March 2018

1. M.C. Al Gonzalez, 82nd Airborne Division Association,
San Diego Chapter
2. Welcome by Rex Kern, Director of Miramar National Cemetery
3. Post Colors, 82nd Airborne Division Association
4. Invocation: Chaplain Blank, USAF
5. Retire Colors, 82nd Airborne Division Association
6. Recognition of Guests.
7. Introduce Speaker
8. Mr. Miguel Alatorre
9. Unveiling of Monument
10. Honor Guard Rifle Salute
11. Taps
12. Ceremony Conclusion

