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# Media Advisory

**To: Myrtle Beach Media**

**From: Mark Kruea, Public Information Officer**

**Date: February 20, 2017**

**Re: Memorial Day Weekend Parade Grand Marshal**

## **Alek Skarlatos named Grand Marshal for 2017 Military Appreciation Days Parade**

Army National Guard Specialist Alek Skarlatos has been selected as Grand Marshal for the 2017 Military Appreciation Days Parade. The parade will be held Saturday, May 27, on Farrow Parkway. In August 2015, Skarlatos and two childhood friends, Spencer Stone and Anthony Sadler, made international headlines when they overpowered a gunman on a Paris-bound train.



For his heroic actions, Alek Skarlatos was awarded the United States Army Soldier's Medal by President Barack Obama and France's highest decoration, the Legion of Honour, by French President Francois Hollande. He subsequently was invited to compete on season 21 of ABC TV's hit show, "Dancing with the Stars," finishing in third place with professional partner Lindsay Arnold. Skarlatos recently completed a tour of duty in Afghanistan and continues to be a member of the Oregon National Guard.

"At 24, Alek Skarlatos is our youngest Grand Marshal ever, but he's certainly someone you'd like to meet and shake his hand," said Myrtle Beach Public Information Officer Mark Kruea, who chairs the Military Appreciation Committee. "Each year, the Committee looks for a Grand Marshal with a recognizable military background and compelling personal story, and the committee is excited to announce Alek Skarlatos as this year's selection."

Recent Grand Marshals for Military Appreciation Days have included Noah Galloway, J.R. Martinez, Montel Williams and Rocky Bleier. "The bravery and heroism that Specialist Skarlatos and his friends exhibited on that Paris train exemplify the high level of service that our National Guard and military personnel give to the United States," Kruea added.

As Grand Marshal, Skarlatos will lead the Military Appreciation Days parade, then greet fans afterward at the Family Picnic in Valor Memorial Garden at The Market Common. Everyone's invited to enjoy the activities, which include military exhibits and live music. The picnic lunch, prepared by the Omar Chefs Shriners, is free for our active-duty military, veterans and their families, including National Guard and Reserve.

The Military Appreciation Days parade and picnic are just two of the highlights of a month-long "thank you" to our dedicated service men and women, past and present – along with their families – for all that they do on our behalf.

- **Second Annual Horry County Junior ROTC Drill Competition** – 9:00 a.m., Saturday, May 6, Pelicans' Stadium
- **Military Family Members Social (following the Junior ROTC Drill Meet)** – 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Saturday, May 6, Pelicans' Picnic Area.
- **Myrtle Beach Pelicans' Military Appreciation Night** – 7:05 p.m. game time, Saturday, May 13, Pelicans' Stadium
- **Military Appreciation Days Dinner and Dance** – 7:00 p.m., Thursday, May 25, Ballroom, Sheraton Myrtle Beach Convention Center Hotel
- **Military Appreciation Days Parade** – 10:30 a.m., Saturday, May 27, Farrow Parkway, The Market Common
- **Family Picnic** – 12:00 to 2:00 p.m., Saturday, May 27, Valor Memorial Garden, The Market Common
- **Veterans' March** – 9:00 a.m., Monday, May 29, Ocean Boulevard
- **Grand Strand Patriotic Alliance Memorial Day Ceremony** – 11:00 a.m., Monday, May 29, The Plaza, Myrtle Beach Convention Center

Myrtle Beach area attractions, accommodations and restaurants also offer military and veteran discounts during the month of May. Military Appreciation Days are sponsored by the City of Myrtle Beach, PGBA, LLC, and the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. Parade entry forms for 2017 will be available shortly.



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*Alek Skarlatos' photo is available as a high-resolution image upon request.*