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**PRESIDIO TRUST ANNOUNCES 150<sup>th</sup> MEMORIAL DAY COMMEMORATION  
MONDAY, MAY 28, 2018**

**Presidio of San Francisco (May 08, 2018)** – The Presidio Trust, Department of Veterans Affairs, and City of San Francisco announce the City and County of San Francisco’s official 150<sup>th</sup> Memorial Day Commemoration. This year’s event, which draws over 2,000 spectators, will honor the one million Americans who died while serving in the United States armed forces, and the remarkable commitment and sacrifices made by active duty military personnel and veterans. The ceremony will provide the public with an opportunity to understand and share the burden of military sacrifice, and honor the milestone of 150 years of commemoration in San Francisco. Selected speakers will recount personal military experiences that have impacted individuals, families, and communities.

The Presidio of San Francisco has always taken part in the commemoration of Memorial Day. Established by the Spanish Empire in 1776, the Presidio became a Mexican outpost in 1821 after that country’s revolution. In 1847, it became a U.S. Army post. The Presidio became a national park in 1994, and maintains strong ties with the veteran community today. Board Chair John Kecker, a veteran of the Vietnam War, said: “Military service and sacrifice are embedded in the history of the Presidio, and today we at the Trust are stewards of that honorable legacy. Our country needs a strong military, and no military can be strong without a close bond between those who serve and the civilian community. On May 28 we will honor our military service members and their families for the 150<sup>th</sup> commemoration of Memorial Day in San Francisco.”

**Program**

The formal program begins with a 4-Gun Salute by the Pacific Training Division and Presentation of the Colors by the U.S. Army Color Guard. Speakers include decorated veteran and historian Phil Gioia, Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom, Major General James Michael (Mike) Myatt, USMC (Ret.), and San Francisco Mayor Mark Farrell. Matthew Smith, President of the University of California, Berkeley Veterans Group will provide reflections on contemporary challenges faced by post 9/11 veterans. A wreath will be laid by the Gold Star Family to honor Air Force Major Adrianna Vorderbruggen, killed in Afghanistan in 2015 while leading a security patrol. Music for the ceremony is provided by The Golden West Winds from the U.S. Air Force Band of the Golden West, Travis Air Force Base, California, and it will conclude with a fly-over by the U.S. Coastguard, U.S. Coast Guard Air Station San Francisco.

### **Schedule of Events**

- 9:30 a.m. Special flag raising ceremony by National Park Service Rangers at Pershing Square, located across from the Presidio Officers' Club at 50 Moraga Avenue.
- 10:30 a.m. Grand March includes veterans, dignitaries, Color Guard, marching band, families and others (from the Presidio Officers' Club to the San Francisco National Cemetery)
- 11:00 a.m. Formal ceremony at the San Francisco National Cemetery, 1 Lincoln Blvd (see description above)
- 12:00 p.m. 21-gun-salute by the U.S. Army's 75th Pacific Division
- 12:30 p.m. Community BBQ Picnic by Presidio Foods on the Main Post of the Presidio
- 12:30 p.m. Cemetery tours led by National Park Service interpretive rangers Fredrik Penn and James Osborne

### **Memorial Day History**

In 1868, an organization of Union Army veterans, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), inaugurated an annual national observance to be held on May 30 for the commemoration of Union soldiers who had died in the Civil War. The San Francisco GAR post did not receive the order in time to make arrangements for that day, so its members held the ceremonies on June 7th. That morning a procession of six or seven hundred Grand Army members and other Civil War veterans, including wounded men riding in carriages, marched from the GAR's headquarters on Pine Street to Lone Mountain Cemetery. They were accompanied by about seven hundred civilians and were escorted by soldiers of the California National Guard, U. S. Army and Navy officers, and the band and two batteries of the Second Artillery Regiment from the Presidio of San Francisco. Along the route, San Franciscans presented them with numerous flower bouquets and wreaths. At the cemetery, several hundred people awaited, including many soldiers from the Presidio, Fort Point, and Point San Jose (Fort Mason). After an address and prayers, the band played a dirge, the veterans decorated the seven soldiers' graves there and the artillery batteries fired minute guns followed by a rapid volley. The procession then returned home.

In 1884, the U.S. established the San Francisco National Cemetery in the Presidio for members of all military branches and their families. Large public commemorations of Memorial Day began to be held at the Presidio in 1893 when a local GAR post secured a plot in the San Francisco National Cemetery for the interment of its members. With the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898, and the assembling of thousands of volunteer troops from around the country in San Francisco and at the Presidio, Memorial Day took on new significance, and the city's primary public ceremonies began to be held at the Presidio. The Army, the Grand Army, and newer veteran organizations organized the annual event, and a permanent rostrum for the ceremony was constructed in 1915. 1949 marked the first year that no Civil War veteran participated in a Memorial Day observance in the San Francisco Bay area.

Parking at the Main Post is free on holidays, and a free Memorial Day shuttle will provide service between the Main Post and the National Cemetery beginning at 9:30 a.m. and running through 1:30 p.m. For more information about the Presidio's Memorial Day Events visit [www.presidio.gov](http://www.presidio.gov)

**Attn: Calendar Editors**

**150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Memorial Day Commemoration at the Presidio**

**Date:** Monday, May 28

**Time:** Ceremony 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.; Pre-events 9:30 a.m.; picnic at 12:30 p.m.

**Place:** San Francisco National Cemetery at the Presidio, 1 Lincoln Blvd., San Francisco

**Phone:** 415-561-4323

**Price:** Free, with food for purchase.

The Presidio Trust, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the City of San Francisco invite you to be part of the official City and County of San Francisco Memorial Day Observance. This year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Presidio's participation in the city's annual ceremony, dating back to the establishment of this national day of remembrance in 1868. The ceremony will honor the one million Americans who have died while serving in the U.S. armed forces and will connect the public to the commitment and sacrifices made by military personnel, veterans, and their families.

**Link:** <https://www.presidio.gov/events/150th-anniversary-memorial-day-commemoration>

**The Presidio Trust** is a federal agency that manages the Presidio of San Francisco, a national park at the heart of the 82,000-acre Golden Gate National Recreation Area. In partnership with the National Park Service and the non-profit Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, the Presidio Trust brings alive the park's historic, natural, and recreational assets for the inspiration, education, health, and enjoyment of all people at no cost to taxpayers. Spanning nearly 1,500 acres in a spectacular setting at the Golden Gate, the Presidio is defined by its history, spectacular views, natural habitats, and beautiful open spaces. It is home to 3,000 residents and 200 tenant organizations, many of which welcome and serve the public. The Presidio Trust is focused on welcoming all to the national park experience, protecting and enhancing the environment, and operating in service to the public. Learn more at [www.presidio.gov](http://www.presidio.gov).

**The San Francisco National Cemetery in the Presidio** was established in 1884. More than 32,000 veterans and their dependents are buried there. It has long been a tradition for the Boy Scouts to decorate each grave in the cemetery with an American flag for Memorial Day. Starting in 2017, the Girl Scouts have joined the Boy Scouts in this tribute. CalFlowers and the Memorial Day Flowers Foundation with the support of Recology San Francisco have provide 200 volunteers and 26,000 blooms to decorate each grave.

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