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CONTACT: Elsie Jackson 706-545-6674 | Ric Rosado 706-545-8970 | After hours: 706-545-2218

MEDIA RELEASE: Fort Benning to observe German and Italian Memorial Day

DATE: Nov. 12, 2014

FORT BENNING, Ga. – Fort Benning will remember German and Italian prisoners of war who are buried at the Main Post Cemetery during the annual German and Italian Memorial Day ceremony at 3 p.m. Nov. 19 at the cemetery.

Thomas Wulfig, the deputy consul general of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Southeastern United States, will speak.

The second Sunday before Advent marks the German memorial holiday, Volkstrauertag, the Day of National Mourning which was established in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1952.

On Volkstrauertag, the German people pause to remember and commemorate those in arms who died in World Wars I and II, those who lost their lives because of their race, religion, ideology, or political convictions, and those who died while fleeing their homeland.

Each year on Nov. 4, Italians come together to celebrate “*Giorno delle Forze Armate*,” Italian Armed Forces Day. This day is a national day of unity, commemorating the Allied victory in World War I and honoring members of the Italian Armed Forces, past and present.

The annual ceremony at Fort Benning is an established tradition, carried out every year with full military honors.

The 44 German and seven Italian soldiers buried at Fort Benning all served in World War II and became prisoners of war after they were captured by the Allies between 1943 and 1946. Most of them died of accidental or natural causes while prisoners either in Missouri, South Carolina or Georgia POW camps.

There will be a brief reception in The Infantry Chapel’s annex after the ceremony. The public is invited to attend the ceremony and the reception.

Media who wish to attend this event should call the Public Affairs Office during duty hours to coordinate a media escort.

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