MEDIA ADVISORY: Fort Benning to mark National Airborne Day with parachute jumps, Airborne School graduation August 16

DATE: August 13, 2019

FORT BENNING, Ga. – Fort Benning, birthplace of the Army’s Airborne, will observe National Airborne Day with a series of parachute jumps, and followed by a graduation ceremony of the nation’s newest paratroopers at 9 a.m., Aug. 16 at Fryar Drop Zone.

The observance is scheduled to start with freefall parachute jump demonstrations by two separate jump teams. One is the U.S. Army Parachute Team, which is the Army’s official parachute demonstration team, better known as the Golden Knights. The other is the Silver Wings, which is the official parachute demonstration team of Fort Benning’s Maneuver Center of Excellence.

Those freefall jumps are to be followed by a parachute jump from a World War II-vintage C-47 Skytrain transport plane that flew missions in World War II, including those in support of D-Day, the crucial 1944 Allied invasion of France that led to the liberation of Western Europe from occupation by Nazi Germany in World War II. It also took part in supporting Operation Market Garden and other operations of the war.

The jumpers, members of the Liberty Jump Team, will jump in World War II-reenactor paratrooper uniforms. The Team is an organization of parachutists, some of whom are current or former military jumpers.

The final jump will be from a U.S. Air Force C-130 Hercules transport. The jumpers will be Soldiers from the Army’s 1st Battalion, 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment. The battalion is part of the Fort Benning’s Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade, which runs the U.S. Army Airborne School. The jumpers are members of the School’s training cadre.

The jumps are to be followed by a graduation ceremony of several hundred Airborne School students of Bravo Company, Airborne Class 30-19, part of the 1-507th PIR.

The Basic Airborne Course trains some 10,000 military personnel each year as military parachutists. Airborne candidates include not only U.S. Army Soldiers but members of other U.S. armed services, as well as members of foreign military forces.
National Airborne Day was established on August 16, 2001 by President George W. Bush to commemorate the first official American parachute jump, made at Fort Benning August 16, 1940 by the U.S. Army’s Parachute Test Platoon.

Media who wish to cover this event should call the MCoE Fort Benning Public Affairs office to coordinate a media escort by 5 p.m. Thursday, August 15. This event is in a field environment with some walking through grass.

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