



NEWS Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 24, 2023

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MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE IN ROCKPORT

ROCKPORT, TX – In honor of the men and women who lost their lives while serving in the United States Armed Forces, a special Memorial Day Observance will be held on Monday, May 29, at 10 a.m. at Veterans Memorial Park on Austin Street. The event is free and open to the public. This is the 38th consecutive year of the Memorial Day Observance in Rockport.

The ceremony will include an Invocation, National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance, and a Recognition of Veterans Organizations, Law Enforcement Agencies and Fire Departments.

The guest speaker for the event is Kathleen “Katy” Jackson, Electronics Technician Senior Chief Petty Officer, USN (retired). Born in Rockford, Illinois, Katy graduated from Harlem High School in 1983. She attended Drake University in Des Moines, IA and graduated in 1988 with a Bachelor of Arts in Physics. Due to the downturn in the economy, Katy enlisted in the United States Navy as an Electronics Technician. Katy began her Navy story on January 9, 1990.

After Boot Camp and four different schools, Katy began her career in earnest. Stationed in Long Beach, CA, she gained proficiency at repairing all things electronic. Katy was then transferred to the USS Samuel Gompers for her first sea tour. Though only a year long, this tour cemented her desire to remain in the Navy as long as possible.

While stationed onboard USS Frank Cable in Guam, she was the first female enlisted person to qualify Command and Control Officer, a position usually reserved for junior

officers. She left the command as a First-Class Petty Officer (E6). At Naval Communications and Telecommunications Station Guam, she was the Leading Petty Officer for the Command Training Team. While on shore, Katy completed her Master of Arts in Organizational Management from the University of Phoenix in less than 18 months. She received her dream orders to Service School Command Great Lakes, Illinois. While completing courses prior to working at the Command, the Gods blessed her by selecting her for advancement to Chief Petty Officer. A challenging time made more challenging by the events of 9/11.

Her four years in Great Lakes followed by four years onboard USS Abraham Lincoln in Everett, Washington were the most rewarding and fulfilling of her career. She learned leadership, counseling, word smithing and many of the skills which have made her the person she is today. The pinnacle of this time was her qualification as Junior Officer of the Deck Underway, the first female enlisted person to qualify in the watch position in the ship's history. She gained her eligibility for the VFW when the ship was sent to the Persian Gulf in support of Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. Her duties as the Junior Officer of the Deck enabled the safe launch and recovery of aircraft in support of the boots on the ground. She then transferred to Naval Air Station Meridian, Mississippi where she was graced with selection to Senior Chief Petty Officer.

Her last tour stationed onboard USS George Washington was a fitting capstone to a 26-year career. The skills attained throughout her career lead to being hand-selected as the Leading Chief Petty Officer for Work Controls during two of the ship's nuclear aircraft carrier maintenance availabilities. Her efforts lead to the USS George Washington being the first carrier to complete its maintenance availability on time and under budget.

Spanning 26 years, Katy received numerous medals, ribbons, and awards: Navy Commendation Medal (x5), Navy Achievement Medal (x6), Navy Good Conduct Medal (x7), Humanitarian Service Medal (x2), Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, National

Defense Medal (x2) among others. She qualified as Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist, Enlisted Air Warfare Specialist and Master Training Specialist.

Katy retired from the United States Navy January 31, 2016. Since then, she has been heavily involved in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and Another Chance Rescue. She currently holds the positions of Commander of VFW Post 3904, Adjutant of Department of Texas District 6, the Department of Texas Voice of Democracy/Patriot's Pen Chair and member of the National General Resolutions Committee. Katy is a Silver Legacy Life Member of the VFW and a Life Member of the American Legion.

The speech will be followed by the Laying of the Wreath and Dedication, Remarks from Luis Puron, Taps, and conclude with a Benediction.

This special event was organized by the local Veterans organizations including the American GI Forum Post & Unit #324F, Carl Morrison American Legion Post & Unit #363 & Sons of the Legion, and Stewart-Wendell Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #3904. Sponsors for this event include the City of Rockport's Parks and Leisure Services Department and the Aransas County Navigation District. Immediately following the Memorial Day Observance program, refreshments will be served at the American Legion, located at 1701 South Church Street. In case of inclement weather, the event will be held at the American Legion.

For more information contact the Parks Department at 361-790-1136.