

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Johnson Beach Day To Be Held May 7, 2016 Annual Remembrance Day Will Celebrate Life Of Local Hero

Perdido Key, Fla., April 25, 2016 – The Perdido Key Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the [Gulf Islands National Seashore](#), is proud to announce its annual Rosamond Johnson Beach Day. The ceremony will take place Saturday, May 7, 2016 at 10 am under the Star Pavilion on Johnson Beach, which is part of the Gulf Islands National Seashore.

The ceremony will honor and remember the life of Army Private Rosamond Johnson Jr. Scheduled speakers include Eugene Franklin, President/CEO Florida Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc.; the Rev. John Philpot, Pastor of the Talbot Chapel AME Zion Church; Dan Brown, Superintendent for the Gulf Islands National Seashore; Alison Davenport, Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce; and Sue Straughn, WEAR News Anchor. The NAVT choir will perform, as well as the Naval Aviation Technical Training Center Performing Units. The ceremony will conclude with words from the Johnson family, and Benediction from the Rev. John Philpot.

After enlisting in the Army at only 15, Johnson died in combat at age 17. Johnson rescued two injured soldiers and brought them to safety before he was fatally wounded while returning for a third comrade. He was the first Escambia County resident to die in the Korean War. Johnson posthumously received the Purple Heart on August 21, 1950.

During the time of Johnson's death, Pensacola beaches were racially segregated. After the Korean Conflict, the county-owned recreational area was renamed to honor its fallen hero at the suggestion of the Sunset Riding Club, Inc. The club leased the land in 1950 from the county for the sole use of bathing, beach and recreational facilities for "colored citizens." Although the lease was cancelled in 1956, the name Rosamond Johnson Beach remained. The area became part of Gulf Islands National Seashore May 8, 1973. A permanent monument in his honor was erected at Johnson Beach on June 10, 1996.

Every year, the Perdido Key and Pensacola communities spend a day on Johnson Beach with its citizens and Johnson's family, honoring the memory of Rosamond Johnson. A big Thank You to this year's premier sponsor of Rosamond Johnson Beach Day: [Pen Air Federal Credit Union](#). We appreciate your support and involvement. For more information on this celebratory day, please go to [VisitPerdido.com](#) or our Visitors Information Center, located at 15500 Perdido Key Drive, Perdido Key, Fla.



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Perdido Key, FL

With "Perdido" meaning "lost" in Spanish, it's clear why the island truly is a treasure. Its dazzling white sand and clean, clear water make Perdido Key one of the most beautiful beaches on the Gulf Coast. The barrier island is 16 miles long, with more than half of the area preserved from development to the public. Numerous locally owned restaurants and nightclubs add to the ambience of the island, which is between Pensacola, Fla. and Orange Beach, Ala. Discover our island at VisitPerdido.com.

National Park Service

More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 411 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.

Gulf Islands National Seashore

Gulf Islands National Seashore stretches for 160 miles along the northern coasts of the Gulf of Mexico in Florida and Mississippi, and includes barrier islands, maritime forests, bayous, and marine habitat. Learn more at www.nps.gov/guis or share the experience @GulfIslands_NPS or on Facebook/GulfIslandsNPS.