



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**GRAND STRAND FREEDOM FESTIVAL**

**Festival Organizers Announce Names of Wounded Heroes Attending**

(Myrtle Beach, South Carolina . August 25, 2009) ... Organizers of the inaugural Grand Strand Freedom Festival announced today the names of a dozen American soldiers who will be participating in the inaugural event, which will be held Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>.

Eight of the soldiers suffered severe injuries during their tours of service in Iraq, including SFC Sean Bennett who has just launched a promising career as a singer/songwriter. Bennett is scheduled to perform as guests prepare for the *Concert for America* by the Long Bay Symphony on September 11<sup>th</sup> at La Belle Amie Vineyard. The event is free to the public. Also performing that evening will be US Army Special Ops Daniel Jens, who placed 11<sup>th</sup> in this years America's Got Talent on NBC Television.

Day two of the Festival takes place at Freestyle Music Park, which will open at 11am that Saturday. Sgt Vicki Golding, Sgt in the Army National Guard will sing the national anthem to start the Parade of Patriots, which will include a motorcycle unit from Rolling Thunder (veterans), from the Blue Knights (police); the Red Knights (fire & rescue), all the heroes from Operation First Response and the marching bands from Aynor, Conway, Carolina Forest, Loris and North Myrtle Beach high schools.

BOOST co-founder and president Robert Kelley, speaking on behalf of his members and Festival Co-Sponsors, noted "We are honored – we are privileged – to welcome these true American heroes as we remember the victims and first responders on September 11<sup>th</sup> – and honor the brave men and women of our Armed Forces – veterans and active duty alike. I implore each of you to read their stories and to come and meet each of them personally during the festival."

Transportation, accommodations and meals for the soldiers and, in some cases their families, has been arranged by members of BOOST through Operation First Response, created in 2003 by founder Peggy Baker to "support our wounded heroes and their families. We are thrilled that BOOST and its fine co-sponsors chose our organization for this fantastic weekend-long event."

Grand Strand Freedom Festival Co-Sponsors include: Freestyle Music Park, WPDE-TV15, WWMB-TV21, WEZV Radio, WGTR Radio, DiscoverMyrtleBeach.com. Sponsorship information is available at GrandStrandFreedomFest.com.

Special opportunities to contribute to Operation First Response will be available for the public attending all the festivities on Friday and Saturday. Saturday's activities take place at Freestyle Music Park and include special exhibitions and concerts by Charlie Floyd & The Southern Express, Jeffrey Allen Edwards & Southern Blue, Billy Jo Royal and an 8:00pm concert by Grammy Award Winner LeAnn Rimes. Special event packaging offers a 2-Day pass to Freestyle Music Park (Saturday & Sunday) for just \$24.99 (plus tax) and includes access to all the concerts. VIP Seating for LeAnn Rimes limited and available for just \$54.99 (plus tax) and also includes the 2-Day park pass. For more information, call 843-236-7625 or visit GrandStrandFreedomFest.com.

**Musicians/Performers**

*SFC Sean Bennett (wounded)*

*Dan Jens*

*SGT Vicki Golding*

**Wounded American Soldiers**

**Cpl Kevin “Andrew” Smith**

**PFC. Richard Kolath**

**SPC Henry “Austin” Phillips**

**Cpt. Joseph Amos**

**SGT. Ian Newland**

**PFC Paul Skarinka**

**Sgt Michael Marrero**

**1st Sgt Peter Lara**

**SSG Ricardo Perez**

**[www.OperationFirstResponse.org](http://www.OperationFirstResponse.org)**

**[www.GrandStrandFreedomFest.com](http://www.GrandStrandFreedomFest.com)**

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