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North Carolina Fourth of July Festival Announces Parade Grand Marshal
Sunny Point Commander Colonel Heather J. Carlisle to Lead Parade

SOUTHPORT, N.C. - The 4th of July Festival Committee is pleased to announce this year's parade Grand Marshal will be Colonel Heather J. Carlisle, Commander of the 596th Transportation Brigade and Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point (MOTSU).

"Each year the committee strives to honor those who are or have been in service to our country and this year is no exception," said Karen Sphar, executive vice president for the Southport-Oak Island Chamber of Commerce. "The parade is one of the biggest highlights of the entire festival, and as the new Commander of MOTSU we couldn't think of a better person than COL Carlisle to lead the procession this year."

COL Carlisle took the helm at MOTSU in August 2018. She is the first woman to serve as commander of the 596th Transportation Brigade and MOTSU. She has served in the U.S. Army for more than 23 years.

COL Carlisle said, "Being selected as the Grand Marshal of the parade is quite an honor for me. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in such a fantastic event."

The parade is sponsored by Doshier Memorial Hospital, First National Bank, Jammin 99.9 WKXB-FM & WECT TV6. The parade will be televised on WECT TV6, and will be presented by WECT-TV Weatherman, Gabe Ross, & N.C. 4th of July Committee Member and parade veteran & WHQR News Director, Rachel Lewis Hillburn.

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The history of Southport's Fourth of July Festival celebration was first recorded in a newspaper in 1795. Now the event has grown to attract more than 50,000 visitors each year. Through the years the festival has evolved to encompass a wide variety of American celebration traditions. And what could be more American than a Naturalization Ceremony which was incorporated into the N.C. Fourth of July Festival in 1996 and administered by what is now the United States Department of Homeland Security U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS). Holding true to its mission of promoting patriotism, the festival also holds a Veterans Recognition Ceremony, Flag Retirement Ceremony and Flag Raising Ceremony.