

## DEDICATION SPEECH

Col. David Drichta

Joint Base San Antonio Randolph

Thank you for this honor of speaking to you today. Mayor Carpenter, we are honored to be part of your community, standing before you as veterans currently serving. I am thankful to the citizens of Schertz and to the Plaza Committee for this dedication. This recognition of the greatness that we all stand upon, the very foundation in the bricks, is the names of those who have stood up for freedom since the birth of this nation.

I am thankful for the cold this morning to remind me a little bit of the first Continental Army at Valley Forge. I am thankful for the cold this morning to remind me of the men who served in the Ardennes Forest in World War II. I am thankful for this cold this morning to remind me of the Chosin Reservoir Valley and those who served in Korea. I am especially thankful of the cold to remind me of the POW in the cold, cold cell in the Hanoi Hilton. I am also thankful for the cold this morning to remind me that our brothers and sisters in arms are serving in the hills of Afghanistan, much in a cold like today.

I come to you as a current serving military member, but I'd like to introduce a few folks who brought me to where I am today. First, my wife, a former Air Force captain, her father, a lieutenant in the Navy in Viet Nam, and her grandfather, a captain in the Army in World War II. We come from families of America's sons and daughters that have served.

I'd like to introduce you today to another son, a son of Texas, Winona, Texas, an American, Major Mike "Nascar" Granbury who eventually graduated from the Air Force Academy, went off to serve out in Del Rio, Texas, as an instructor pilot, and then was selected to be a B-52 aircraft commander instructor pilot. But that's not where his veteran's service in combat comes from. The Air Force later called Nascar to fly a bombardier and a bombardier jet from Canada loaded with electronic communications gear to make sure that our airmen had full picture of the battle before them. It was a communications passage so important that the United States Army would not go into the hills of Afghanistan without it. Nascar's journey began 28 December 2013, three days after Christmas. He left two young boys and his wife, Emily, and traveled half way across the world to stand and guard freedom wherever people might lie. Nascar went over and ended up flying 74 missions in this aircraft, 10 hours at a time, providing local surveillance, persistence over the battlespace, linking our airmen, soldiers, sailors, and marines altogether with a picture that the enemy would never have. That blanket of freedom concluded on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July (2014) for Nascar as he arrived home back into Emily's arms.

**Ladies and gentlemen, please help me welcome and thank the current face of those veterans, Nascar Granbury. Thank you, Nascar. (Applause). Ladies and gentlemen, again, as part of the current serving veterans, and those sons and daughters of ours that WILL serve and stand and guard the liberty that has been provided to us, provided by those men and women around us today that we STAND on those shoulders of freedom. THANK YOU for the honor of serving this GREAT NATION. (Applause).**