



This restoration was made possible through generous efforts and contributions by:

USMC/Geiger Memorial Committee: Eric Richey, Ada Richey, Dr. Arthur Jansik, Manny Perez, Dr. Jim Watson, Greg Cates, Irene Priess, Capt. Linda Pauwels

Mayor Xavier Garcia and current and former City Council Members
Billy Bain, Bob Best, Roslyn Buckner, George Lob, Jaime Petralanda, Michael Windrem

Miami Springs City Manager Ron Gorland

The Village of Virginia Gardens

Marine Corps Aviation Association

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Manny Perez and Southeast Design Associates

Alan Milam and Milam's Markets

Tom Nash, Lazaro Garaboa and the Miami Springs Public Works Department

Boy Scout Troop #334: James Fulton III Scoutmaster, Louis Diaz Asst. Scoutmaster, Scout Jack Fulton, Scout Tyler Fulton, Scout Brandon Diaz

Hialeah - Miami Springs Rotary Club

Miami Springs Historical Society

Alex Varela and Alex Electric

Wayne Amodie and Hi Tech Aviation Welding

John George and Miami Brick and Stone

Wayne Orr and Orr Plumbing

Ozzy's Golden Construction, Inc

Fred Suco and Woodys West End Tavern

Tony and Nancy Carnavale

Dana Estabrook

Carol Foster

Al and Gaby Granado

Jose Negron

...and the many community members who have supported this effort by donating a memorial brick

REDEDICATION OF THE FIRST MARINE AVIATION FORCE AND CAPTAIN ROY S. GEIGER MEMORIAL



**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19TH, 2015
10:00 A.M.
CURTISS PARKWAY MEDIAN AT DEER RUN
MIAMI SPRINGS, FLORIDA**

HISTORY

On November 13, 1948, the First Marine Aviation Force Veterans Association erected this monument to commemorate the nearby site of the very first Marine airbase and the accomplishments of its illustrious first commanding officer, Captain Roy S. Geiger.



PIONEER MARINE FLIERS MEET—Miami members of the First Marine Aviation Force in World War I will invite officers and men who served in the pioneer air unit to Miami for their 20th annual reunion next year. The First Marine Air Force trained here during World War I. Miami members, who met left to right, seated, Byron B. Prosser, Lt. Capt. E. W. Palmquist, Sheldon Grebe Gurnett. Standing, left to right, Ross Bryner and Lester Avery.

From 1918 to 1919, this airbase, known as the “Old Curtiss Flying Field”, was leased from legendary aviation pioneer, inventor and developer Glenn Curtiss for \$1 a year, and housed all four squadrons of the First Marine Aviation Force. The Marines lived in tents, the planes were housed in two wooden sheds and canvas hangars, and the soft sand runway flooded in every rain, making it unusable for several days each time. The surrounding countryside was wild, swampy and undeveloped. Their equipment consisted of three OX-5 Jennys, about 20 Jennys with Hispano-Suiza engines and some older machines they had bartered for with the Curtiss flight instructors, who were all given reserve commissions. Bombing and strafing practice was done over the Miami River and where the Miami Springs Golf Course is today.



Despite these difficult conditions, the Marine uniform, then as now, provided the impetus for stirring deeds. The 135 USMC pilots who trained there flew in France during WWI, providing bomber and fighter support to the Navy's *Day Wing*, *Northern Bombing Group*. By the end of the war, Marine Aviators had recorded twelve air-to-air kills, and collectively they had dropped over fourteen tons of bombs. They were the first American military aviation force to see combat, and suffered the loss of four USMC pilots: Lt. Chapin C. Barr, Lt. Ralph Talbot, Lt. Caleb W. Taylor, and Lt. Harvey C. Norman.



The commanding officer of this field and the First Marine Aviation Force, Captain Roy Geiger, was the fifth flyer in the newly-formed U.S. Marine Corps aviation program. His training had consisted of 107 heavier-than-air flights, totaling 73 hours of flight time, plus 14 free-balloon ascents! And so he launched a career that led him to become one of the most distinguished aviators in Marine aviation history, one of its greatest pilots and a four star General. In the battle of Okinawa he became the only Marine ever to command a field army. His aviation career spanned active combat in every significant Marine Corps action around the world until his death in 1947.



PROGRAM

Welcome and Introductions

Mayor Xavier Garcia

Presentation of Colors

Boy Scout Troop #334

United States Marine Corps Forces South Color Guard:

Staff Sgt. Earnest Barnes

Sgt. Luchmy Luc

Sgt. Geomary Diaznegron

Cpl. Tiffanie Williams

Pledge of Allegiance

Girl Scout Troop #594

Invocation

Rev. Tex Ziadie

National Anthem

Christine Engelmann, Vocal

Joe Donato, Keyboard

Keynote Speech

Colonel David Carbonero

United States Marine Corps Forces South

Closing Remarks

Eric Richey, Chair, USMC/Geiger Memorial Committee

The Marines' Hymn

Joe Donato, Saxophone