

Miramar Community Leaders Forum
February 25 2010

The February, 2010 Miramar Community Leaders Forum was held on board the air station in the Commanding Officer's conference room. The guest speaker this month was Mr. Kirk Leopard, Director Fort Rosecrans and Miramar National Cemeteries. Mr. Kirk provided the forum with information concerning the National Cemetery program in general as well as specific comments regarding the new National Cemetery that will open soon at MCAS Miramar.

The mission of the National Cemetery Administration is to honor veterans with final resting places in National Shrines and with lasting tributes that commemorate their service to our Nation. The National Cemetery Administration provides burial space for veterans and maintains cemeteries as National Shrines. It administers the Federal grants program for construction of state veterans cemeteries. The administration furnishes headstones and markers and administers the Presidential Memorial Certificate program.

The National Cemetery Administration oversees 131 cemeteries and 2.9 million gravesites. The cemeteries cover 16,980 acres. There were 103,273 burials in 2008 alone. To be eligible to be buried in a National Cemetery, you must have been any member of the Armed Services who dies on active duty, or any veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, or a National Guard member or Reservist with twenty years of qualifying service, who are entitled to retired pay, or would be entitled, if at least 60 years of age. Spouses and minor children are also entitled.

The following burial benefits are provided by the NCA: Gravesite, opening and closing of the grave; grave liner; headstone or marker; perpetual care of the gravesite; a U.S. flag and a Presidential Memorial Certificate.

The NCA continues to develop new cemeteries. Programs are ongoing to extend the life of existing cemeteries. Memorial walls will be included in designs of new cemeteries or expansion of existing cemeteries. Memorial walls contain plaques in honor of veterans whose remains were either never recovered or the family chose burial at sea or otherwise scattering of the ashes. This conserves limited burial space that might otherwise be used for interment of remains.

The new Miramar National Cemetery will cover over 214 acres on the northeast corner of the air station. This new cemetery has long been anticipated by veterans because there have been no in ground burials at Fort Rosecrans since the 1960s. Since that time, families of veterans have had to bury their loved ones in Riverside. The new National Cemetery at Miramar will accept in first burial in September of this year.

Air operations report for January shows that operations during this month have been consistent on a year-to-year basis. Flight operations for January 2010 were 7,694 compared to 7,836 for January of last year. Noise complaints were down slightly for this

past January (15 this year compared to 20 for the same period last year). The I-15 helicopter route experienced 147 overflights, which generated one noise complaint. The Julian North jet departure has been renamed to "Lakee North" jet departure. This was a change in name only. The aircraft track is exactly the same as the Julian North. This route, which affects Rancho Bernardo, experienced 926 flight operations generating 2 noise complaints. Rancho Bernardo filed only one noise complaint during the month of January 2010 and that was for the I-15 helicopter route. Interestingly, that complaint was filed by myself to call attention to a flight of CH-53Es that were flying below their prescribed altitude.

The March meeting is yet to be determined. Likely it will be during the day and involve a tour of some part of the air station.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey C Frederick