



Missing In America Project

www.miap.us

**AFTER ACTION REPORT
MIAP-FL CALL TO HONOR #19
SOUTH FLORIDA NATIONAL CEMETERY
LAKE WORTH, FLORIDA
SATURDAY, APRIL 6, 2019
11:00AM**

The unclaimed cremains for this service were from Dignity Memorial's Broward Burial & Cremation in Fort Lauderdale that were in storage at the Kraeer Funeral Home at Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens in Pompano Beach, and were also from the Miami-Dade County Medical Examiner Department Indigent Cremation Program.

At this service MIAP-FL interred 25 veterans, which included:

- US Army – 14 veterans
- US Marine Corps. – 2 veterans
- US Navy – 4 veterans
- US Air Force – 5 veterans

The veterans served in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf and other non-specific war periods. The longest that any of these veterans' cremains were unclaimed was since 1975. Unfortunately, of the 25 veterans interred, 12 were indigent when they died and their cremations were paid for by medical examiner's offices.

It was a warm, sunny Saturday morning, and over 250 people attended this service. There was an approximate 50 motorcycle escort led by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office with an MIAP Lead Rider and Tail Gunner. Paul Markonni, MIAP Team Leader, coordinated this service. Other MIAP-FL team members involved in the identification of the veterans and spouses, and the service, included Elaine Markonni, Roberta Battis, Patricia Rizzo, Sharon Gilley, Pete Gilley, Diane DeLorie, and Steve Spickelmier. Certified registered, return receipt letters were sent to family members on file and an "Intent of Action" was published in the local newspaper as required by Kathy Church, MIAP-FL State Coordinator. We did not get any response back from any family members for this service.

This service was supported by many local veterans' and other organizations which included:

- The Director, and the staff, of the South Florida National Cemetery
- Military Funeral Honors, Navy Region Southeast
- Active duty military service participants
- Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office
- Palm Beach County Firefighters Pipes and Drums Band
- Palm Beach County Fire Rescue Honor Guard
- MIAP Lead Rider Michael Merriman and Tail Gunner Michael Ewing
- Patriot Guard Riders
- Seminole Ridge Community HS JROTC Sabre Team
- Young Marines of the Palm Beaches Honor Guard
- Lake Worth High School Air Force JROTC Sabre Team
- The South Florida Woodworking Guild and the Gold Coast Woodturners
- Military Officers Association of America, Palm Beach/Martin County. Chapter
- Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 25, West Palm Beach
- Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1125, Boca Raton
- Valencia Reserve Veterans Group and Valencia Pointe Men's Club

Project 425 military vehicles
American Legion Post 271, Tequesta
Target Store, 5900 State Rd. 7, Lake Worth

Numerous other veterans' organizations whose members were pallbearers and flag carriers.

This service was done in two parts. The first part was at the a cemetery committal shelter which included the transportation of the cremains to the site, led by the Palm Beach County Firefighters Pipes and Drums Band, the Palm Beach County Fire Rescue Honor Guard, and the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Motor Unit, and followed by the motorcycle escort of over 50 bikes. The procession of urns and flags were carried to the front table through a detailed line formation by the PGR, Seminole Ridge Community HS JROTC Sabre Team, Young Marines of the Palm Beaches Honor Guard and the Lake Worth High School Air Force JROTC Sabre Team. The program included Invocation, parading of the colors, singing of our National Anthem, posting of the colors, reading of the names and ringing of the bell, the volley, Taps, folding of the Flag by a two person Air Force team, and the presentation of the Flag to an MIAP volunteer in the absence of family members. The Master of Ceremonies for this service was Col. Robert Ames, USAF (ret.). Speakers included Sonny Peppers, Director of the SFNC and Peter Manfredi, General Manager of Dignity Memorial's Kraeer Funeral Home at Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens, Pompano Beach. We concluded this part of the service with the singing of God Bless America. (Program attached).

For the second part of the service everyone walked to the columbarium, with the urns and flags carried by the volunteers, and each decedent's urn was placed in a niche with a final salute by a member of the branch of service in which the decedent served.

An Eagle Scout, acting on behalf of Joshua Katz, the originator of the MIA-POW-OREE program, along with other Boy Scouts, placed one of their challenge coins in each niche. Benediction was offered and Steve Spickelmier, MIAP Fields Operation Coordinator then asked everyone to thank all of the active duty service members that participated for their service.

The service was concluded by Kathy Church. She thanked all who participated in and attended this service. Her last remark was "We can now say YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN."

Total time for this service from start to finish was approximately 1 hour.

Final notes: We had a rehearsal the day before for any volunteers that could and wanted to attend at the South Florida National Cemetery at 3:00PM.

All niche plates will have "YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN" at the bottom.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Markonni,
Broward County Team Leader

Kathy Church
MIAP – FL, State Coordinator