

UPDATED MILLENNIUM GROUNDS RENOVATION PROJECT

The National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific is currently working in Section "P" as part of a \$4.5 million Millennium Grounds Renovation Project. Section "P" is expected to be completed by the end of November.

From there, the project will move into Section "Q", "R", "S", "U", "V", "W", "X", "M", "N" and then finally "O" as the first half of the cemetery will be completed. It is estimated that each section will take 90 days to complete. As work commences in a section, that individual section will be closed due to safety concern and provide the contractor uninterrupted access to the excavation area.

"In the 60 years this national shrine has been open, the turf has never been renovated before," Gene Castagnetti, the cemetery's director said. "Gravesites will be leveled, grave markers will be cleaned and stabilized with a non-biodegradable product called grass-pave. The soil will be tilled to a depth of eight inches and replanted with a new Bermuda grass called 'Celebration' that is tolerant to both shade and drought.

"All this effort will take out the uneven 'washboard effect' in our worst sections," he said. "The grave markers and serviceable flower vases will be stored for safekeeping, cleaned and replaced once the renovation in each section is completed. Unserviceable vases will be returned to their owners and temporary vases utilized for all future floral tributes."

There will be 11 burial sections and more than 16,400 markers renovated in the next two years in Phase I. Each section contains anywhere from 1,200 to 2,900 graves and no more than three burial sections at a time will be closed during the renovation.

"Families and friends can use the chapel as a venue to remember their loved ones on special occasions or dates," he said. "If we have a requirement to join a family member with a predeceased burial, the cemetery will reopen the closed section to bury the surviving spouse. We will halt the construction work, dig the grave, do the interment and then continue with the renovation project in that section. Burial benefits to the veteran and his or her family would not be curtailed as this is the NCA's primary mission."

Gravesite visitors to these areas are urged to return to this website for periodic updates.