



HELENA DAY BREESE/NEWS-PRESS PHOTOS

The U.S. flag flies at the Presidio during Veterans Day ceremonies.

Veterans remembered at Presidio

By **SARAH McCARTHY**
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

Drums, a flag ceremony and cannon fire commemorated Veterans Day at the Presidio during an event hosted by the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation.

About 60 people gathered at the historic site to honor men and women who have served in the U.S. military.

"Remember this: the veteran is America's most honored citizen," Jim Martinez, who served in the U.S. Army Special Operation Command during the Vietnam War, said during a speech.

Mr. Martinez is a descendant of Lt. Jose Francisco Ortega, a Spanish soldier who helped found the Presidio in 1782.

Honoring veterans at the place where his ancestor once held command has "great significance" for him, Mr. Martinez said.

"It means to me that the country has always been strong," he said. "It's very special. They're very dear to me, all veterans are."

During the ceremony, several veterans in the crowd stood to share parts of their stories, often thanking their fellow veterans for their service.

Michael Hardwick, an engineer in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War, said he felt lucky that he was not on the front lines.

"I was a young guy, there was a lot going on over there. It was interesting," he said. "The fleet operations were incredible, not matched since World War II.

"I'm proud to be a veteran," he added.



Jim Martinez, who served in the U.S. Army Special Operation Command during the Vietnam War, speaks at Wednesday's Veterans Day ceremony at the Presidio.

After the songs of each branch of military were played, Mr. Martinez reminded everyone to acknowledge the men and women who have fought for the United States.

"On this Veterans Day, or any other day, should you see a veteran, stop and shake his or her hand and say to them: 'Thank you for your service,'" he said. "It is important to continue remember veterans."

email:
smccarthy@newspress.com