



Committed to the Cut.®

WHAT OUR USERS ARE SAYING

KANSAS VETERANS' CEMETERY

FT. RILEY, KANSAS

As a state-run operation, no one knows better than Cecelia Shellnut, Cemetery Manager at the Kansas Veterans' Cemetery at Ft. Riley, the value of dependable equipment. Located near Manhattan, Kan., Cecelia has been there since the cemetery opened on March 4, 2009. "As part of the Kansas Commission on Veterans affairs, we work within the confines of very tight budgets so we must make do with what we have for longer periods of time," she says.

Maintaining the cemetery as a showplace is top-of-mind with Cecelia and her staff. "Our staff of five takes a lot of pride in making our cemetery a national shrine to show honor and respect to our veterans and their families." The motto we have on the main building says it all: No One Is Ever Buried Alone, All Are Buried With Honor.



"Our military veterans are heroes," Cecelia says. "Heroes who deserve all the honor and respect we can give to them. This is never so true than when they are laid to rest. Our veterans deserve the very best internment facilities as a token of our appreciation for the sacrifices they have made to defend our freedom. Cecelia and her staff pay attention to every detail in order to keep the cemetery in pristine condition.

On September 18, 2018, this attention to detail paid off when the Kansas Veterans Cemetery at Ft. Riley received the highest accolades in the country receiving a Certificate of Cemetery Operational Excellence Award by the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs. Out of only four of the 136 cemeteries in the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration receiving this distinction, the Ft. Riley cemetery received the

highest ranking (98) of all. Cecelia explains, "This is a great honor, but we do it for our veterans and not for awards and Grasshopper has been with us every step of the way. I couldn't be more satisfied with their dependability, parts availability and their great customer service. Grasshopper is an integral part of our team and they help us fulfill our mission!

"Using Grasshopper mowers gives us a manicured cut fitting for a national cemetery. They also help keep our expenses down because of their dependability, longevity and versatility," Cecelia says. The cemetery operates with three Grasshopper mowers, two 930D (diesel) units with 72-inch decks, and one 620T gasoline mower with a 52-inch deck. The newest one is over 10 years old. "All three work as hard as the day they were acquired.

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"Grasshopper's dependability stretches our budget in many ways. We love the power and fuel economy of the diesel engines in the 930D's. They are very reliable and the maintenance guys say they are easy to work on. The cemetery's 90 acres of land must be in pristine condition all-year-long so we cannot afford to have equipment failures."



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The mowers are maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Aside from a few parts here and there, they have performed flawlessly. At the end of each day the crews clean the mowers and check all belts, fluid levels and tire pressures in preparation for the next day.

In addition to the dependability and high-quality of cut the mowers deliver, the Grasshopper mowers' versatility pays off by replacing the front-mounted cutting decks with implements including Tine Rake dethachers, PowerVac™ Collection Systems, a turbine blower, snowthrower, rotary broom and a shielded sprayer. These implements are powered by the Grasshopper tractor. "This versatility lets us use our mowers year-round



and saves us money by not having to purchase and maintain single-purpose equipment," Cecelia says. "Plus, it also saves us storage space which is at a premium here." Something she also appreciates is the fact that new Grasshopper features and implements are compatible with the cemetery mowers so upgrades to the existing mowers don't bust the budget.

There have been 1,037 internments at the cemetery in the first 10 years. Over 2,200 pre-certifications (pre-registrations) are also on the books which means there will eventually be triple the number of grave stones to mow around. Right now, only 40 of the 90 acres are currently maintained. Even so, the mowers work virtually non-stop every week from March to October. After the growing season, each one is thoroughly inspected top-to-bottom and prepared for the next season. Some are operated during the winter months removing snow. Cecelia also adds that they take advantage of Grasshopper workshops and training videos to let their employees stay up-to-date on the equipment.

