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Morón AB celebrates 75 years

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 by Senior Airman Damon Kasberg
 86th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

6/1/2015 - **MORON AIR BASE, Spain** -- Thousands of people flocked to the flightline of Morón Air Base, Spain, as the Ala 11th, Spanish Air Force welcomed them to attend an open house from May 30-31.

The event was held to celebrate Morón's 75th anniversary.

"The local populace in the cities surrounding the base such as Utrera, El Coronil, Morón de la Frontera, and Arahál have been talking about this event for months," said U.S. Air Force Capt. Katherine Plichta, 496th Air Base Squadron Operations Support Flight commander. "The support from all air base partners as well as aircraft from all over Spain makes this a once in a lifetime celebration. The range of activities and demonstrations that are being offered this weekend also make this event special."

Participating units included the Spanish Air Force, U.S. Air Force 496th ABS and Marine Corps Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response-Africa. Visitors had the opportunity to see static displays from both countries' armed forces, such as the Eurofighter Typhoon, P-3 Orion and MV-22B Osprey.

"Everyone has been extremely nice here," said U.S. Marine Capt. Matthew 'Flame' Shaw, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 226th SPMAGTF-CR-AF MV-22B Osprey pilot. "We've had a steady stream of people come up to ask questions, take picture next to the Osprey and tour the inside. Getting this close to an aircraft with the Osprey's capabilities is a once in a life time opportunity for some of these people."

When attendees looked to the skies they were treated with a show from the Spanish Air Forces' Patrulla Águila, Casa C-101 Aviojets demonstration team and Patrulla ASPA, EC-120 helicopter aerobatic display team.

"I'm proud to visit Morón and feel what it's like to be around the military," said Jose Jimenez Garcia, open house attendee. "We don't get to do this often, get to see who they are. Being here helps us understand the military life."

In its 75-years, Morón has had a long history of working side-by-side with the United States. It hosts U.S. Air Force and Marines units, and supports operations throughout Europe, Africa and Central Asia.

"The relationships between Spain and the U.S. has been magnificent and we've been able to help other friendly, allied countries," said Spanish Air Force Lt. Juan Sanz Penalver, Ala 11th historian. "The American presence in this base is very important, logically. They've given us security, jobs and employment. In exchange, we've offered them our support with the installation. The reality is that today we are friends, allies and we work together. Defense is our shared interest."

While it's uncertain what the next 75 years has to offer Morón, it's clear by looking across the flightline during the open house, Morón has built a heritage of U.S. and Spain partnership.

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Attendees of an open house gather around a U.S. Marine MV-22B Osprey, May 31, 2015, at Morón Air Base, Spain. The two-day event was held to celebrate Morón's 75th anniversary. Participating units included the Spanish Air Force, U.S. Air Force 496th Air Base Squadron and Marine Corps Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response-Africa. Visitors had the opportunity to see static displays from both countries' armed forces, such as the Eurofighter Typhoon, P-3 Orion and MV-22B Osprey. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Damon Kasberg)

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