

2008 Annual Report

El Dorado County Veterans Monument

Compiled by:

Friends of the Veterans Monument, Inc.



APR 28 2009
EL DORADO COUNTY
VETERAN AFFAIRS

2008 Annual Report

**Friends of the Veterans Monument,
Inc.**

Founded 1997

OUR MISSION

*To honor those who have served
the Cause of Freedom, to preserve the legacy of the
monument, to educate, and to foster cooperation
among veterans groups.*

Dear Friend:

2008 marked the third anniversary of the El Dorado County Veterans Monument, with a year's worth of programs, ceremonies and other activities. It was a great time for the Friends of the Veterans Monument Inc., and I hope you were able to join us at some of these events.

It was certainly a year that will not be forgotten. It started with a Memorial Day Ceremony with hundreds in attendance. We were honored to have LtCol. Gregory A.M. Etzel, Air Force Cross, USAF (ret.), as our guest speaker. Pilot Charles Mitchell performed a fly over salute to our veterans in his T-28 in Navy colors. In a very emotional ceremony, a granite bench honoring Mathew Taylor, USA, KIA, was dedicated, with many of his family members in attendance. Other programs held later in the year include a salute to members of the Legion of Valor, a tribute and wreath-laying by the National Veterans Awareness Riders in route to Washington DC, and the dedication of two new bronze plaques: One honors those who served in Vietnam and later died as a result of their service; the other displays the Oath of Enlistment: "In remembrance of our fallen comrades." Tours and presentations that included discussions about respect, military service, and the traditions of Veterans Day were given to Boy Scout Troop 95, Cub Scout pack 190, Daisy Girl Scout Troop #19 and the El Dorado High School junior and senior history classes.

The year culminated with the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Veterans Monument Plaza. Major Brian P. Coyne, Commanding Officer of the Recruiting Station, Sacramento, was the keynote speaker, having just returned from Iraq where he was awarded the Bronze Star w/ combat V. Major Coyne gave a stirring address to the standing-room only crowd.

Prior to Veterans Day, nearly 180 new memorial bricks were laid. It was very moving to watch, from early morning to late night, family members and loved ones visiting the new bricks for the first time. As I watched many of them I was reminded once again why the Friends of the Veterans Monument, Inc. fought so hard to build a monument to honor those who have served the cause of freedom.

As the last hours of 2008 arrived, the Friends helped bring season's greetings to El Dorado County veterans and their families with the first annual Veterans Monument Christmas tree.

Education continues to be an important part of the Friends' mission. We are pleased to offer scholarships for the sons and daughters of Veterans of El Dorado County. This endowment fund has been created to provide tuition assistance and recognition to students who are the children of veterans...

2008 was a great year for the Friends of the Veterans Monument Inc. We look back at our past accomplishments, while anticipating a future filled with new challenges and exciting new programs. Thank you for all your help in 2008, and we hope we can continue counting on your support in the years ahead as we continue our important work.

Sincerely,
Richard W. Buchanan, NC
Founder and President

History of The El Dorado County Veterans Monument.

The El Dorado County Veterans Monument was first envisioned by former United States Marine Richard W. Buchanan when he served during the Vietnam War, for which he was awarded the Navy Cross for upholding the highest traditions of the Marines Corps and the United States Naval Services.

In 1997 the vision was shared with James Denmark, Peter Wolfe USCG (ret.), William Shultz USN (ret), and Robert Laurie. Shortly thereafter, the Friends of the Veterans Monument, Inc. was formed.

In 2006, after almost ten years of tireless planning, fund raising and promotion, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors essentially matched the funds raised by the Friends and community, turning the effort to build a veteran's monument in El Dorado County into a collaborative one. The monument, which sits on the east end of the EDC Government Center, was dedicated on Veterans Day, November 11, 2006, four months after construction began.



Programs

El Dorado County Veterans Monument is intended to honor those who have served the cause of freedom and to provide a place for individuals to engage in quiet contemplation, reflection, meditation, and consideration of the veterans and their service. To preserve this purpose, it is intended that the Monument not be utilized for any organized activities other than the commemorative ceremonies to be held on Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

Memorial Day

Hundreds gathered at the Veterans Monument Plaza to remember those who had made the ultimate sacrifice. Sgt. K.P. Smothers, former USMC, gave the call to order and present colors. Performing the flyover salute to all who have served was Charles Mitchell in his T-28 in Navy colors. CPO William Schultz, USN (ret.), lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Master of Ceremonies was Lt. Col. Chaplain Tim Thompson, California Army National Guard. Keynote speaker Lt. Col. Gregory A.M. Etzel, AFC, USAF (ret.), who was instrumental in getting the Monument built, gave a heartfelt talk on what it means to serve. Also addressing the crowd was Dennis Haas, former USMC, representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars 10165 and the veteran's organizations of El Dorado County. Lt. Col. Thompson also led a very emotional unveiling of a granite bench honoring Mathew Taylor, KIA, and his father Richard Taylor. Vocalists Brittany McKenzie and Melanie Jones sang the National Anthem and America the Beautiful. After the Benediction, Monument bagpiper Master Gunnery Sgt. Robert Maerdian, USA (ret.), played Amazing Grace

Veterans Day

The largest gathering of veterans since the monument dedication in 2006 overflowed the monument plaza site to witness the Veterans Day ceremony. Former USMC pilot Captain Norm Mahalich, USMC (ret.), lead the call to order and present colors. Richard W. Buchanan, NC, former USMC, led the Pledge of Allegiance. Master of Ceremonies was Lt. Col. Chaplain Tim Thompson. Guest speaker was Major Brian P. Coyne, USMC, who recently returned from Iraq where he was awarded the Bronze Star w/combat V. Major Coyne gave a stirring address about the dedication of our young men and women in our armed services. Larry Boudreaux, USN (ret.), past National President of the Fleet Reserve Association, gave the Veterans organization presentation on behalf of the Fleet Reserve Association and the veterans groups of El Dorado County. Robert Primicerio, VFW 2680, dedicated a bronze plaque with the Oath of Enlistment, "in remembrance of our fallen comrades." Vocalists Brittany McKenzie and Melanie Jones sang the National Anthem and America the Beautiful. Mastery Gunnery Sgt. Robert Maerdian, USA (ret.), Monument bagpiper, played Amazing Grace.

Annual Veterans Monument Christmas Tree

"Friends bring Christmas Tree to the Veterans Monument." Friends conspired with the EDC CAO's office and the General Services Department to install the first annual Veterans Monument Christmas Tree at the Veterans Monument Plaza. The community was then encouraged to stop by the Monument Plaza, write a holiday message to our veterans and troops and to continue decorating the tree. Friends provided a box full of ready-made, weatherproof "message ornaments" near the tree. On Christmas Day over 100 "messages ornaments" graced the 18-foot tree with dozens of red, white and blue ornaments, providing an additional patriotic element to the decoration.

Education

Friends of the Veterans Monument Inc., are now proud to be affiliated with The Joe Foss Institute, one of the only national organizations promoting Patriotism, Integrity, Public Service and an Appreciation of America's Freedoms to our nation's youth.

The Friends Education Committee has developed comprehensive and balanced educational materials in cooperation with the Institute that incorporate the lessons of heroism and selflessness to provide students with a greater sense of responsibility, leadership, citizenship and patriotism.

Additionally, the Education Committee took important steps in 2008 that will bring us closer to the next phase of remembrance with the Veterans Monument Center. The center will be an educational facility built to bring context to the monument for its younger visitors and to put faces to the more than 2000 inscribed bricks, plaques and benches at the monument

Veterans Monument Scholarship Fund

Friends of the Veterans Monument, Inc. and the generosity of many community members have established the Veterans Monument Scholarship Fund to assist sons and daughters of veterans in the pursuit of higher education. The Veterans Scholarship Fund is an advised fund managed by the El Dorado Community Foundation.

2008 scholarship funds totaled \$4,629.00.

Veterans Monument Scholarship Fund, Board of Directors;
William Cathcart, DSC, Andrew Woll, Esq., Richard W. Buchanan, NC, James Denmark

Monument Preservation

The Friends of the Veterans Monument Inc. is vigilant in its efforts to preserve the Veterans Monument and its 1.9 acre site. Friends authored the adopted "Criteria for Military Honoraria and Civilian Recognition" and have taken an active role in assessing and providing for the long-term needs of the site.

Committees exist to monitor the monument's content to ensure the exclusive honoring of in-service contributions of those who served, to promote its dignified and appropriate use, and to schedule events appropriate to the monument's mission.

Additionally, the Friends provide monument volunteers with necessary supplies and equipment to supplement the EDC General Service's Department maintenance efforts. Written materials, programs and directory information are provided to continue the useful work of honoring, healing and educating.

The Friends review all applications submitted for bricks, plaques, and benches for correctness and authenticity. Records are maintained of all sales of bricks and of orders for plaques, benches and other products that further the use and spirit of the Monument.

Goals completed in 2008

1. A two year effort to construct ADA parking in front of the monument was completed. Two parking spaces and access to the monument were designed and funded by the EDC General Services Department.
2. Drainage was added to the urn at the monument's entrance.
3. A Veterans Monument sign was added to the government center directory.
4. The installation of bricks, plaques and benches: Over 180 bricks, most honoring veterans and active duty service members, were installed this year at a cost of approximately \$11,020.00, of which \$1,200.00 was paid for by the Friends. Additionally, one bench and two plaques were installed.
5. Monument directory: A directory in book form has been compiled and is projected to be published in 2009. The directory will list the names and locations of over 2000 inscribed monument bricks, plaques and benches that have been installed. The soft cover book will include a series of selected short stories about local veterans, with pictures and little known facts about the monument. It will include an in-depth review of the politics and events leading up to and following the dedication and co-management of the monument.

Goals for 2009

1. Complete the monument's landscaping plan that was approved by the Board of Supervisor in 2006.
2. Assist the General Services department in writing a plan for management and maintenance of the monument's eleven flags and flag poles.
3. Install street signs in the surrounding community with directions to the monument.
4. Install Veterans Monument signs on US Highway 50 at exits that lead to the monument.
5. Install a sign with accent lighting on the monument's south/east outside tower wall facing Ray Lawyer Drive, identifying the structure as a veteran's monument as follows:

El Dorado County

Veterans Monument

6. Expand the Monument Plaza with pavers to accommodate seating for an additional 400 chairs.
7. Clear the view shed in front of the monument between Ray Lawyer Drive and the rear government center access road of shrubs and selected small trees. This has been approved by the last four General Services Director but never initiated.
8. Construct an 8-foot square, one-foot high portable stage that will allow the speaker to be seen during the scheduled events.

Repairs in 2008

1. As a result of a major storm last spring with documented 80 MPH wind gusts, major repairs and upgrades had to be made to all eleven flag poles in the form of cement collars when it was discovered that the American and US Marine Corps poles had been pushed out of alignment. Repairs were done by DG Granade Inc. Transaction information was not available to the Friends.
2. Recessed rock that was designed into the monument structure on both outer walls became loose on the outer wall and fell to the ground. Repairs were absorbed by DG Granade Inc. The inner wall facing the Monument Plaza is currently being assessed for the same issue.

Friends of the Veterans Monument Inc. 2008 Board of Directors

Richard W. Buchanan
Founder and President

Dennis Haas, Chairman

James Denmark
Treasurer/ Secretary

Lt Col. Tim Thompson
Chaplain, National Guard

Ken Schoniger

Mike Tilson

Salvatore Gigante

Lt. Col. Gregory AM Etzel AFC
USAF (Ret.)

Committee Members

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William Cathcart DSC USA (ret)

Dennis Haas

Glenn Gilbert Esq.

Lt. Andrew LePeilbert DSC USA (ret)

K.P. Smothers

Gary Hansen

Larry Boudreaux USN (ret)

Robert Primicerio

Gary Hansen

Andrew Woll Esq.

Salvatore Gigante

Lt. Col. Tim Thompson

Capt. Jack Babbitt USMC (ret)

Charles Mitchell

MGS Robert Maerdian USA (ret)

Capt. Norm Mahalich USMC (ret)

Richard W. Buchanan

Lt Col. Gregory AM Etzel AFC USAF

Mike Tilson

Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2008

