

# 2010

## Annual Report

**El Dorado County  
Veterans Monument**

Dedicated November 2006

Compiled by:

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



Flyover led by  
Capt. Jim Booth

# 2010 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.

## Dear Friend:

For the Friends of the Veterans Monument, Inc. (Friends), preserving the legacy of the Veterans Monument goes beyond the ceremonies, activities, and programs we conduct. Throughout 2010, we were vigilant in our efforts to preserve the high standards of the El Dorado County (EDC) Veterans Monument.

As most EDC veterans are aware, one of the duties of the Friends is to determine the eligibility of individuals seeking to be honored as one of those who "served the cause of freedom" in the EDC Veterans Monument that was initiated, designed and significantly funded by the Friends.

In 2006, a non-veteran and former member of the EDC Board of Supervisors (BOS) bypassed the approval process and had her name engraved on a bench alongside the distinguished veterans in her family. Accordingly, the Friends formed a committee that worked diligently to establish eligibility criteria to ensure that non-veterans will not occupy ground in the Monument that is exclusively reserved for veterans and that inscription content meets national standards. A detailed process was approved by EDC County Counsel (Counsel) in 2007.

Proof of eligibility of veteran status is verified through a veteran's DD214 or equivalent discharge certification. Approval of inscription content is to be accomplished through the resources of nation wide monument affiliations, state/national veteran's services and federally chartered veterans organizations. Additionally, under the 2007 guidelines, Friends may request that the EDC Veterans Service Officer (VSO), "convene a committee including, one representative from each of the federally chartered veterans organizations in EDC to hear and settle the issue." "The decision rendered by the committee may be appealed to the BOS."

In 2010 this process was challenged by Supervisor Ray Nutting on behalf of an individual, who in 2005 purchased a granite bench with engraved inscription for display at the Veterans Monument. The proposed bench inscription wasn't submitted until late 2009 and was at that time questioned by the Friends Recognition and Honoraria Committee because of its religious content and the lack of qualifying discharge certification for the individual whose name would appear next to the inscription.

Friends turned to EDC Counsel with the inscription issue. The Counsel's position was, "once a forum is opened up to allow messages to be expressed by the public, then the law makes it difficult to make future content-based distinctions between individual messages that would be allowed."



Friends committee then applied specific directions as called out in the approved 2007 guidelines, "any issue that arises in regard to inclusion, inscription, or location of honoraria in the monument" can be directed to the EDC VSO who upon request, "will convene a committee including, one representative from each of the federally chartered veterans organizations in EDC to hear and settle the issue." Friends made the request and the committee convened on 2-18-10 with three of the county's eight qualified veterans' representatives in attendance and the proposed inscription was approved. During the committee meeting Ray Nutting produced the individuals discharge certification which was discussed but omitted from the minutes taken by Ray Nutting's assistant.

The following Tuesday the issue of the inscription, which had already been concluded by the representatives of EDC's federally chartered veterans organizations under approved guidelines, appeared on the EDC BOS regular agenda item # 3 authored by Ray Nutting. What followed next was unusual: item # 3 was amended to the consent calendar and conceptually approved by a motion made by Supervisor Sweeney and seconded by Supervisor Knight, then unanimously approved for the second time in five days.

Supervisors Sweeney and Knight's efforts to avoid a public debate of this contentious topic failed. The inscription issue was allowed to be debated once again, first by a standing room only crowd of whom many had been motivated to attend by Ray Nutting's office, and then in the media, all to the embarrassment of the veterans and the many of the citizens of El Dorado County.

In the following four months, the issue of the individuals certification appeared each month on the EDC Veterans Affairs Commission agenda. And each month an effort was made by the Interim Director, EDC Department Veterans Affairs to downgrade the monument's eligibility standards by allowing the individuals name to appear on his bench even though his veteran's status eligibility had never been clarified and his discharge certification document was no longer available.

On August 13, 2010, the Veterans Affairs Commission defined and determined that the discharge certification submitted by Ray Nutting on behalf of the individual during the 2/18/10 Commanders' committee meeting did not meet the definition of the Veterans Service Organizations, the Friends or the Federal guidelines Title 38-101 for inclusion into the veterans monument and voted unanimously, "to uphold the rules as defined in the criteria, due to the lack of proof to review official documentation."

While local veterans and even their national organizations and affiliations are subject to local rule, this issue and its accompanying theatrics and cost should have never gone to the Board of Supervisors. It was best left to veterans helping veterans, consistent with the rule of law and policy long established by precedent across the nation.

In the future we hope that all members of the BOS will let the veterans' process take its normal and natural course with discretion and dignity.

With respect,

Richard W. Buchanan, NC, USMC  
Friends of the Veterans Monument, Inc

## **History of the El Dorado County Veterans Monument**

In 1997 Friends of the Veterans Monument was founded to build a Veterans Monument in honor of the dedication and sacrifices of the men and women of our Armed Forces who have served the cause of freedom.

In 2006, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors essentially matched the funds raised by the Friends and community, turning the effort to build a veterans' 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 with over 2500 in attendance. Former Governor of the State of California, Gray Davis, described the Monument as "the gateway to the Sierras" and "a significant contribution to American monuments."

### **Ceremonies**

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 Summary**

Over twelve hundred people packed the Veterans Monument Plaza for the 2010 Memorial Day ceremony. Once again the Monument's Sgt-At-Arm, Sgt. K.P. Smothers, former United States Marine, gave the call to order and present colors. The color guard was comprised of members of Civil Air Patrol Cadet Squadron # 85 and performed smartly. Additional members of the Cadet

Squadron acted as the guides for the estimated 120 Boy and Girl Scouts.

A flight of five World War 11 aircraft made two passes over the Veterans Monument plaza – the first in honor of those who served; the second in honor of those who lost their lives in the service to our country.

## AERIAL SALUTE



Photo by William A. Smith  
STAFF SGT. RAY SMOTHERS of Shinglo Springs, a Vietnam veteran, stands at attention during a flyover of F-6 airplanes as part of the Memorial Day tribute at the El Dorado County Veterans Monument at the El Dorado County Government Center. Keynote speaker for the event was retired Lt. Cmdr. Theodore M. Robinson, who commanded a PT boat during WW II's war in the Pacific.

The invocation and the benediction were both given by Monument Chaplain LtCol. Tim Thompson (Ret.), California Army National Guard. Master of Ceremonies was Marty Sanford, former USMC, who retired from the California National Guard.

Guest speaker was Commander Theodore M. Robinson, USN-Ret. Commander of PT-118, who gave an





eyewitness account of the rescue of John F. Kennedy after the sinking of PT-109 by a Japanese destroyer during WW11.

The El Dorado Community Foundation Director Bill Roby give the history of the Veterans Monument Scholarship Fund followed by the wreath laying, 21-gun salute, the benediction, and taps. The colors were retired thus ending the 2010 Memorial Day ceremony.

Lt. Commander Robinson, PT-118

### Veterans Day Summary

Attendance at the 2010 Veterans Day tribute was just over fifteen hundred, overflowing the Monument Plaza on a cool November morning - the largest gathering at the monument since its dedication in 2006.

Monument Sgt. At Arms, former USMC Sgt. K.P. Smothers, once again lead the way with the call to order and present colors and the Pledge of Allegiance.

El Dorado County Superior Court Judge, the Honorable Steven C. Bailey, former Sgt. USMC, emceed the event. Bailey welcomed the audience and reminded the attendees that freedom is never free.

Guest speaker was Ponderosa High School Principal Christopher Moore, former Staff Sergeant United States Army, who served in Operation Haiti and in Bosnia Herzegovina. Moore opened his speech by telling the crowd that the military, "transformed me as a man." In the Army Moore said his experiences shaped his values and perceptions for years to come.



Christopher Moore, former Staff Sergeant USA

The Foothills Women's Chorus sang the National Anthem as a flight of vintage

war birds roared overhead.

The second annual El Dorado County Veterans Monument Veteran of the Year Award was presented to the recipient. Monument Piper Del Hansen played a heartfelt rendition of Amazing Grace followed by taps ending the 2010 Veterans Day ceremony.

### **Third Annual El Dorado County Veterans Monument Veteran of the Year Award**

Beginning November 11, 2009, the Friends of the Veterans Monument, Inc. annually recognizes one El Dorado County veteran on Veterans Day as the El Dorado County Veterans Monument Veteran of the Year.

The award recognizes a veteran who has compiled a record of exemplary service as a military service member, in veterans' issues, and as a citizen of El Dorado County. The award is part of the Friends of the Veterans Monument, Inc., ongoing effort and commitment to honor those who have served the cause of freedom.

Recipient of the second annual El Dorado County Veterans Monument Veteran of the Year Award was Lt. Raymond L. "Larry" Hyder who served in the 35<sup>th</sup> Reg., 25<sup>th</sup> Div. Korea, 1951-1953. A longtime veterans' supporter, Larry has been active in veterans' issues and for the last 40 years has sent holiday greetings and Christmas trees from his tree farm to troops from Vietnam to Afghanistan.



Veteran of the Year Lt. Raymond L. "Larry" Hyder

### **Education**

In cooperation with the Legion of Valor of the USA and the Joe Foss Institute, two of the leading national organizations promoting Patriotism, Integrity, Public Service and an Appreciation of America's Freedom to our nations' youth, the Friends of the Veterans Monument Inc. Education Committee continues to develop balanced educational materials, incorporating the lessons of heroism



and selflessness to provide students with a greater sense of responsibility, leadership, citizenship and patriotism.

Additionally, although in 2008 the Education Committee took important steps to bring us closer to the next phase of remembrance with the Veterans Monument Center, the Center has been delayed until 2013 due to current economic challenges. The center will be a covered educational facility built to bring context to the monument for its younger visitors and to put faces to the nearly 3000 inscribed bricks, plaques and benches at the monument.

### **Veterans Monument Scholarship Fund**

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

Scholarship Committee member Andrew Wall Esq. had the privilege of presenting two \$2,500.00 scholarships to the two most deserving high school graduates for use in their continuing education: Tabitha Fraser, Union Mine High School, and Clifford Abbott, from El Dorado High School.

Tabitha's family felt a deep appreciation for the award. Tabitha's father, recently deceased, who served in the U.S. Army in the 1970's, would have been celebrating his 54<sup>th</sup> birthday. Tabitha will be enrolling in UC Santa Cruz and majoring in Environmental Biology this fall.

Clifford was not only a scholarship recipient but also played an important role in the ceremony as he was the honorary bugler, playing taps in honor of those who have given their lives for our freedoms. Clifford's chosen field of study is English with a focus on Political Science.

### **Monument Preservation**

Friends of the Veterans Monument, Inc. authored the county-adopted Veterans Monument "Criteria for Military Honoraria and Civilian Recognition" and have taken an active role in reviewing all applications submitted for engraved bricks,

plaques and benches for correctness, authenticity and to ensure exclusive honoring of in-service contributions of those who served...

Committees exist to provide monument volunteers with necessary supplies and equipment to supplement the County Buildings and Grounds maintenance and landscaping efforts.

Shortly after the 2009 Veterans Day ceremony, the Friends were approached by a prominent seniors group and individuals from our community about the lack of seating at the Veterans Monument. The monument plaza can only accommodate about 460 chairs, which are transported by the Friends and set up by our local Boy Scouts troops. With attendance soaring the remaining attendees are forced to stand in the landscaping, which has resulted in a number of incidences of tripping, falling and damage to the already inadequate and incomplete landscaping.

The monument plaza as originally designed and approved by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) included twice the amount of seating space than is currently available.

#### **Goals completed in 2010**

1. Temporary new seating for 150 was installed for Memorial and Veterans Day ceremonies in the form of portable aluminum bleachers.
2. Our goal to double the number of Boy and Girl Scouts attending from sixty to one hundred twenty was achieved.
3. Installation of bricks, plaques: Forty eight new bricks honoring veterans and active duty service members were installed in 2010. Available space for 2011 has dwindled to less than forty. Buildings and Grounds have been notified of the need for additional space to mount engraved bricks.
4. The portable stage was replaced.
5. A living Veterans Monument Christmas tree was donated and planted.

#### **Goals for 2011**

1. Complete the monument's landscaping plan that was approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2006.
2. Install street signs in the surrounding community with directions to the monument.
3. Install two Veterans Monument signs on US Highway 50 at exits that lead to the monument.

4. 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**

5. Design additional seating for the Monument Plaza.
6. Clear the view shed in front of the monument between Ray Lawyer Drive and Highway #50 and the rear government center access road of volunteer shrubs and selected small trees. This has been approved by the eight General Services directors.
7. Monument directory: A directory in book form that was started in 2008 is still being compiled. The soft cover book will include a series of selected short stories with pictures and little known facts about the monument. It will include a review of the events leading up to and following the dedication, and co-management of the monument.

#### **Friends of the Veterans Monument, Inc. 2010 Board of Directors/Corporate Council**

Richard W. Buchanan NC  
James Denmark USAF  
LtCol. Tim Thompson USA (Ret)

Ken Schoniger USN  
William Cathcart DSC USA (Ret)  
Lt.Col. Gregory AM Etzel AFC USAF  
(Ret)  
Gary Campbell USAF

#### **Andrew LePeilbet DSC USA Committee Members**

Jim Cahill USA  
William Cathcart DSC USA (ret)  
Gary Campbell USAF  
Glenn Gilbert Esq.  
Lt. Andrew LePeilbet DSC USA (ret)  
K.P. Smothers USMC  
Gary Hansen USAF- Flags  
Jim Booth - Flight Leader  
Chuck Wahl - Pilot

Andrew Woll Esq. USMC  
Mike Tilson, USA  
Lt. Col. Tim Thompson USANG (Ret)  
Capt. Jack Babbitt USMC (Ret)  
General LePeilbet USANG  
Del Hanson - Monument Piper  
Capt. Norm Mahalich USMC (Ret)  
Richard W. Buchanan NC USMC  
Frank Yost - Sound System



Veterans Rifle Team

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

First Sgt. Marty Sanford USAR (Ret)

Lt. Col. Dusty Deryck USA (Ret).

Aaron Yanagihara - Cival Air Patrol

John Riley USN

Adam Stupek USMC

Gary McMillan – Sound System

Salvatore Gigante USA

Clifford Abbott - Bugler

Pat Egan - Boy Scouts

Gold Star Mothers

#### **Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2010**

The Friends Fund revenues were \$9,944.30 for the year ending December 31, 2010. The Fund incurred maintenance expenses, including the addition of new engraved bricks, landscaping materials, plants and other program related expenses of \$8,672.21.