

Public Comment
New Business Item A.
R. Bradshaw

Remarks For the July 14, 2022 Veterans Affairs Commission

I am opposed to moving this item forward to the Board of Supervisors.

The Veterans Alliance proposal was not done publicly. Many of us only heard and actually got to read about it at the July 6, 2022 discussion at the Veterans Building. There was no published proposal as there was for the original criteria. There have been no published minutes from that July 6th meeting even though we provided emails. No other proposals were allowed to be presented. Now the Veterans Alliance proposal is being rushed through without public comments or changes incorporated. In my discussions with other veterans, it does not have the support of the veterans community at large, only those on the Veterans Alliance. This appears to be a power grab by that organization whose only authorized role, as set out in County Ordinance 4743 is to host the Veterans Day and Memorial Day events. The Alliance proposal attempts to give them rights that were never intended for that organization.

The Veterans Alliance proposal departs significantly from the original intent of the Veterans Monument and instead allows Veterans Alliance the sole authority over the Monument. The Veterans Affairs Commission and Veterans Alliance will not have any oversight on their activities. Indeed John Poiriroo is the chair of the VAC and has served on the Veterans Alliance Board since its inception. There is a clear conflict of oversight between the two organizations. When and where were the meetings held to create the Veterans Alliance proposal?

Any and all Changes or proposals should have been available to the public via the county's website and not at the last minute as done at the July 6th meeting. This speaks to the lack of oversight of the Veterans Alliance.

I move the Veterans Alliance proposal to be tabled until such time that proper oversight can be provided and all modifications to the existing policy are thoroughly vetted by the veterans community and that all meeting minutes on these discussions are made public.

Bob Bradshaw

July 6, 2022

From: Joseph Connolly, M.A., QMCS, USCG (Ret.)

To: El Dorado County Board of Supervisors

Copy: El Dorado County Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Daniel Del Monte, Director, Health & Human Services

Mr. Richard Todd, Veterans Services Program Manager

Mr. Richard Buchanan, Founder, El Dorado County Veterans Monument

El Dorado County Veterans Alliance Board

Subj: Proposed Changes to El Dorado County Veterans Monument Honoraria

Dear Supervisors:

On July 27, 2021 it was my privilege to represent Mr. Richard Buchanan in his appeal of a bronze plaque that did not meet the County's established criteria for individual bronze plaques. The subject of the proposed plaque did not have the requisite criteria—either the Medal of Honor or a military service cross—to qualify for that distinctive honor.

Mr. Buchanan, a recipient of the Navy Cross—our nation's second highest medal for valor—brought that matter to the attention of the Veteran's Alliance but they would not recognize the county's 2007 criteria and continued to oppose the appeal.

Mr. Buchanan proposed a comprehensive solution to you on July 27, 2021. You then directed the Health and Human Services Department's Director to convene a meeting between Mr. Buchanan's representatives, the Veteran's Alliance, and possibly the Veteran Affairs Commission to remedy the issues brought forth by the appeal.

Your Board direction was “do what you can based upon the veteran's desires with this, because **I don't think the Board wants to get out in front trying to make changes. It really needs to come from our veterans community**, and I'm talking about the at large veterans community.” (emphasis added.)

The attached proposal is my personal recommendation to systemically improve the monument's honoraria processes so that your goal is achieved. I respectfully submit it in service to the El Dorado County Veterans Monument and its founder's vision.

Sincerely,

s/Joseph Connolly

PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE EL DORADO COUNTY VETERANS MEMORIAL HONORARIA PROCESSES AND ENABLE THE RECOGNITION OF VALOR

INTRODUCTION

This proposal is my personal recommendation to address the systemic issues I observed as a representative for Mr. Buchanan in his 2021 appeal of a bronze plaque's placement at the El Dorado County Veterans Monument ("Monument"), and my military experience after serving in the United States Coast Guard for 25 years.

The proposal recommends three main areas of change: (1) clarify the County's 2007 honoraria criteria, through the submission of proposed revisions; (2) remove all honoraria decisions from the Veteran's Alliance and administratively move them to the County's veteran services office; and (3) propose designs for a new "Valor Plaza" addition to the monument, for the recognition of those veterans distinguished by awards of valor bestowed by the United States.

These changes are proposed to complete the monument's original design and purpose, which was to distinctly recognize acts of valor. The current design does not have enough space to sufficiently recognize those military awards as Mr. Buchanan intended.

If enacted by the Board, these proposals would also eliminate the *subjective* decisions that led to the 2021 appeal, and the Board's direction to remedy those issues.

The proposed changes would clarify and require adherence to the *objective* criteria established by the United States in the awarding of military medals for valor. Those esteemed honoraria could then be properly displayed without competition for the monument's currently limited resources.

I.

2007 CRITERIA FOR MILITARY HONORARIA

In 2007, veterans including Mr. Ken Schoniger, who also represented Mr. Buchanan in his appeal, were instrumental in drafting honoraria criteria for the monument, so as to prevent the issues that were raised in the 2021 appeal.¹

¹ See "El Dorado County Veterans Monument Criteria for Military Honoraria and Civilian Recognition," dated September 11, 2007 ("Criteria").

The criteria established three forms of honoraria at the monument: (1) engraved bricks; (2) benches (engraved granite benches are the norm); and (3) “Special Bronze Plaques honoring events, units, or heroes.”²

Approved Forms of Military Honoraria

- ★ Engraved bricks or markers
- ★ Engraved benches
- ★ Bronze plaques for military events
- ★ Bronze plaques for military units
- ★ Bronze plaques for recipients of the Medal of Honor, or military service cross medal






The criteria “for plaques that honor heroes” listed three bullet points describing eligibility, including that “[h]eroes are defined as recipients of the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, or any person who, while serving with the military, distinguishes himself by extraordinary heroism.”

The remaining two bullet points were restatements of existing military criteria for the *same standard*.

In other words, for any individual to be honored at the monument by a bronze plaque, as of **September 11, 2007**, they *must* have been awarded either the Medal of Honor or a military service cross. The criteria is clear: “For plaques that honor heroes, the honoree *must meet* the following conditions.”³ (emphasis added.)

² See *Id.*, page 2, “Types of Military Honoraria.”

³ *Ibid.*

CONFLATION OF “HERO” v. MILITARY STANDARDS OF “HEROISM”

Throughout the appeal, the Veteran’s Alliance conflated the *subjective value* of “heroes” versus the *objective standard* of “heroism,” as defined by the United States for individual military medals. The Alliance repeatedly cited the honoree as a “hero” and compared them to civilians recognized for saving others; e.g.,

“We all remember the hero of the Hudson, Captain Sully Sullenberger, who saved 155 lives. Then there’s the German industrialist Oskar Schlinder, who saved 1,200 lives. Both are remembered rightly as heroes, and so should Captain Jacobs, who saved 32,000 souls. In the closing moments of an ugly war that tore our Country apart, there was one bright shining moment, where human decency mattered more than anything else. It would not have happened without an extraordinary hero. Captain Paul Jacobs was that hero. In those moments, in those days, by his actions, leadership, and courage, he earned the right for a plaque honoring what he did to be mounted on his County’s honor wall.”⁴

In the Alliance’s subjective view, the honoree was entitled to be recognized by an individual bronze plaque at the monument. However, the Alliance never acknowledged the honoree did *not meet* the objective, and *mandatory*, criteria established by the County in 2007. That was because the honoree was not awarded a service cross medal or the Medal of Honor by the United States.

According to online records, the honoree was most likely recognized by the United States for a *humanitarian* mission of saving “32,000 souls,” by the awarding of the Humanitarian Service Medal.⁵ The honoree’s alma mater lists the awarding of four Humanitarian Service Medals among a list of their military awards.⁶

The Humanitarian Service Medal was established by executive order on January 19, 1977, and was retroactive to April 1, 1975. It is an individual service medal and “may be awarded to any member of the United States military ... who distinguishes himself or herself by meritorious participation in specified military acts or operations of a humanitarian nature.” The medal was created as “a precedent to recognize military

⁴ See page 12, lines 12-19, “Transcript of Committee of Federally Chartered Veterans Organizations, dated June 21, 2021..

⁵ See e.g., <http://www.navsource.org/archives/06/06021087.htm>, showing the Humanitarian Service Medal as an award to USS Kirk.

⁶ See <https://mainemaritime.edu/alumni/eight-bells/capt-paul-h-jacobs-58/>.

participation in major humanitarian actions” and its criteria included “evacuation of non-combatants from a hostile area, or humanitarian support to refugees.”⁷

Furthermore, according to the Naval History and Heritage Command, headed by the Director of Naval History, the honoree’s naval vessel was awarded “the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for her service off Vietnam.”⁸ That medal is “authorized for three categories of operations: [1] U.S. military operations; [2] U.S. military operations in direct support of the United Nations; and [3] U.S. operations of assistance for friendly foreign nations.”⁹

A. VALOR AWARDS CRITERIA

The decision to adopt an exceptionally high level of eligibility for the monument’s honor of an individual bronze plaque was twofold.

First, it recognized what the Department of Defense describes as “the most esteemed awards” “[f]or servicemembers who carry out the bravest and most selfless acts in combat.” The DOD recognizes those awards as the Medal of Honor, the service crosses, and the Silver Star.¹⁰

The service crosses are the second highest U.S. military award for acts of “extraordinary heroism” in combat with an armed enemy force, above the criteria for all other U.S. combat decorations, but which do not meet the criteria for the Medal of Honor.

There are four service crosses, equivalent to the others by virtue of their common standard of “extraordinary heroism.” They are the Distinguished Service Cross (Army), Navy Cross (Navy and Marine Corps), Air Force Cross (Air Force and Space Force), and the Coast Guard Cross (Coast Guard).¹¹

⁷ See e.g., https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanitarian_Service_Medal.

⁸ See <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/k/kirk-de-ff-1087.html>.

⁹ See e.g., https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_Forces_Expeditionary_Medal.

¹⁰ See e.g., <https://www.defense.gov/Multimedia/Experience/honors-for-valor/>.

¹¹ See e.g., “Military Awards for Valor-Top 3” at <https://valor.defense.gov/Description-of-Awards/>; see also “Coast Guard Military Medals and Awards Manual,” pages 2-2, 2-3, at https://media.defense.gov/2017/Mar/29/2001723556/-1/-1/0/CIM_1650_25E.PDF.



Service Cross Medals, as commemorated by U.S. Postal Service¹²

The Medal of Honor “is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress, and is conferred only upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. ... There are three distinct versions (one for the Army, one for the Air Force, and one for the Navy, the Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard).”



The monument’s founder, Mr. Buchanan, is a recipient of the **Navy Cross** for acts of extraordinary heroism while serving as a Marine Corps automatic rifleman, when he “served two tours in Vietnam. In 1965 ... he participated in the first major Marine Corps amphibious assault since Korea, and in 1968 was awarded the Navy Cross for his action against the North Vietnamese Army during the battle of Le Bac (1), where Buchanan upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Services. He is a life member of the Disabled American Veterans, and served as National Commander 2004-2005 of the Legion of Valor of the United States Of America, [an organization] organized and chartered by the U.S. Congress [on] April 23, 1890.”¹³

¹² See e.g., https://about.usps.com/news/national-releases/2016/pr16_041.htm.

¹³ See “Monument Founders” at <https://www.edcgov.us/Government/Veterans/>

It is notable that two other monument founders, Mr. William Cathcart and Mr. Gregory Etzel, are also recipients of service cross medals. “Through his utter fearlessness and completely selfless devotion to his men and to his duty,” [Master] Sergeant Cathcart was awarded the **Distinguished Service Cross** for saving the lives of six wounded men in Korea, despite being “in the face of the heavy enemy fire.”

Lieutenant Colonel Etzel was awarded the **Air Force Cross** for rescuing a downed pilot in “one of the most heavily defended areas of North Vietnam” over a two day search and recovery where his helicopter was damaged each time. He “flew through intense automatic fire, dodged deadly missiles, and evaded attacking MIGs in search of the downed pilot.” Col. Etzel was recognized for his “extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness in the face of hostile forces.”¹⁴

Second, the monument’s original design incurred unintentional space limitations to display these esteemed honors to their deserving recipients with the significance they deserve.

A number of plaques had been placed on the main display wall in the monument’s plaza, from the monument’s November 11, 2006 dedication until the monument criteria went into effect on September 11, 2007. These plaques were representative honoraria placed by the generous benefactors that made the monument’s design a **million dollar reality**.¹⁵

With a limited display area already used in service to the monument, Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Schoniger, among others, recognized the immediate need to establish criteria that would ensure recognition of known valor honorees. They looked ahead and did their best to preserve the monument’s original intentions with the resources they had.

Mr. Schoniger and County officials worked together to establish the 2007 criteria, with the knowledge it was to help preserve sufficient space to recognize future valor honorees. Those criteria have remained in effect since then and were the mandatory standard the Alliance was bound to follow as it sought to display an individual bronze plaque at the monument.

[Monument/Pages/founders.aspx](#). See Buchanan’s Navy Cross citation at https://legionofvalor.org/lov_citation/richard-w-buchanan/.

¹⁴ See Cathcart’s Distinguished Service Cross citation at https://legionofvalor.org/lov_citation/william-d-cathcart/; see Etzel’s Air Force Cross citation at https://legionofvalor.org/lov_citation/gregory-am-etzel/.

¹⁵ See e.g., <https://www.edcgov.us/Government/Veterans/Monument/pages/Dedication.aspx>.

B.
PROPOSED CHANGES TO HONORARIA CRITERIA

The criteria’s language and processes require clarification and some updating to current standards; e.g., the addition of the Coast Guard Cross.

For several reasons, I also propose that any decision making authority regarding honoraria be removed from the Veteran’s Alliance–or any organization outside the County’s direct authority–and placed instead with the Veteran Services office and County officials.

The criteria for receiving a personalized bronze plaque at the monument is clear: it requires that the proposed honoree must have been awarded either the Medal of Honor or a service cross medal. That is an administrative function that can be carried out, without dispute, by a clerk and verified by an authorized official. It is a “yes or no” decision–either the proposed honoree meets the criteria, or they do not.

In the case of the 2021 appeal, the honoree did *not meet* the criteria, and the matter was elevated through an authorized appeal process to the Board of Supervisors. The appeal process required that the “Veteran Services Officer” “convene a committee including one representative commander from each of the federally chartered veterans organization[s] in El Dorado County to hear and settle the issue.”

The Veteran Services Officer had no other authority regarding honoraria, including to review applications to ensure they met mandatory criteria. In the 2021 appeal, there was no record of an application submitted to the Veteran Services Officer by the Veteran’s Alliance.¹⁶ Had there been a required application, with oversight authority, the appeal matters could potentially have been resolved by the Veteran Services Officer at that time.

The Veteran’s Alliance alleged they had a County contract giving them the sole authority for “reviewing and approving the placement of memorials at the El Dorado County Veterans Monument,” stating, “We are the only individual organization assigned this responsibility.”¹⁷ Notably, County Ordinance Code 9.54 does not describe the monument’s military honoraria, or authority over those honoraria.

¹⁶ See Criteria, pages 1-2, regarding eligibility for military honoraria, and raising honoraria issues.

¹⁷ See page 9, lines 15-25, “Transcript of Committee of Federally Chartered Veterans Organizations, dated June 21, 2021.

The Veteran's Alliance was not aware of the 2007 honoraria criteria, but when it was brought to their attention by Mr. Buchanan the Alliance ignored it based on their own subjective beliefs. "Even though we did not know the criteria, after reviewing it, we believed the placement of the plaque honoring Captain Jacobs remains justified."¹⁸

Neither the Veteran's Alliance, nor the commanders of the federally chartered veterans organizations, are County bodies subject to standards such as the Brown Act or the California Public Records Act. In each case, they acted subjectively and in direct contravention of a County policy that established mandatory criteria.¹⁹

Therefore, the County should clarify its existing policy and place administrative control over all determinations for military honoraria with the Veteran Services office, which would be held to public standards and accountability through transparent processes.

A revised honoraria policy is attached hereto as **Exhibit 1**. It takes into account a proposed valor plaza, as explained in the following section.

II. PROPOSED VALOR PLAZA

On July 27, 2021 Mr. Buchanan submitted a proposal for an additional valor plaza to the Board, which was known to the HHSA Director when he was given direction by the Board.²⁰

In short, Mr. Buchanan proposed two changes to the monument that would accommodate the Veteran's Alliance proposed plaque, *and* fulfill the monument's original intent to properly recognize valor honorees.

¹⁸ *Id.*, page 10, lines 22-23.

¹⁹ See e.g., committee member's remarks, and appellant's responses at *Id.*, page 15, line 8 to page 22, line 26.

²⁰ See e.g., pages 7-9, "Transcript of Supervisor's Remarks."

A.
**DESIGNATE THE MONUMENT’S MAIN WALL FOR PLAQUES
HONORING MILITARY UNITS AND EVENTS**

First, the main wall of the existing monument would become the designated site for all plaques recognizing military units and events, which are authorized under the existing criteria. Mr. Buchanan suggested that the Alliance’s proposed plaque would be justified under that category by recognizing the naval vessel highlighted by the Alliance, and its military contributions under the leadership of its captain.

**Proposal 1 - Install Jacobs
Plaque on Plaza Wall**

- ★ Install Jacobs plaque as intended by the Veterans Alliance
- ★ Utilize remaining space for military units or events plaques
- ★ Eliminates unintended competition for existing space



Left hand plaque space Right hand plaque space

The benefit of that change would be to keep the existing plaques in place without any structural changes to the monument—as in removing or relocating installed plaques—and to maintain recognition of the military units and events selected by the monument’s benefactors. **There would not be a monument today without their efforts and support.**

I recommend the Board adopt this change as the most suitable way to minimize change to the monument. There would be no physical disruption to the monument whatsoever; it would merely require a change in policy to designate that area for a specific purpose. The monument’s beauty and design would be maintained, as would the military legacy that the monument’s benefactors and founders desired.

To complete this proposal, I recommend each panel of the existing wall be designated with section markers, and that each plaque be documented as to its source and placement; e.g., “Benefactor’s Honoraria Plaque. Installed September, 2006.”

B.

ADD A “VALOR PLAZA” FOR RECOGNITION OF VALOROUS AWARDS

Mr. Buchanan’s proposed “Valor Plaza” recommended that an existing concrete pad be repurposed for the installation of a granite obelisk and base, upon which individual bronze plaques would be installed for eligible valor honorees; i.e., those veterans who had been awarded either the Medal of Honor or a military service cross medal.

Proposal 2 - Create New Valor Plaza

- ★ Install obelisk and base to display individual bronze plaques
- ★ Eliminates competition for plaza wall space
- ★ Fulfills original design intent of monument
- ★ Allows long overdue recognition of eligible veterans
- ★ Preserves space for future honorees



I propose a similar idea to achieve the same outcomes as shown above, but with a more expansive view of valor; that is, to include the Silver Star Medal and the Bronze Star Medal, when awarded “for acts of valor in combat.”

The Silver Star Medal is our nation’s third-highest military decoration for valor in combat and is awarded “for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States.”²¹

²¹ See e.g., https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silver_Star; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bronze_Star_Medal.

I recommend this expansive view of valor based on my personal experience representing Mr. Buchanan during the 2021 appeal. That afforded me a unique opportunity to observe and hear his views and those of Mr. Schoniger, along with the County officials who managed the committee’s hearing, all commanders of the federally chartered veterans organizations, the Veteran’s Alliance, and the Board of Supervisors.

Among those diverse perspectives of the appeal’s participants was a desire to recognize those they felt were indisputably “heroes.” They seemed to agree on a general idea of distinguishing “heroes,” but without understanding of what the criteria *were or should be*. There was also a recognition by one commander that you can’t recognize everybody, and to do so would be an impossibility. He said, for example, “We should abide by the rules ... we can’t lower the rules so if we put down for every Purple Heart or everything else, that wall would be filled up in nothing flat. We have a lot of heroes in El Dorado County.”

The proposal would accomplish all viewpoints encompassing “heroes” and “heroism,” as objectively defined by acts of valor; i.e., heroism in combat. It would expand the recognition of those acts by recognizing all military awards related to valor—the Medal of Honor, all service crosses, the Silver Star, and the Bronze Star with a valor designation. The recognition of more veterans who meet the *eligibility standards for valor as established by the United States* would be welcome, for as one veterans organization commander said, “We have a lot of heroes in El Dorado County,” of which he is rightfully proud. **The proposal will recognize more “valorous” acts by eligible honorees.**

The monument’s other forms of honoraria already recognize a subjective view of “heroes.” For example, each engraved brick is ultimately a story of someone’s hero, such as family members of a veteran. To be eligible for *any* honoraria at the monument, there is also a general requirement that the honoree’s service must have been *honorable*.²²

The details of the proposed valor plaza are attached hereto as **Exhibit 2**. They are supported by the revised honoraria criteria in **Exhibit 1**, which form the substance of this proposal to fulfill the founder’s original intent for the monument to recognize valor alongside all honorable military service.

²² See, e.g., page 1 of Criteria, “Eligibility for Recognition through Military Honoraria.”

EXHIBIT 1
PROPOSED REVISIONS TO HONORARIA CRITERIA

A.
SUMMARY OF POLICY CHANGE

The proposed policy document below incorporates the current criteria for “military honoraria and civilian recognition” at the monument, with revisions and updates that are meant to support the proposed changes and additions to the monument.

In short, the authority and responsibility for honoraria determinations would be shifted to the County, in alignment with the facts that the monument is located on County property, is subject to County ordinance 9.54, and is named the “El Dorado County Veterans Monument.” In practice, the monument is maintained and supported by County staff, with support from veterans.

The proposed changes would not affect the existing County ordinance. A designated veterans organization may continue to act as a host for two authorized programs on Memorial Day and Veterans Day, but honoraria administration and oversight would properly shift to the appropriate County staff and veteran affairs commission for public accountability and transparency.

In the future, if policy changes need to be made, they would be done so by public notice, with public comment and consideration by the appropriate decision-makers, up to and including the Board of Supervisors.

B.
PROPOSED MONUMENT HONORARIA POLICY

TITLE:

The title of this policy is “El Dorado County Veterans Monument Criteria for Honoraria.”

PURPOSE:

The El Dorado County Veterans Monument (“Monument”) is intended to honor the in-service accomplishments of eligible veterans who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. This policy defines eligibility for potential honorees and the forms of honoraria at the monument.

ELIGIBILITY:

To be eligible for honoraria at the monument, a potential honoree must be a current or past resident of El Dorado County, who served in the Armed Forces of the United States and received an honorable discharge. The following discharges are disqualifying for eligibility: (1) Other than Honorable; (2) Bad Conduct; (3) Dishonorable; (4) Entry-Level Separation.

INDIVIDUAL HONORARIA:

The monument includes three forms of individual honoraria for eligible honorees: (1) engraved bricks; (2) engraved benches; (3) specified honoraria for recipients of valor awards.

1. **Engraved Bricks:** Any eligible honoree may be recognized by an engraved 4 x 8 inch sized brick, containing up to three lines of text, with a maximum of 14 characters per line.



2. **Engraved benches:** Any eligible honoree may be recognized by an engraved granite bench of approved design. The design may include the honorees name, branch of service(s), military rank or rating, and military units the honoree served in.



Engraved bench in honor of SSgt Sky Mote, USMC

3. **Specified Honoraria for Valor Award Recipients:** Eligible honorees who have been awarded the Medal of Honor, a service cross medal (either the Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, or Coast Guard Cross), Silver Star Medal, or Bronze Star Medal with “valor” designation are also eligible for specified honoraria on the monument’s Valor Plaza.

a. **Medal of Honor or Service Cross:** An eligible honoree who has been awarded either the Medal of Honor or a military service cross may be recognized by an individualized bronze plaque that includes the honoree's image in uniform, alongside the text of the honoree's medal citation. In lieu of an individual's image, the plaque may include an image of the honoree's military medal.

	<p>The President of the United States of America, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved July 9, 1918, takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Master Sergeant William D. Cathcart, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy of the United Nations while serving with Company L, 224th Infantry Regiment, 40th Infantry Division. Master Sergeant Cathcart distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action against enemy aggressor forces in the vicinity of Chungbangp'yong, Korea, on 18 February 1952. On the morning of 18 February 1952, the company of which Sergeant Cathcart was a member was engaged in an attack against a large hostile force occupying a strategic and well-fortified hill. In the ensuing action, Sergeant Cathcart observed that the leader of the assaulting platoon had been killed and the friendly troops had been pinned down by the intense enemy fire. Without hesitation, he rushed to the men, rallied them, and personally led them toward the crest of the hill only to be met by such a tremendous volume of fire that a withdrawal was necessary to save the friendly force from annihilation. Upon reaching the base of the slope, Sergeant Cathcart realized that several wounded were still on the fireswept hill. Without regard for his personal safety, he traveled back up the slope directly in the face of the heavy enemy fire to evacuate his stricken comrades. Six times, Sergeant Cathcart made his way almost to the edge of the enemy bunkers, and six times, he returned with a wounded man. Through his utter fearlessness and completely selfless devotion to his men and his duty, Sergeant Cathcart saved the lives of several of his comrades at great risk to his own. The extraordinary heroism display by Sergeant Cathcart on this occasion reflects the greatest credit on himself and is in keeping with the most esteemed traditions of the military service.</p>
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Option 1: Citation with honoree's image in uniform

	<p>The President of the United States of America, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved July 9, 1918, takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Master Sergeant William D. Cathcart, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy of the United Nations while serving with Company L, 224th Infantry Regiment, 40th Infantry Division. Master Sergeant Cathcart distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action against enemy aggressor forces in the vicinity of Chungbangp'yong, Korea, on 18 February 1952. On the morning of 18 February 1952, the company of which Sergeant Cathcart was a member was engaged in an attack against a large hostile force occupying a strategic and well-fortified hill. In the ensuing action, Sergeant Cathcart observed that the leader of the assaulting platoon had been killed and the friendly troops had been pinned down by the intense enemy fire. Without hesitation, he rushed to the men, rallied them, and personally led them toward the crest of the hill only to be met by such a tremendous volume of fire that a withdrawal was necessary to save the friendly force from annihilation. Upon reaching the base of the slope, Sergeant Cathcart realized that several wounded were still on the fireswept hill. Without regard for his personal safety, he traveled back up the slope directly in the face of the heavy enemy fire to evacuate his stricken comrades. Six times, Sergeant Cathcart made his way almost to the edge of the enemy bunkers, and six times, he returned with a wounded man. Through his utter fearlessness and completely selfless devotion to his men and his duty, Sergeant Cathcart saved the lives of several of his comrades at great risk to his own. The extraordinary heroism displayed by Sergeant Cathcart on this occasion reflects the greatest credit on himself and is in keeping with the most esteemed traditions of the military service.</p>
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Option 2: Citation with image of honoree's valor medal

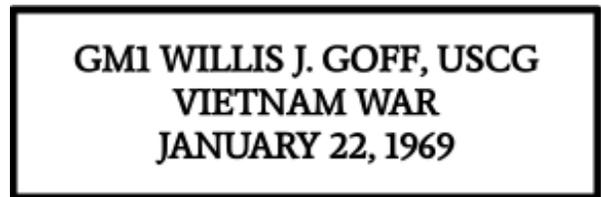
b. **Silver Star, or Bronze Star with valor designation.** An eligible honoree who has been awarded either the Silver Star, or Bronze star with valor designation, may be recognized by an individualized bronze plaque that includes the honoree’s rank or rating, name, and branch of service; the name of the applicable military engagement; and the date of valor.

A separate plaque is authorized for each award given to an eligible honoree; e.g., two Silver Stars, one Silver Star and one Bronze Star with valor designation, or two Bronze Stars—each with valor designation.

The plaque shall be in the style used by the National Cemetery Administration for bronze niche markers, and the text area shall be approximately 1.5 x 4 inches in size.



Bronze Niche Marker example
Nat'l Cemetery Administration



Example valor plaque for
Silver Star and Bronze Star (V) awards

MILITARY UNIT OR EVENTS HONORARIA:

The monument includes two forms of honoraria for military unit(s) or military events:

(1) engraved benches; (2) bronze plaques.

The unit or event to be recognized should conform to the same standards for individual eligibility; i.e., honorable service to the United States.

1. **Engraved Benches:** Any military unit or military event of the Armed Forces of the United States may be recognized by an engraved granite bench of approved design.

2. **Bronze Plaque:** Any military unit or military event of the Armed Forces of the United States may be recognized by a bronze plaque of approved design, subject to space limitations. The location for such plaques is restricted to the monument’s main plaza wall.

APPLICATION AND APPROVAL:

All applications for honoraria shall be submitted to the El Dorado County Veterans Service Office (“Office”) for review and approval. The office shall maintain forms online and in person for the submission of applications.

1. Each application shall include original or certified copies of eligibility for honoraria.

2. **Individual Honoraria:** Any person may submit an application to request individual honoraria for eligible honorees. Approval is subject to verification of eligibility by the office. Engraved benches are subject to additional design approval by the office.

3. **Military Unit(s) or Event Honoraria:** Any eligible veteran who may be honored at the monument may submit an application to request honoraria for military unit(s) or events. Engraved benches are subject to additional design approval by the office.

Approval for bronze plaques is subject to review and approval by the veterans affairs commission (“Commission”), owing to the monument’s space limitations and standards. Any request for bronze plaque honoraria should be limited and in the interests of a link to El Dorado County.

The commission shall place any bronze plaque request on its public calendar and receive any public comment at that time, either in person or in writing. Following public comment the commission shall vote on a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors (“Board.”). If the vote is unanimous, the commission shall recommend in writing that the matter be placed on the Board’s consent calendar. If the vote is not unanimous, the commission shall explain why, in writing to the Board, and recommend the matter be placed on the Board’s agenda.

COSTS AND ALLOCATION OF PROCEEDS:

The office shall maintain current costs for honoraria online and in person.

The costs shall reflect the desired goal of the monument to support local scholarships for graduating high school students. The office shall timely forward all proceeds to the _____ Foundation for the scholarship fund.

MODIFICATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE MONUMENT:

The County shall be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the monument, including installation of any honoraria.

As of the implementation date of this policy, contingent on the approval of a proposed Valor Plaza, the Board does not expect to approve any further changes to the monument. If and when the County should consider any changes to the monument, the Board shall be briefed by the appropriate County staff why such changes are needed. If the Board agrees, it shall direct the appropriate staff to solicit proposals for public consideration and comment, to which the staff shall submit its recommendations to the Board, who will consider the matter on its agenda.

EXHIBIT 2
VALOR PLAZA DESIGN PROPOSAL

This proposal recommends the addition of a “Valor Plaza” to create sufficient resources for the fulfillment of the monument’s original intent to recognize acts of valor.

A.
LOCATION, SIZE AND GENERAL APPEARANCE

The proposal would enlarge the existing concrete pad envisioned for use by Mr. Buchanan, by extending the pad’s length towards the monument’s main entrance. Rather than a single obelisk for a limited number of individual bronze plaques, the proposal envisions granite markers to recognize current and future valor honorees.



Proposed “Valor Plaza” area (outlined in yellow)

The area outlined in yellow, above, would lengthen the existing concrete pad by approximately 18 feet, or about double its existing length. The pad would be finished with bullnose brick edging to match the current edging, and fencing would be continued around the outer edge to match the existing fencing. Railings should be installed along the curved path leading to the plaza, for safety and accessibility purposes.

B.
PROPOSED VALOR MARKERS

Each marker, or marker section, would be unique to its categorization of the level of valor; e.g, (1) the Medal of Honor “for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty,” (2) all service crosses “for extraordinary heroism,” (3) the Silver Star Medal “for gallantry,” and (4) the Bronze Star Medal “for valor in combat.”

Each marker should be of the same granite material as is in place at the monument, to maintain the monument’s overall design and appearance. Whatever the size and shape of the markers, they should be distinct in their categorization of the proposed valor honoraria, and sufficient in size to recognize known honorees, and accommodate space for future honorees.

One example is pictured below, consisting of vertical markers above a small base. These are located at the “Walk of Honor Monument” in Iola, Kansas.²³



Example of vertical markers

²³ See e.g., <https://headspringis.com/walk-of-honor-monument-dedication-made-june-15/>;
see also https://www.villageofiola.com/american_legion_park.

Another example is located at the Westwood Hills Memorial Park in Placerville, as a recent addition to the park’s veterans section. While it is designed for burial niches, its depth can be reduced to create suitable markers with sufficient room for honoraria on each outward face. It also offers the option of using two colors for greater aesthetic effect, as shown in the contrast between the black and gray granite below.



Example of a shorter, broader marker

**C.
PROPOSED MARKER DESIGN**

Generally, each marker would have an etched “heading,” reflecting the level of valor as recognized by the United States’ military criteria. Underneath each heading would be either a colored engraving or bronze plaque of the associated valor medal, or a bronze plaque of the valor medal and its description, as illustrated below.



Example heading for Service cross medals and level of valor

“FOR GALLANTRY”



Example Silver Star heading -
With colored, engraved medal

“FOR GALLANTRY”



Example Silver Star heading -
With colored bronze plaque

Underneath each heading would be the designated honoraria for that categorization of valor, as defined by the revised honoraria policy. (See pages 13-15 above.)

“FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM”



	<p>The President of the United States of America, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved July 9, 1918, takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Master Sergeant William D. Cathcart, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy of the United Nations while serving with Company L, 24th Infantry Regiment, 40th Infantry Division. Master Sergeant Cathcart distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action against enemy aggressor forces in the vicinity of Chungbanggyong, Korea, on 18 February 1952. On the morning of 18 February 1952, the company of which Sergeant Cathcart was a member was engaged in an attack against a large hostile force occupying a strategic and well-fortified hill. In the ensuing action, Sergeant Cathcart observed that the leader of the assaulting platoon had been killed and the friendly troops had been pinned down by the intense enemy fire. Without hesitation, he rushed to the men, rallied them, and personally led them toward the crest of the hill only to be met by such a tremendous volume of fire that a withdrawal was necessary to save the friendly force from annihilation. Upon reaching the base of the slope, Sergeant Cathcart realized that several wounded were still on the pressway hill. Without regard for his personal safety, he traveled back up the slope directly in the face of the heavy enemy fire to evacuate his stricken comrades. Six times, Sergeant Cathcart made his way almost to the edge of the enemy bunkers, and six times, he returned with a wounded man. Through his utter fearlessness and completely selfless devotion to his men and his duty, Sergeant Cathcart saved the lives of several of his comrades at great risk to his own. The extraordinary heroism displayed by Sergeant Cathcart on this occasion reflects the greatest credit on himself and is in keeping with the most esteemed traditions of the military service.</p>
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	<p>The President of the United States of America, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved July 9, 1918, takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Master Sergeant William D. Cathcart, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy of the United Nations while serving with Company L, 24th Infantry Regiment, 40th Infantry Division. Master Sergeant Cathcart distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action against enemy aggressor forces in the vicinity of Chungbanggyong, Korea, on 18 February 1952. On the morning of 18 February 1952, the company of which Sergeant Cathcart was a member was engaged in an attack against a large hostile force occupying a strategic and well-fortified hill. In the ensuing action, Sergeant Cathcart observed that the leader of the assaulting platoon had been killed and the friendly troops had been pinned down by the intense enemy fire. Without hesitation, he rushed to the men, rallied them, and personally led them toward the crest of the hill only to be met by such a tremendous volume of fire that a withdrawal was necessary to save the friendly force from annihilation. Upon reaching the base of the slope, Sergeant Cathcart realized that several wounded were still on the pressway hill. Without regard for his personal safety, he traveled back up the slope directly in the face of the heavy enemy fire to evacuate his stricken comrades. Six times, Sergeant Cathcart made his way almost to the edge of the enemy bunkers, and six times, he returned with a wounded man. Through his utter fearlessness and completely selfless devotion to his men and his duty, Sergeant Cathcart saved the lives of several of his comrades at great risk to his own. The extraordinary heroism displayed by Sergeant Cathcart on this occasion reflects the greatest credit on himself and is in keeping with the most esteemed traditions of the military service.</p>
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Example Valor Marker - service cross medals Honoraria

“FOR GALLANTRY”



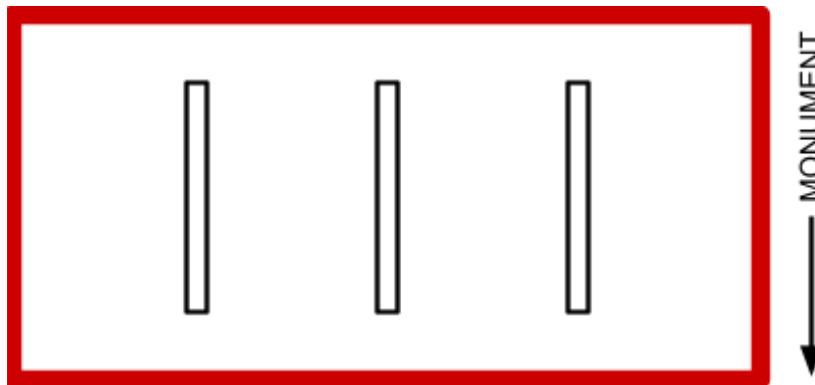
Example Valor Marker - Silver Star Medal Honoraria

D.

RECOMMENDED VALOR MONUMENT PLACEMENTS

Regardless of whether the valor markers are tall, vertical ones, or shorter, broader ones, the best placement for them on the large concrete pad would be in parallel lines with the sides facing the monument, as illustrated below. This would allow a maximum display of honorees without any of them having a “front” or “back” side. All would be open to viewing, and the overall aesthetic would be an open plaza.

This would avoid the effect of creating a “wall” if the honoraria side faced towards the monument, blocking the view of adjacent office workers in the process.



Recommended placement for Valor Markers

E.
VALOR PROPOSAL MODEL

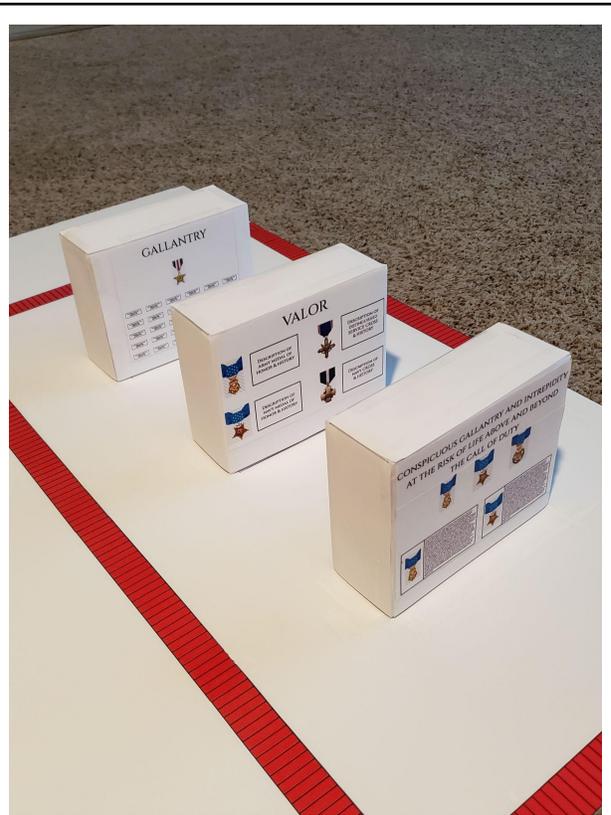
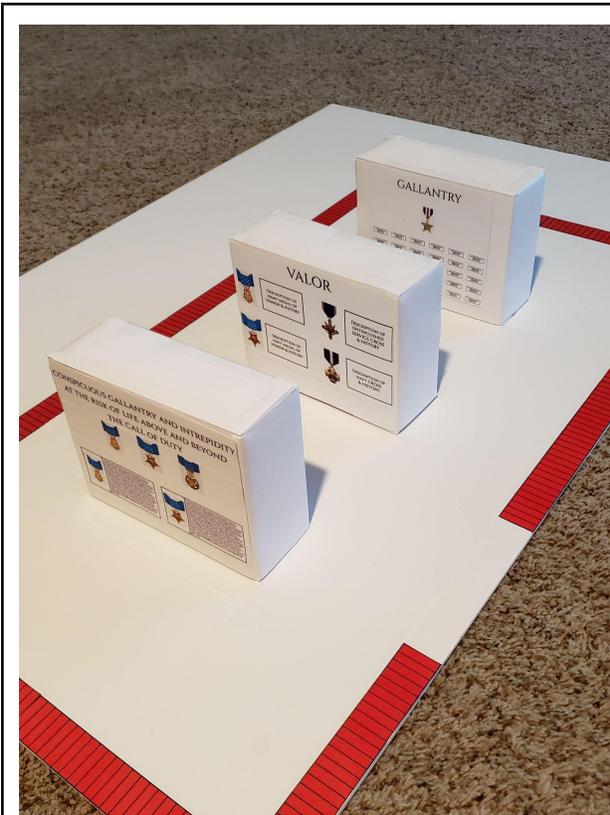
On July 6, 2022 I attended a public meeting to solicit input regarding the monument's honoraria and potential changes. I displayed a model to illustrate the proposal, as pictured below.

The model was built on a scale of 1 inch = 1 foot. The proposed valor plaza's outer dimensions, encompassing an existing brick bullnose design, are 29 feet by 16 feet 4 inches. The interior dimensions—i.e., the concrete pad surface—are 27 feet by 14 feet 4 inches.

The three markers were built to scale but the illustrations are overscaled to visually demonstrate the marker's conceptual design. Each marker is between 5 feet 6 inches to 6 feet high, 6 feet in length, and 2 feet in width. The space between markers is 5 feet. The space between the outer faces of the markers and the surrounding brick/fencing is 4 feet.

The center marker is dedicated to displaying the qualifying awards for valor: The three variants of the Medal of Honor; the four military service crosses; the Silver Star medal; and the Bronze Star medal with "valor" designation. The standard for each award, and its history, would be displayed alongside a large sized replica of each medal and its variants. Above the displays would be the word "VALOR" in prominent etched lettering. Below the displays would be the six emblems of the United States Armed Forces: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard.

The outer markers are dedicated to the qualifying awards for valor. One marker would be used for honoraria recognizing the Medal of Honor and service crosses. The other marker would be used for honoraria recognizing the Silver Star medal and the Bronze Star medal, with "valor" designation. Above each honoraria would be words describing that level of valor; e.g., "EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM" for service crosses. Each heading would be in prominent etched lettering. Underneath each heading would be replicas of the associated awards for each level of valor, as pictured below.





July 9, 2022

From: Joseph Connolly, M.A., QMCS, USCG (Ret.)

To: El Dorado County Board of Supervisors

Copy: El Dorado County Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Daniel Del Monte, Director, Health & Human Services

Mr. Richard Todd, Veterans Services Program Manager

Mr. Richard Buchanan, Founder, El Dorado County Veterans Monument

El Dorado County Veterans Alliance Board

Subj: Review of Veteran's Alliance Proposal

Dear Supervisors:

On July 6, 2022 I attended a public meeting to discuss proposed changes to the Veterans Monument honoraria criteria. Also in attendance were members of the Veterans Alliance Board of Directors ("Alliance"), representatives of the local Marine Corps League, County officials, and other veterans including the monument's architect, Mr. Peter Wolfe, a retired Coast Guard officer.

I submitted a proposal in writing to you, the Alliance, Mr. Richard Buchanan (the Monument's founder and designer), and relevant County officials. The Alliance passed out copies of their proposal, but I'm not aware that it was submitted in writing to the County. There may be other proposals that are being submitted, but I have not seen those and am not aware if they were submitted in writing.

As one of the identified parties to the honoraria matters, per your direction to the HHSA Director last July, I think it's incumbent upon the County to share all proposals with every stakeholder so they can be reviewed and compared. The initial stakeholders were identified by the Board and the HHSA Director as Mr. Buchanan's 2021 appellate representatives, the Alliance, and possibly the El Dorado County Veteran Affairs Commission.

I have reviewed the Alliance's proposal and compared it to the historical record of what the 2007 Board of Directors and the monument's founders intended. My comments are attached for your information and consideration, and I look forward to more meetings to clarify the best proposals that uphold the monument's purpose, goals, and design.

Sincerely,

s/Joseph Connolly

REVIEW OF VETERAN'S ALLIANCE MONUMENT PROPOSAL

INTRODUCTION

Any present discussion of potential changes should be guided by the past. The founders of the monument, in collaboration with the Board of Supervisors, took approximately seven months to create the foundation of the monument's vision, its cooperative management agreement, and the standards that should be applied to the monument, including all honoraria criteria.

Those foundational agreements are summarized first, as a benchmark for the review of the Veteran's Alliance ("Alliance") monument proposal.

Respectfully, the Alliance's proposal should be rejected because it seeks to take sole control of the monument's honoraria decisions. That would be completely at odds with the Board of Supervisors founding vision and approved monument authorities, and against every intention of the monuments' founders.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF MONUMENT AUTHORITIES

A.

NOVEMBER 11, 2006 DEDICATION

The El Dorado County Veterans Monument ("Monument") was dedicated on November 11, 2006—Veterans Day. "Richard Buchanan ... first thought of the project during his days in Vietnam where he was awarded the Navy Cross. Buchanan witnessed numerous examples of the American fighting spirit and selfless devotion to duty. He vowed that their dedication would not be forgotten, and began his quest "to honor those who have served the cause of freedom." In 2006, after years of tireless planning, fund raising and promotion, the [El Dorado County] tax payers essentially matched the funds raised by the Friends and the Monument...."¹

"Construction of the veterans memorial became a priority and a collaborative effort between the community, Friends [of the Monument] and El Dorado County government."

¹ See attachment 3 to El Dorado County Legistar record ("Legistar Record"), at <https://eldorado.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=271122&GUID=209F1726-3508-474B-A753-27E97128D95A&Options=&Search=>.

World War II Navy veteran Don Donaldson, one of the monument's Friends and founders, said "This all materialized because of the hard work - the determination - and the love and patriotism that the citizens of a small, rural county have for our military personnel who have made their way of life possible. ... The Friends want to thank all who have contributed in any capacity."

The Board of Supervisors was rightfully proud of the community effort. Supervisor Helen Baumann, whose son was a Marine Corps officer, said "the veterans memorial is really a tribute to the veterans as well as the community." Supervisor Jack Sweeney said "[t]he taxpayers should be very proud that we've got the best veterans memorial west of the Mississippi."^{2 3}

The monument's dedication is a timely reminder of community and government collaboration to create a unique monument that memorializes the sacrifices and dedication of veterans, "To Honor Those Who Have Served The Cause of Freedom."⁴

B.

2007 ORDINANCE AND HONORARIA CRITERIA

On September 11, 2007 the Board of Supervisors approved the adoption of "Ordinance 4743 establishing regulations for the use of the Veterans Memorial Monument; and providing amendments to the Criteria for Military Honoraria and Civilian Recognition."⁵

1.

SUPERVISOR BRIGGS 2007 MEMORANDUM

The County file for the matter was created on February 2, 2007 and read, "Supervisor Briggs recommending the Board review recommendations pertaining to the Veteran's Memorial Monument and provide direction to staff to meet with the Friends of the Veteran's Monument, Inc. for the purposes of entering into an

² See "Monument Dedicated Veterans Day, November 11, 2006" at <https://www.edcgov.us/Government/Veterans/Monument/pages/Dedication.aspx>.

³ Supervisor Baumann's son is now the Commanding Officer, Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 21, in Maryland. See Lieutenant Colonel Baumann's biography at <https://www.navair.navy.mil/nawcad/hx21>.

⁴ Centerpiece quote displayed at the monument.

⁵ See Legistar Record, at <https://eldorado.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=271122&GUID=209F1726-3508-474B-A753-27E97128D95A&Options=&Search=>.

agreement for the Veteran's Memorial Monument to be forever a place of dignity and honor providing quiet reflection of veterans from a grateful community.”

On March 6, 2007 Supervisor Ron Briggs wrote a memorandum of recommendations for a three point “seamless transition” to “move the memorial from a construction to operational phase.” The memorandum is attached hereto as **Exhibit 1.**

The “first step would be to proclaim for future Supervisors our vision of the memorial,” and recommended that it “shall be forever a place of dignity and honor visited respectfully and provides quiet reflection of veterans and their service.” (emphasis added.)

The second step was to direct the Chief Administrative Officer to meet with the “Friends of the Veterans Memorial ... for the purpose of entering into a co-operative management agreement” in which the agreement “**shall [a]ppoint the County Veteran Service Officer as primary public contact.**” The agreement also required that the “Friends ... deliver ... a report to the County Veteran Affairs Commission (VAC) on an annual basis ... with suggestions or recommendations from the Friends to the VAC.” (emphasis added.)

The third step was to keep the “status quo” “by clearly stating all activities of our memorial monument shall remain as it has been with Rich Buchanan and the Friends ... until otherwise declared by the Board of Supervisors.”

Finally, Supervisor Briggs recommended “adding the Veterans Memorial Monument to the purveyance of the Veterans Affairs Commission[’s powers and duty]” by “[p]roviding appropriate and timely information and recommendations to the board of supervisors and the public concerning all matters of our Veterans Memorial Monument.” (emphasis added.)

2.

2007 MONUMENT MANAGEMENT ISSUES SUMMARY

Supervisor Brigg’s recommendations were supported by a veteran’s committee summary report of monument “management issues.”⁶

⁶ See attachment 4 to Legistar Record, at <https://eldorado.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=271122&GUID=209F1726-3508-474B-A753-27E97128D95A&Options=&Search=>.

The committee's protocols included the question, "Who is primary contact?" Their answers were, "For monument-specific issues, General Services is the primary point of contact. **The Veteran Services Officer remains the point of contact for coordination of issues among veterans groups.**" (emphasis added.)

As to honoraria the committee stated, "The Friends will craft a set of proposed guidelines governing the levels of distinction of honorable and distinguished service for the determination of the location of recognition at the monument." Those guidelines were submitted to the CAO for review.⁷

As to the monument's maintenance, upkeep and any potential modifications the committee stated, "The County shall be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the Monument, **including installation** of any bricks, plaques and the like that are provided by the Friends." (emphasis added.)

"The County, through the General Services Department, will notify the Friends in writing of any intended or proposed changes in the design, configuration, or landscaping of the monument. The Friends will have the opportunity to discuss any such changes with representatives of the General Services Department."

"Any modifications must be consistent with the original purpose of the monument, which is to honor veterans. The Friends will continue to purchase materials for the monument, such as bricks, tiles, plaques, and benches. The General Services Department is responsible for the installation of the materials within the monument."

3.

FRIENDS OF THE MONUMENT CO-MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL

On February 15, 2007 the "Friends of the Veterans Monument, Inc." ("Friends") submitted a proposal for the monument's co-management with the County, emulating similar partnerships such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC.⁸

The intention of the proposal was to "optimize the relationship between government and the people of El Dorado County consistent with our heritage and lifestyle and the spirit of the Veterans Monument." (See Proposal, page 3.)

⁷ See attachments 5, 7 to Legistar Record, at *Id.*

⁸ See attachment 3 to Legistar Record, at *Id.*

The Friend's Proposal included to "[m]anage **the sale of bricks, plaques, and other products that further the use and spirit of the Monument.**" (emphasis added.)

Notably, the proposal did not give the Friends authority to determine honoraria criteria. Instead, the Friends were to "provide recommendations, endorsements or formal objection to the [Veteran Services Officer] and General Services for all proposals of honoraria or other additions or changes to the design of the Monument. (See Proposal, pages 4-7.)

The Friends intended that the Veteran Services Officer have a significant role in coordinating information about the monument, consistent with public engagement with the county's elected officials.

"The Friends believe that the VSO has the staff and day-to-day presence necessary to co-manage scheduling and other activities of the Friends that require coordination between the government representatives of the people and their monument. The friends intend to keep the VSO fully informed and expect to be informed on a mutually cooperative basis. By monitoring the printed reports of the Friends and maintaining day-to-day contact, **the VSO is in a position to ensure that the Friends do not in any way interfere with the people's elected representatives and their responsibility to aid in the conduct of the people's business in a fully open and transparent manner consistent with the Brown Act, the County Charter, the State and Federal Constitutions and the rule of law.**" (See Proposal, page 9.) (emphasis added.)

The Friends Proposal included many letters of recommendation and approval. (See Proposal, pages 12-39.)

Among those were the architect of the monument, Mr. Peter Wolfe, a retired Coast Guard officer. He emphasized that "[t]he management system governing the use, improvement, and maintenance of the monument must preclude the many complications which would result from **relinquishing the public control of the monument to self-appointed private individuals and/or organizations which are not fully and ultimately accountable to the general public through the electoral process.**" (See Proposal, pages 18-19.) (emphasis added.)

4.

ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE 4743 AND HONORARIA AMENDMENTS

On September 11, 2007 the Board of Supervisors adopted ordinance 4743 “establishing regulations for the use of the Veterans Memorial Monument” and approved amendments to the monument’s honoraria criteria.⁹

Ordinance 4743 is listed in the El Dorado County Code of Ordinances as Chapter 9.54, titled “County Veterans Monument.”¹⁰

The Ordinance does not include the word “honoraria,” nor does it grant any person or organization the authority to make honoraria decisions. As suggested in the preceding history, that authority rests with the Board of Supervisors, upon public recommendations that may be coordinated through the Veteran Services Officer.

As to the Friends’ responsibilities, the ordinance authorizes them to act **only as a host for two organized events on Memorial Day and Veterans Day**. “The ceremonies shall be hosted by The Friends of the Veterans Monument, a State nonprofit mutual benefit corporation, whose specific purpose is to foster cooperation among veterans groups. **In hosting said events** The Friends of the Veterans Monument shall act as the umbrella organization for the duly constituted, chartered veterans organizations in the County.”¹¹ (emphasis added.)

5.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MONUMENT’S HISTORY

In 2021, the preceding lessons were forgotten by the Alliance, the commanders of the federally chartered veterans organization charged with upholding the criteria for military awards as established by the United States, and the Board of Supervisors.

The Alliance acted outside the County’s approved monument authority to self-approve a personalized bronze plaque of its own design for a veteran who did not meet mandatory criteria for that high honor.

The commanders disregarded the criteria to deny an appeal of the plaque’s placement because they felt the veteran’s service should be recognized regardless of his eligibility for a personalized bronze plaque.

⁹ See final honoraria criteria; attachment 9 to Legistar Record at *Id.*

¹⁰ See https://library.municode.com/ca/el_dorado_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTAGECOOR_TIT9PUPEMOWE_CH9.54COVEMO.

¹¹ See section 9.54.030(A), at *Id.*

The Board of Supervisors upheld the commander's decision for similar reasons and chastised the **monument's founder—a recipient of the Navy Cross**—for upholding the monument's standards and its integrity.

As Mr. Buchanan implored the commanders to recognize,

“This current debate is not about any of us, in my view. It's about the monument—what it was created for, who created it and why, and how it was intended to remain apart from political whims. Like our founding constitution, it's a pillar of symbolism and dedication that is worth fighting for, so it retains its dignity and honor. Once that is taken away you lose what it exists for. This push to recognize CAPT Jacobs without discussion, who does not meet the County ordinance #4743 for inclusion on the front wall is elevating personal desires over the monument's eternal dignity and honor.

Those standards exist for a reason--we don't give medals to veterans who didn't earn them, and it's not “disgraceful” to say that. If we continue to follow those who are pushing this issue until it can be reviewed by all, then the honor wall means nothing. ... We don't give out awards that are not warranted, and this action to place a plaque for Captain Jacobs is in that attempt to circumvent well established, objective criteria without even acknowledging the standards exist.”¹²

THE VETERAN'S ALLIANCE PROPOSAL

The El Dorado County Veteran's Alliance proposal is at odds with the County's established criteria for the monument's management and its honoraria, and the historical intent behind the adoption of those criteria by the Board of Supervisors.

A.

PURPORTED “SOLE” MONUMENT AUTHORITY

The Alliance purports to have contractual authority to be the “sole organization” for all honoraria decisions and for the monument's management in general. The Alliance Board of Directors made those statements multiple times

¹² See pages 16-17 of “Veterans Monument Appeal Committee Meeting” record, dated June 21, 2021.

throughout the 2021 appeal matter, and repeated them at the July 6, 2022 meeting to discuss potential changes to the monument's honoraria criteria.

There is no evidence of that "sole" authority and the Alliance should produce it to publicly document its claims. Moreover, the Alliance's authoritarian claims are not included in the 2007 criteria adopted by the Board, nor were they intended in the historical record attached to the County's record of those decisions.

B. PROPOSAL ISSUES

Apart from an overstated "sole" authority the Alliance's proposal has a number of issues that should be carefully evaluated, discussed among the stakeholders (including the County staff overseeing the honoraria review), and subject to comparison against the existing honoraria criteria adopted by the 2007 Board of Supervisors.

These issues include the Alliance's personal views and subjective criteria, vague terms and standards, and an overall approach that is inconsistent with the community standards that were used to design, approve and manage the monument.

Eligibility examples: The eligibility criteria, as one example, include vague terms, and expand honoraria recognition beyond El Dorado County veterans.

The phrase "American forces constituted prior to the American Revolution" is contradictory and not defined. What were "American forces" prior to the establishment of "America" and its Armed Forces? Furthermore, what relevant connection do those forces have with El Dorado County, which formed in 1850?

The current Armed Forces all formed after the "American Revolution." In the case of my service, the Coast Guard's founding dates to August 4, 1790, when Congress authorized the formation of the Revenue-Marine. The United States Navy was established when Congress passed the Naval Act of 1794, after the Continental Navy was disbanded. Similarly, the United States Marine Corps was established by Congress in 1798, after the Continental Marines were disbanded. Obviously, the Air Force and Space Force arose long after our country's founding.

The Alliance would expand eligibility to veterans who are not current or past residents of El Dorado County, leading to unrestricted use of the monument's limited resources, which should be reserved for El Dorado County veterans. The phrase

“related by blood or friendship to a resident of El Dorado County” is vague and unmanageable. Who are “blood” relatives, for example, and how would those relationships be documented? How would a “friendship” be documented, and to what extent does “friendship” extend?

Finally, the Alliance proposes to review eligibility, including after the fact, and on the basis of deceit or errors, to deny or remove honoraria, or waive “insignificant” errors. Not only are these proposals completely subjective—and intended that the Alliance be the “sole” authority to decide so—but there is no timeframe for the criteria’s application.

The Alliance could use its proposed standard to retroactively remove honoraria, for example, without public review and/or approval by the Board of Supervisors. The Alliance’s proposed “Oversight” includes “The Veterans Alliance is authorized to approve, fund, place **and/or deny any memorial.**” (emphasis added.)

Application: Under the Alliance’s proposal, if passed, I would personally move for the removal of the two bronze plaques placed by the Alliance at the monument. One, in memory of the crew of an airplane crash, has no known connection to El Dorado County, through residence, relatives, or friendship to a County resident. It was placed there without any apparent application and/or County approval.

Similarly, the 2021 plaque that was the subject of an appeal—and the current review of the honoraria criteria—was an intentional misrepresentation by the Alliance of that veteran’s service record, and under the Alliance’s proposal, “**Shall be denied or removed.**”¹³ (emphasis added.) Since that plaque is already in place, removal would be the appropriate step following review.

There is a full record of review already in place, owing to a public committee record and hearing on Zoom, and also transcribed by the appellant. That official proceeding was followed by a Board of Supervisors review of the committee’s decisions, also documented on Zoom and transcribed by the appellant, including the Board’s direction to the HHSA Director.

¹³ The proposal’s criteria is “Memorials to veterans whose service record has been misrepresented, following review and determination that the deceit was intentional, shall be denied or removed.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

The historical record, and the Alliance's subjective practices as the alleged "sole" authority to determine honoraria matters for the monument, give weight to two recommendations.

First, the Alliance's proposal should be rejected as is. It evinces little to no respect for the history of the monument's founding, its collaboration between the founders and the County, nor the 2007 decisions of the Board of Supervisors to adopt a managing ordinance and honoraria criteria.

The Alliance's proposal is largely made up of undefined criteria, dependent upon the largely subjective authority of the Alliance, and far removed from the co-management vision adopted by the Board in 2007.

It also removes the Board from final authority over the monument; e.g., "Decisions rendered by the Veteran Affairs Commission relative to this policy are final." However, as I pointed out to the Alliance on July 6, 2022, the Veteran Affairs Commission is an advisory body only, and the Alliance's proposal would require Board action to amend the authority of the Veterans Affairs Commission. That potential change is problematic in and of itself.

The proposal shows no recognition or intention by the Alliance to recognize the concept of "valor," which is an unfulfilled design of the monument, and one of the primary reasons the current honoraria criteria specified two valor awards for eligibility of an individual bronze plaque. The criteria's goal was to preserve sufficient space within the existing resources to recognize our nation's two highest awards for heroism in combat.

The Alliance has already used the monument's limited space for two bronze plaques of their own design and approval, constricting all remaining space for future valor honorees. The Alliance's proposal does not take that limited space into account for current or future honorees under the County's criteria. Other proposals do.

Moreover, the Alliance is planning to place at least five bronze plaques of their own design for valor honorees on or before Veterans Day, 2022, without any public input or process. That unauthorized decision would most likely use up the remaining display area of the current monument—potential consequences the public, relevant County staff, and the Board of Supervisors should be aware of and discuss.

Second, the Alliance's only authorized role is to act as a program host for Memorial Day and Veterans Day programs. That role can continue, under Ordinance Code 9.54, but it does not authorize the Alliance to propose honoraria, make them part of a program, or install any honoraria either on its own or in coordination with the County.

The County should ensure the Alliance does nothing more than is authorized under Ordinance Code 9.54, which excludes any honoraria actions by the Alliance.

CONCLUSION

If the Alliance wishes to have sole authority over veterans honoraria, it should exercise that right on its own at a monument of its own creation and governance. It should follow the example of the monument's founders, who undertook an enormous personal and organizational effort to create an exceptional public monument for the benefit of El Dorado County and its veterans.

The Alliance should not be allowed to independently determine what the monument should be, nor how its honoraria decisions are to be made. Those proposals are an affront to the founding vision of the veterans and government officials who collaborated to build and maintain "the best veterans memorial west of the Mississippi."

The Alliance's practices, and its proposal, show little to no respect for the United States criteria for medals and awards, especially those for valor. The Alliance's proposal includes, for example, the subjective criteria that "Deserving veterans are those whose deeds were of such renown that they are considered to be one of El Dorado County's heroes." But subjective values of what "heroes" are and why, are not the same as the official criteria for United States military awards given by the United States for specific acts of valor; i.e., "heroism in combat."

If the County chooses to have the Alliance continue as a program host for the monument's authorized programs, then it should reemphasize that role alone and ensure the Alliance operates *only* within that limitation, as defined by Ordinance Code 9.54.

EXHIBIT 1
SUPERVISOR BRIGGS MONUMENT MEMORANDUM

County of El Dorado

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

RUSTY DUPRAY.....DISTRICT I
HELEN K. BAUMANN.....DISTRICT II
JAMES R. SWEENEY.....DISTRICT III
RON BRIGGS.....DISTRICT IV
NORMA SANTIAGO.....DISTRICT V

CINDY KECK.....CLERK OF THE BOARD

330 FAIR LANE PLACERVILLE, CA 95667
TELEPHONE (530) 621-5390
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Recommendations for our Veterans Memorial Monument

March 6, 2007

After many weeks of discussions and dozens of meetings and conversations it is clear a universal complete desire exists to keep our memorial a place of honor and dignity that is visited respectfully and provides quiet reflection of veterans and their service.

To move the memorial from a construction to operational phase I believe the Board should consider adoption of a simple three point approach providing for a seamless transition.

First step would be to proclaim for future Supervisors our vision of the memorial, suggested language is:

Our Veterans Memorial Monument shall be forever a place of dignity and honor visited respectfully and provides quiet reflection of veterans and their service.

Second step is to direct the County Administrative Officer to meet with the "Friends of the Veterans Memorial, a California non-profit corporation" (Friends) for the purpose of entering into a co-operative management agreement.

Such an agreement shall:

Apply normal County risk management practices

Appoint the County Veterans Service Officer as primary public contact

Require the Friends to deliver by their representative a report to the County Veterans Affairs Commission (VAC) on an annual basis, financial records that minimally include a profit & loss, balance sheet, income and expense sheets and a "state of the memorial" with suggestions or recommendations from the Friends to the VAC.

Third step is for our Board to keep a "status quo" by clearly stating all activities of our memorial monument shall remain as it has been with Rich Buchanan and the Friends coordinating the corps of volunteers to support county staff until otherwise declared by the Board of Supervisors.

There is a fourth step wherein our Board amends county ordinance 4188 section 2.25.060 adding the Veterans Memorial Monument to the purveyance of the Veterans Affairs Commission.

Adding "E" to 'Powers and Duties' reading:

"Providing appropriate and timely information and recommendations to the board of supervisors and the public concerning all matters of our Veterans Memorial Monument"

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Briggs
District IV Supervisor

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