

El Dorado County Veterans Monument
Criteria for ~~Military Memorials Honoraria~~ and Civilian Recognition
~~January 14, 2025~~ ~~September 11, 2007~~

The El Dorado County Veterans Monument is intended to honor and remember the ~~in-service and sacrifices~~ ~~accomplishments~~ of veterans ~~and current members~~ of the armed forces of the United States of America. ~~All eligible veterans will be included proportional to their in-service contributions.~~

There will be two separate areas of recognition:

1. Recognition of veterans through ~~memorials~~ ~~military honoraria~~ to be located ~~on~~ the ~~Veterans Monument grounds~~ ~~plaza~~ (hereinafter referred as “~~grounds~~ ~~plaza~~”).
2. ~~Recognition of Civilian Contributors~~
 - a. No person who is not a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces (refer to definition) may be memorialized ~~within the plaza grounds~~. ~~The west entrance~~ ~~An area to the left and right~~ of the Veterans Monument, ~~is main (west) entrance~~ adjacent to the parking lot and technically “outside” the grounds, is dedicated to recognition of civilian contributors to the monument. ~~to the monument to the left and right of the Monument’s main (west) entrance adjacent to the parking lot.~~
 - b. ~~Civilian Contributors are defined as contributors that are non-veterans that purchased bricks and stones as a form of fundraising to construct the monument and to honor volunteers who have provided a significant service to the Veterans Monument. Upon adoption of this ratification, no further integration of civilian recognition is permitted at the Veterans Monument.~~

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~~As of November 11, 2006, no further integration of veterans honoraria and civilian recognition is permitted in the plaza. ¶~~

~~Any issues that arise regarding inclusion, inscription, or location of honoraria in the monument are to be directed to the Veterans Service Officer, who will convene a committee including one representative commander from each of the federally chartered veterans organization in El Dorado County to hear and settle the issue (hereinafter referred as “committee”). The decision rendered by the committee may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors by submitting a request to the Veterans Services Officer, who will place the appeal on the Board’s agenda. All decisions regarding inclusion, inscription, or location of honoraria in the monument will be made in a manner consistent with this policy. ¶~~

Eligibility for Recognition through ~~Military Memorials Honoraria~~

To be eligible to be memorialized ~~on in~~ the Veterans Monument grounds ~~plaza~~, a veteran must meet both of the following requirements:

~~Eligibility for inclusion in the plaza is based upon discharge from active military service under other than dishonorable conditions.~~

1. Have served ~~honorably~~ in the U.S. Armed Forces, including American forces constituted prior to the American Revolution (receiving either a General or Honorable discharge).
 - a. For a former service member to establish veteran status, generally the individual must have served in active military service and be discharged under **Honorable or General** conditions ~~other than dishonorable~~. Reservists and National Guard members may or may not always qualify for veteran status. The County Veterans Service Officer will confirm or deny eligibility based on the current United States Code (U.S.C. Title 38, §101 (2), (10), (21), (24), (26), and (27) defining veterans in their various categories and U.S.C. Title 10 and Title 32 for Reservists and National Guard members).
 - b. Veterans that are dishonorably discharged from active military service shall not be eligible for inclusion in the Veterans Monument.

and

2. Be a current or former resident of El Dorado County; or be a ~~relation~~**family member** of, or have an established friendship with, a current or former resident of El Dorado County and declare said relationship on the application for a ~~memorial~~**honoraria**.

~~1. Active service means full-time service, other than active duty for training, as a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Merchant Marines or Coast Guard. Men and women veterans with similar service will be entitled to the same category of honoraria.~~ ¶

~~2. Dishonorable and bad conduct discharges issued by general courts-martial may bar inclusion in or cause removal from the plaza.~~ ¶

~~3. Veterans in prison and parolees must contact the El Dorado County Veterans Service Officer or Friends of the Veterans Monument to determine eligibility. Acceptance will not be provided to any veteran wanted for an outstanding felony warrant.~~ ¶

~~Those seeking honoraria in the plaza for the first time must complete and submit an application to the El Dorado County Veterans Services Officer that provides the following information:~~ ¶

1. ~~Documentation that demonstrates service dates and type of discharge a copy of their service discharge form, such as DD-214, DD-215, or for WWII veterans, a WD form; or~~ ¶

2. ~~Full name, military service number, and branch and dates of service.~~ ¶

~~Application forms are available from the Veterans Service Office, The Friends of the Veterans Monument, Inc. (hereinafter referred as "the Friends"), or the Pool Place on Missouri Flat Road, Placerville, or other such places as may be designated by the Chief Administrative Officer.~~ ¶

Types of ~~Military Memorials~~ **Honoraria**

Several types of ~~Memorials~~ **honoraria** are utilized at the Veterans Monument:*

Memorial Bricks – (Available for purchase by the public) To honor an individual veteran. Each engraved brick (8x4 inches) contains up to three lines and a maximum of 14 characters per line, including spaces. Bricks are placed along the Walk of Honor.

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Memorial Stones – (Available for purchase by the public) To honor an individual veteran or military unit (as defined in U.S.C. Title 38, §101 and U.S.C. Title 10 and Title 32 for Reservists and National Guard members). Each engraved granite stone contains up to five lines and a maximum of 14 characters per line, including spaces.

Memorial Benches – (Not available for purchase by the public) To honor a veteran who is the recipient of a Medal of Valor, or to recognize a war period or a military unit (as defined in U.S.C. Title 38, §101 and U.S.C. Title 10 and Title 32 for Reservists and National Guard members). Each engraved with an El Dorado County connection (e.g. USS Tahoe, local National Guard Unit, etc.). Each bench is approximately 6 feet by 16 inches. Benches are custom made and inscription length can vary from 4-12 lines.

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Memorial Plaques – (Not available for purchase by the public) ~~Special Bronze Plaques honoring events, units, or heroes.~~ Plaques are installed on the Veterans Monument Honor Wall or elsewhere on the Veterans Monument grounds to recognize veterans ~~who heroes that~~ meet the following requirements in addition to the eligibility criteria identified above.

- ~~For plaques that honor heroes, the honoree must meet the following conditions:~~ ¶

~~Heroes are defined as recipients of the Medal of Honor, i.e., Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, Coast Guard Cross, Silver Star or any person or unit who, while serving with the military, distinguishes himself/herself in action by extraordinary heroism.~~ ^{Valor} ^{Medal of Honor,} ~~and by meeting both of the following:~~

1. The action must take place under one of three circumstances: (1) while engaged in action against an enemy of the United States; (2) while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; ~~or;~~ (3) while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict in which the United States is not a belligerent party; and*

2. The act to be commended must have been performed in the presence of great danger or at great personal risk and must be performed in such a manner as to render the individual

highly conspicuous among others of equal grade, rate, experience, or position of responsibility.

Memorial Statuary - (Not available for purchase by the public). As recommended by the VSO and approved by the County Board of Supervisors.

Once placed, a memorial shall not be modified, relocated or removed, unless it is determined by the VSO that claims on the memorial are false.

~~*Benches*. Benches are intended to honor any veteran, unit or action. For benches included in the plaza, the inclusion of civilians in the inscriptions is specifically prohibited.~~

~~*Bricks*. Size 4x8 bricks may be purchased to honor any qualified veterans or current member of the armed forces of the United States. Each brick contains up to three lines and a maximum of 14 characters per line.~~

Application Requirements

Those seeking memorials on the grounds ~~honoraria in the plaza~~ must complete and submit an application to the El Dorado County Veterans Services Officer that provides the following information:

1. Documentation that demonstrates service dates and type of discharge, including a copy of their service discharge form, such as DD-214, DD-215, or for WWII veterans, a WD form, ~~or full name, military service number, and branch and dates of service.~~
2. Documentation that demonstrates current or previous residency for the applicant. Applications honoring family members or friends of a current or former resident will also require a declaration as to said relationship.
3. Proposed inscription for the ~~memorial honoraria~~. Inscriptions must relate to honoring the named veteran or the service provided by the veteran or his/her unit, including, for example the veteran's name, rank, ~~branch of service, and years of service, war periods and military awards/accomplishments. "In memory of," or appreciation for the veteran's service or particular actions.~~

Application forms are available from the Veteran Services Office, ~~and/or other such places as may be designated by the El Dorado County Veterans Service Officer.~~

Application Approval Process

Upon receipt of an application, the El Dorado County Veterans Service Officer (VSO) shall review for completeness. If the application is complete, the VSO will review to ensure the application meets eligibility and application requirements as outlined in this criteria.

Once the determination to approve or deny the application has been made by the VSO, the VSO will ~~communicate the VSO's decision~~ ~~notify~~ in writing to the applicant and all federally recognized and/or ~~congressionally~~ chartered veteran organizations in El Dorado County

(hereinafter referred to as “Veteran Organizations”) that have requested to be notified notification by the VSO (hereinafter referred to as “Veteran Organizations”) of applications for memorials ~~honorary~~ at the Monument, of the VSO’s application determination (“Notification”).

An applicant or Veterans Organization may object to the VSO’s determination of the application for a requested memorial ~~honorary~~ by submitting a written objection to the VSO (“Objection”), which must be received by the VSO no later than 15 business days from the date of the VSO’s notification. The Objection must contain rationale for the Objection.

Upon receipt of a timely Objection, the VSO will (1) notify the applicant or the Veteran Organizations, as applicable, of the Objection and (2) issue a decision approving or denying the Objection as to the ~~application~~ application (“Decision”). Notice of the Decision shall be made to the applicant and the Veteran Organizations.

The VSO’s Decision may be appealed no later than 15 business days after the date of the Decision to the Board of Supervisors (“Appeal”) by submitting a request to the VSO, who will place the appeal on the Board’s agenda.

Memorials ~~Honorary~~ shall not be installed until a final decision is made by the VSO or Board of Supervisors, as applicable, which shall include expiration of time for any Objection or Appeal.

Modification and Maintenance of the Monument

The County shall be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the Veterans Monument plaza, including installation of any bricks, plaques and the like that are provided by the ~~Friends~~ Memorials ~~honorary~~.

The County, through the ~~General Services Department~~ Facilities Division, will notify the Veteran Organizations, including the El Dorado County Veterans Alliance, and the VSO ~~Friends and the committee~~ in writing of any ~~intended or~~ proposed changes in the design, configuration, or landscaping of the monument. The Veteran Organizations ~~Friends~~ will have the opportunity to discuss any such changes with representatives of the ~~General Services Department~~ Facilities Division. Private citizens, civic organizations, and military/veterans’ organizations are encouraged to communicate with the County, Veteran Organizations, and the VSO ~~and the Friends~~ regarding proposed improvements and additions to the monument that are consistent with this policy.

Any modifications must be consistent with the original purpose of the monument, which is to honor veterans.

The ~~Friends~~ El Dorado County Veterans Alliance is authorized to fulfill the details of its contract with the County, as guided by this document, including ~~will continue to~~ overseeing the general management of the Veterans Monument grounds, ceremonies and purchasing e materials and ~~for the monument~~ Monument memorials, such as bricks, tiles, stones, plaques, and benches. The ~~General Services Department~~ Facilities Division is responsible for the installation of the materials within the monument.

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Monument Eligibility

Dawn Wolfson 1/14/2025

Dawn Wolfson, Cameron Park

I would like to thank HHS for the time they have spent on this endeavor. It is the first time this group of veterans has felt listened to.

The eligibility portion of the January 14, 2025, HHS proposal is problematic. It continues to allow excess eligibility for recognition in the monument. By contrast, Arlington National Cemetery is considering limiting eligibility to extend the cemetery's current capacity.

There are approximately 18 million living and 33 million dead American veterans, but only about 12 thousand living and 22 thousand dead El Dorado County veterans. Almost 3,000 of those have service-connected disabilities.

The portion of EDC's 34 thousand veterans that would apply to be recognized in the monument is a function of price, prestige and marketing acumen. On the other hand, the individual cost of recognition in the Vietnam veterans monument is wholly government subsidized so no marketing is needed and every one of the approximately 58,000 who died because of the Vietnam conflict is recognized.

We believe that the EDC cost of a brick is not excessive but that 34 thousand exceeds the monument's capacity. Given that after 17 years we have only about 2,100 honoraria, we believe we have a marketing problem, not a cost problem. Reaching 10-15% of 34,000 EDC veterans is not an unreasonable objective.

Policy should limit eligibility to EDC veterans as defined by federal code. About half of the last tranche of bricks were awarded to individuals who never lived in EDC. This practice should stop immediately. We do not need to reduce prestige by expanding eligibility as described in the January 14, 2024 proposal. Accordingly, we recommend that ordinance 4743 be corrected by simply changing the word country to county which was the original intent.

The monument was not intended to be a national edifice. It is an EDC veteran treasure and should remain so.

*Please reject the expansion.
Please replace "Veterans Alliance" with
generic language.*

Improperly Placed Honoraria

Bud Sweet

I'm Bud Sweet. President El dorado County Fleet Reserve Association, ~~and President and Treasurer of the HHSO Council~~

Proportionality:

The September 11, 2007, criteria was intended to honor veterans "proportional to their in-service contributions." Accordingly, the honor wall was selected as a location to place awards for the nations top two military awards. The 2007 criteria prohibited the mounting of lesser awards after September 11, 2007, but policy was repeatedly ignored ~~with impunity~~. The top two military awards are the medal of honor and the military services crosses. There are distinct versions of individual military services in each category. But each medal is awarded by Congress and/or the President ~~and his~~ commander in Chief of the United States. ~~To distinguish the proportionality of their importance in our veterans community, the Medal of Honor is worn by a silk ribbon around the neck. Military cross awards are worn on the top left of all other medals or on uniform ribbons.~~ Unfortunately, on November 11, 2022, five of El Dorado county's military cross awardees were scattered among the potpourri of plaques previously mounted on the honor wall making the concept of proportionality a non sequitur. While several solutions have been proposed, all have been unilaterally discarded by The Veteran Alliance. We are left with a desecration, not only because of misplaced military cross plaques, but many other details. The HHSO proposal clarifies the intent to restrict the mounting of plaques other than military cross or medals of honor on the honor wall after September 11, 2007, but allows the location of honoraria for the top two military awards "elsewhere" in the monument. We believe that the current 6 known military cross awardees in the 174 history of El Dorado county should be grouped together on the honor wall or in a valor plaza as frequently proposed but unilaterally rejected both prior to and after they were unilaterally mounted without approval. Adding insult to injury a Navy Cross plaque honoring SSGT Sky Mote who gave his life to protect his Marine brothers was placed below a plaque commemorating one of more than 15,000 in-country airplane crashes during WWII. When EDC is graced with a Medal of Honor recipient his/her plaque or honoraria should be positioned in a location slightly more prestigious but near his military cross brothers and sisters. Because current plaques are expensive to move, process and means should be determined in concert with our federally chartered veterans organizations.

We look forward to restoration of the monument in a manner that ~~provides~~ ^{provides} respect for veterans culture and recreates an ambiance that we used to feel during our visits.

The Rule of Law

Ken Schoniger

I'm Ken Schoniger, former member of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Veterans Monument aka The Veterans Alliance, author of the original co-management proposal and member of the committee that negotiated the policy and law currently governing the monument.

The monument was created to “honor those that served the cause of freedom.” Over 1 million veterans have given their lives and millions more have lost their limbs gaining and defending our freedom; but freedom cannot be sustained without our respect for policy and law that underlies its concept. Not only has respect for policy and law been ignored, the monument has become subject to a self-fulfilling prophecy. The less compliance with standards and the greater its eligibility for hundreds of thousands if not millions of non-EDC veterans the less its prestige and value to both local veterans and civilians.

Proper management of the monument requires an unbroken chain of command from the people through their elected representatives to the last county employee. But that chain has been diverted to a private contractor at the link of the VSO. The concept of government of the people has been reversed, and the attempt of the framers of 2007 policy to facilitate veteran influence over the culture of the monument without compromise to the nondelegation protocol of our constitution has been fractured.

Let today mark the beginning of a new county culture respectful of the cause of freedom and the policies and laws that sustain it. Let our newly constituted BOS lead us away from any contractor path to autocratic rule. Comply with the ordinance and criteria ratified by the Board of Supervisors in 2007 to facilitate management of the monument. If change is required, see to it that it be done by a committee of veterans and public officials with membership void of conflict of interest and specifically excluding past repeat violators of policy and law.

2007 policy and ordinance were created by a committee consisting of the Chief Administrative Officer, County Counsel, staff, two leading Supervisors and veteran

representatives. The dialogue was synergistic and resulted in policy and ordinance that worked to make our monument the best of 800 county veterans monuments during its first decade. Any policy must be subject to change, but unenforced policy is no policy. Our constitution has been amended 27 times during the past 235 years, none of them arbitrary and all of them subject to due process.

I would be happy to answer any questions.