



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Darwin J. Thomas Memorial Chapter 201
San Jose, California

October - December 2017

Chapter 201 Participates in Cal Vet Memorial

Chapter 201 VVA and AVVA participated in the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial Ceremony on October 14th at Capital Park in Sacramento for the unveiling of new names to be added to the memorial. Chapter 201 member Fran McVey, with the Scottish American Military Society, and six members of the Chapter 201 AVVA provided the lead Color Guard for the opening ceremony.



The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Honor Committee added the names of fourteen Vietnam veterans who entered active duty from California and later passed away from Agent Orange related diseases. Other names on the California Memorial, that are not on the National Wall, include those sailors killed in 1969 when an Australian aircraft carrier cut their destroyer in half. Since they were "off the line" for a few days to participate in an exercise, they were not official "combat deaths" in the War.

Chapter 201 Supports Los Gatos Veterans Memorial

Chapter 201 member Mike Frangadakis, founder and past president of the Los Gatos Veterans Memorial & Support Foundation, and Chapter 201 member Kent Hillhouse (MG, USA, Ret.), the current foundation president, held an open house to present the design for the proposed Los Gatos, California Veteran's Memorial on October 26, 2017. The presentation at the Los Gatos Civic Center provided an opportunity for residents to see the outline of a proposed memorial approved by the Los Gatos Town Council. The foundation expects to begin fundraising to cover the memorial's approximately \$1.5 million cost (<http://www.honoravet.org>).



**Los Gatos Veteran's Memorial
with the Flame of Liberty**

**Design Presentation
Los Gatos, California
October 26, 2017**

VVA Chapter 201 member
Mike Frangadakis
Founder & Past President of
Veterans Memorial & Support
Foundation, Los Gatos, California

VVA Chapter 201 member
Kent Hillhouse (MG, USA, Ret)
President of Veterans Memorial &
Support Foundation,
Los Gatos, California

The centerpiece of the memorial is a Flame of Liberty, inspired by the Statue of Liberty's flame, will be made of a very heavy, shatterproof glass. It will be lit at night and rest on top of a water feature, with a Soldier's Cross sitting inside. The Soldier's Cross is designed to honor the fallen and is made up of a rifle and soldier's boots with helmet on top. Two rock-faced Walls of Liberty will be behind the flame, with the backside of one used to recognize major donors. A serpentine Wall of Honor will lead visitors to the memorial. The Wall of Honor will contain panels recognizing the six branches of service. This is also where individual veterans and active service members will be recognized.

Chapter 201 UVC Flag Lowering

Chapter 201 VVA and AVVA members honored deceased Veterans at San Jose's Oak Hill Memorial Park on October 29th. Chapter 201 is the sponsor for the October Flag Lowering ceremony each year. United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County (UVC) Past President, and Chapter 201 Vice President, Gene Fanucchi acted as the Master of Ceremonies while Chapter 201 President Warren Finch officiated for the VVA. Chapter Chaplain Randy Richmond provided the invocation and benediction and members Jack Wells and Stephen Thompson (Secretary) lowered and folded the flag. Members of the Chapter 201 AVVA provided the Color Guard for the Ceremony.



Gene Fanucchi acted as the Master of Ceremonies while Chapter President Warren Finch officiated for VVA Chapter 201. Chapter members Jack Wells, Randy Richmond and Stephen Thompson lowered and folded the flag.

The United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County (UVC) conducts a ceremonial Flag Lowering on the last Sunday in every other month to honor those deceased Veterans who are recognized on a Flag Plaque at the entrance to Oak Hill Memorial Park during the previous months. A deceased Veteran does not have to be interred at Oak Hill to have his or her name on the honor plaque. Many Veterans are buried overseas or in the National Cemeteries throughout the country. The names of Veterans to be honored are provided by the families and Oak Hill places the name on the Honor Plaque daily. After a Veteran is honored, the name is recorded in the "Book Everlasting" which is located in the lobby of the Administration Building.



Chapter 201 President Warren Finch officiated for VVA Chapter 201 as Chapter members Randy Richmond, Jack Wells and Stephen Thompson lowered and folded the flag

Chapter 201 Participates in Veterans' Day Parade

On November 11th, over thirty-five Chapter 201 VVA and AVVA members participated in the 2017 United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County (UVC) Veterans' Day Parade in downtown San Jose, California on the occasion of the 99th anniversary of the "War To End All Wars."



Chapter 201 Color Guard in the UVC Veterans' Day. Alexander Cao (AVVA-201), Stephen Thompson (Secretary), Jack Wells, Gerald Arnold, Randy Sessler (Director) and Duy Nguyen (AVVA-201)

The annual UVC Veterans' Day parade in San Jose honors all those who have served, and those continuing to serve their country during the largest Veterans' Day Parade in Northern California. Over 90 numbered units march in the two-hour parade to honor veterans of all wars and pay tribute to our military service personnel, and their families, who have given so much for their country.

Chapter 201 End of Year Holiday Luncheon

On December 17th, Darwin J. Thomas Memorial Chapter 201 closed out 2017 with its annual Holiday luncheon at The Spaghetti Factory in downtown San Jose, California. Over 80 VVA and AVVA members and guests enjoyed a spaghetti feast and were honored with a presentation by author Richard Botkin. Richard is a former Marine infantry officer and author of "Ride the Thunder: A Vietnam War Story of Honor and Triumph." The Chapter was also honored with attendance of Chapter 201 member MG Kent Hillhouse's (USA, Ret) guest; the Honorable William Peacock, former Under Secretary of the Army (and retired Marine Colonel) and his wife Nancy.



Chapter 201 President Warren Finch, member MG Kent Hillhouse (USA, Ret) and guests Richard Botkin and the Honorable William Peacock during the annual VVA/AVVA Holiday Luncheon