

War Memorial honors America's Service Personnel

## San Benito Veterans' War Memorial Acknowledgments



The City of San Benito and the San Benito Veterans' Advisory Board wish to pay tribute to the professionals who donated their specialized skills, their time, and their hearts, to the construction of the San Benito Veterans' War Memorial.



The efforts that they, and their firms, played in the design and development of this beautiful facility stand as a bona fide tribute to their love of Country and of gratitude to the many Veterans who served, fought and even died, to protect and defend the United States of America.



We wish to thank each and every person who participated in this journey that began 10 years ago. Some donors and patrons are cited by name, but because there are so many, surely some may not be mentioned today. Their participation,

however large or small, is greatly appreciated, and we hope that they will feel that this structure is partially theirs due to their efforts.

And, while we are dedicating this structure today, we realize we have not yet finished our task. What remains is the creation of our granite monuments - one for each wartime era - that will carry forever, the names of each San Benito area serviceman and woman who gave the ultimate sacrifice for their beloved country. We plan to commission the creation of three bronze statues that will physically reflect the proud heritage of our servicemen and servicewomen, the sacrifices endured, and the hope for our future.



Little did we realize back then, the vast amount of effort, skill and fortitude it would take to complete this much-beloved facility in our City. But in retrospect, it took great persistence and dedication from those citizens who had the vision and who conceived the idea; to those who promoted the concept; to

those who persuaded officials to believe in the idea; to those officials who worked to find funding for its construction; to those who stepped-up and agreed to professionally design the Memorial; to those who will cherish and care for it in the future. This is truly a community-wide project.

And also, our thanks, and the thanks of a grateful community, go out to our past officials, who over the years, held firm to their commitment. We thank the San Benito City Commission, the San Benito Economic Development Corporation and the City's administrative staff for what they have done here. This is a tribute to you and to all who made this a reality.

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The San Benito Veterans' Advisory Board includes Chairman Victor Garza, Vice Chairman Charlie Wilson, and members Ovidio Gonzalez, Sandra Tumberlinson and Pilar Vega. Each has a few words to share on the meaning of this project.

Veterans' Advisory Board member Ovidio I. Gonzalez recalls back to 1999 when he, as a former assistant chief of police, then Fire Chief Armando Lucio, and then City Commissioner Joe H. Hernandez, met and decided that a Veterans' War Memorial should be created at the site of the old train depot. "That spot was vital," he said, because since the local Draft Board was located in San Benito, as was the passenger train, it was in San Benito where our young soldiers boarded the train to go to war. The trio gathered together 20 supporters and began the thought process on how to make their dream a reality. Eventually, a few of those men were named to what is now the Veterans' Advisory Board.

Lt. Commander Charles R. Wilson, USCG (Ret.), vice chairman of the Veterans' Advisory Board said that with the construction of the San Benito Veterans War Memorial, "We have almost completed our goal of a memorial to honor and remember those who have fallen during WWI, WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and wars that may come to pass."

Sandra Tumberlinson, a member of the Veterans' Advisory Board, has researched many of the young sailors and soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice in service to their Country. She remembers this



account: "Two (San Benito) casualties of the Korean War who had once lived across the street from each other, attended school together and worked together. Cpl. Florencio Pedraza and Pfc. Enrique Atkinson died in battle within three days of each other and were buried (here) side-by-side."

Veterans Advisory Board Chairman Victor Garza said, "The San Benito Veterans' War Memorial is the only place where I will be able to honor my uncle, Victor Garcia, who was declared Missing In Action on Dec. 12, 1950 in the North Korean Peninsula during the Korean Conflict. There is no grave to visit or name on a wall to pray over. Many families have the same situation."

**Veterans' Memorial of San Benito Advisory Committee Prayer: Recited at each monthly and special meeting of the Veterans Advisory Board since its inception.**

Let us pray. Lord, guide us to make good decisions in this meeting and throughout this important project. Assist each of us so that we may communicate and work together to improve this Veterans' Memorial. We ask that you also guide our city leaders in the decision-making process pertaining to this and other projects. In your name we pray. Amen.

*--Adopted April 10, 2002*