

# Salinas man has dreams of local Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Fund-raising begins for marker at local veterans park

By Glenn Cravens  
The Californian

A Salinas man, whose brother died in the Vietnam War, is hoping the community will pitch in to help create a Vietnam Veterans Memorial here.

"The only way we're going to get this done is to get all the veterans involved, all people involved," said Dave Keith, who formally kicked off a fund-raising drive for the memorial at a ceremony on Sunday.

## To help

For information on how to donate to the Monterey County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Committee, call 758-1005.

About 60 people attended the ceremony at All Veterans Park on East Laurel Drive near the Mission Trails Regional Occupational Center.

The ceremony was a chance to pay respects to those fallen in battle, but it was also a chance to see the park in its early stages.

The park has been a dream 15 years in the making for Keith, who hopes to create a fitting memorial to

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Salinas-area soldiers who died in the Vietnam War.

When complete later this year, the park will sport new grass and picnic facilities with benches and barbecues, as well as memorials to fallen soldiers.

Already in place are six flags, representative of each branch of the armed forces,

the Coast Guard and the United States, and 78 crosses lined up in a triangle. Each of the 3-foot high wooden crosses represents a Salinas-area soldier who died in the Vietnam War. A second section of the park includes permanent metal poles for the U.S. flag, the state flag and the prisoner of war flag.

Yet to arrive at the park is a massive medallion, a replica of a pin given to mothers whose children were lost in battle, that will be sunk into the ground between the crosses and the flags.

A large wooden monument Keith built is already installed at the park. It's painted like a national flag, with 50 stars and a blue background. But the red stripes are the names of the 78 deceased soldiers.

# MEMORIAL/ Fund-raising effort begins Sunday in Salinas

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He wants to replace his wooden monument with a permanent, 8-foot by 20-foot bronze replica. Keith hopes to raise enough donations to cover the \$80,000 price tag.

Other Vietnam memorials are in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., and Keith, whose brother, Danny Joe, as well as a cousin died in Vietnam, says it's about time a memorial was created here. "It is

only a park, but it will be a place you can go for solace and a place to give reverence to those who gave their all," Keith said.

At Sunday's service, he told the crowd to remember those who have died in battle and those who are fighting overseas.

"We have to honor those people and praise the new heroes," Keith said.

## To attend

**TODAY ■ UNFURLING OF THE FLAGS, 7 a.m.** More than 1,000 flags will be raised at Garden of Memories Memorial Park. Volunteers welcome. Furling of the flags begins at 4 p.m., followed by a ceremony with keynote speaker Assemblyman Simon Salinas. Information: 449-1690.

**TODAY ■ MEMORIAL DAY MASS AND AVENUE OF THE FLAGS, Queen of Heaven Cemetery, 18200 Damian Way, Salinas.** Celebration begins at 10 a.m. with a Mass in the cemetery chapel, followed by the unfurling of the Avenue of Flags and a 21-gun salute. The American Legion Motorcycle Riders will ride through the cemetery at 11:15 a.m.

**TODAY ■ AVENUE OF THE FLAGS, 10 a.m. to noon.** More than 60 U.S. flags will be unfurled at a ceremony that includes a convocation by the Rev. Rudy Ruiz and other speakers. Castroville District Cemetery, Moss Landing Road and Highway 1, Moss Landing.

**TODAY ■ MONTEREY BAY SYMPHONY CONCERT ON THE LAWN, 10:30 a.m. rehearsal; 2 p.m. concert.** Annual free concert features patriotic music. Colton Hall Lawn, Pacific Street, Monterey.

**TODAY ■ AMERICAN LEGION POST NO. 41 MEMORIAL DAY CELEBRATION, 11 a.m.** Speech by Monterey Mayor Dan Albert, Monterey High School Jr. ROTC Color Guard and 21-gun salute. Monterey City Cemetery, Lake El Estero, Monterey.



DORIAN HANNER/THE CALIFORNIAN  
Fernando Armenta Jr. and his son Fernando Jacob hold flags Sunday at the dedication ceremony in Salinas.

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