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Moraga to Dedicate Veterans' Memorial

By Sophie Braccini



John Haffner, Tony Knox and Jay Ingram indicate the site of the new Memorial Rock. Photo Sophie Braccini

On Veterans Day, the anniversary of the signing of the Armistice that ended World War I, the Moraga Town Council will dedicate a Memorial Rock to all the men and women who served our country in the armed forces and were exposed to acts of war. The three-foot high granite boulder, bearing an engraved plaque honoring the seven uniformed services of the United States, was the idea of Moraga veteran John Haffner. The project was completed by Tony Knox, as his Boy Scout Eagle project. The ceremony will be held at the Moraga Commons Park, close to the flag pole, on November 11th at 11:00 a. m. All residents, veterans and individuals wanting to honor them, are invited to join in.

"Last May, Herb Lederman from the Aklan District (Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda) of Boy Scouts of America asked me why we didn't have a Veterans' Day celebration in Moraga, and I told him that the reason was that we had no special place for it," remembers John Haffner, President of the Military Officers Association of America, Contra Costa County Chapter. "The next morning, at a Kiwanis breakfast, Annette Knox told us that her son Tony was looking for an Eagle Scout project - this was the perfect opportunity."

Knox said that one of his motivations to complete the project was to honor the memory of both his grandfathers, who fought in WWII. Supported by Scout Master Jeff Baldwin, the Campolindo High School junior set the ball in motion. He soon discovered that the project required more work than he thought, but everyone was very

supportive. "I had never worked with so many adults at once," says the soon-to-be Eagle Scout, "many decisions had to be made and Town's protocol had to be followed."

Jay Ingram, Moraga's Parks and Recreation Director, made sure that the process followed standard procedure. "The project had to meet the current Memorial and Donation Policy as well as the Public Art Donation Policy," said Ingram, "since all the elements were compliant, the project was approved by the Parks and Recreation Committee, before the proclamation that is scheduled for the November 10 Town Council Meeting."

The rock, three feet tall and four feet wide, will be set by the public trail that crosses the Moraga Commons Parks, just west of the parking lot. A brass plaque with an engraving identifying the seven uniformed services of the United States (United States Army, United States Marine Corps, United States Navy, United States Air Force, United States Coast Guard, United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Corps) is set in the stone.

The total cost of the project is about \$5,000. The Moraga Park Foundation provided the initial seed money, and local service groups and generous individuals are contributing the remaining funds.

The celebration on November 11 will be both solemn and colorful. John Haffner, in his captain's uniform, will accept the Memorial from the Town on behalf of local veterans. A re-enactment of the Civil War will be performed, and a bagpiper from Travis Air Force Base will provide entertainment.

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