

Assembly Bill No. 1289

CHAPTER 191

An act to add Section 429.9 to the Government Code, relating to state government.

[Approved by Governor August 28, 2013. Filed with
Secretary of State August 28, 2013.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1289, Cooley. State government: California Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Existing law establishes the state flag and the state's emblems, including, among other things, the poppy as the official state flower and the California redwood as the official state tree.

This bill would establish the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial as the official state Vietnam veterans war memorial.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) California has the largest United States veteran population in the nation, comprised of approximately one million eight hundred thousand armed services veterans, which is 8.3 percent of the nationwide veteran population of approximately 22 million veterans.

(b) More than 350,000 California veterans served in Vietnam, resulting in 5,822 killed or missing in action, which comprised more than 10 percent of the nation's total, and 40,000 wounded.

(c) More California residents died in Vietnam than residents of any other state and California veterans received more Medals of Honor, Bronze Stars, and Purple Hearts than veterans of any other state.

(d) The history of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial began when Herman Woods, a double amputee who served in the 1st Air Cavalry Division, United States Army (1970), returned to California from the dedication of the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial in our nation's capitol, Washington, D.C., in 1982.

(e) Assembly Member Richard Floyd subsequently held a rally on the steps of the State Capitol and over 800 people attended; he was convinced that construction of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial was the will of California Vietnam veterans.

(f) Assembly Member Richard Floyd introduced Assembly Bill 650, which created the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Capitol Park, and was signed into law by Governor Deukmejian in September 1983.

(g) The newly formed Vietnam Veterans Memorial Commission was comprised of nine veterans, eight of whom served in Vietnam, including Linda J. McClenahan, Chairperson, Leo K. Thorsness, Medal of Honor recipient and Vice Chairperson, and members Gregory C. Green, Treasurer, Abel A. Cota, Secretary, B.T. Collins, Don A. Drumheller, Jesse G. Ugalde, Senator Jim Ellis, Assembly Member Richard E. Floyd, member and author of Assembly Bill 650, and Jerri L. Dale, Executive Officer, which led to the creation of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

(h) The California Vietnam Veterans Memorial is located in the northeast section of the Capitol Park grounds of the State Capitol and is a standing tribute to the 5,822 servicemen and servicewomen killed and missing in action.

(i) The California Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated on December 10, 1988, in Capitol Park; there were thousands in attendance at the dedication ceremonies where Brigadier General George B. Price was the keynote speaker at the dedication; and the dedication events were spread out over a two-day period, commencing with “Buddy Search” registrations, unit reunions, open houses, and concluding with the dedication ceremony in Capitol Park.

(j) The theme of the memorial reflects the overwhelming majority of those who were killed in Vietnam, including 19-year-old infantry soldiers, their youth, camaraderie, the fatigue of the war, and the American women who served, with the winning entry in the opening design competition awarded to Michael Larson, a Marine Corps Vietnam veteran, and Thomas Chytrowski.

(k) B.T. Collins and Stan Atkinson, who had traveled to Vietnam together after the war, undertook the mission of raising the necessary funds to complete the memorial.

SEC. 2. Section 429.9 is added to the Government Code, to read:

429.9. The California Vietnam Veterans Memorial is the official state Vietnam veterans war memorial.