

PH 0508969

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED NOV 7 1977  
DATE ENTERED FEB 13 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Veterans Home of California Chapel  
AND/OR COMMON "Armistice Chapel"

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER State Route 29  
CITY, TOWN Yountville VICINITY OF Napa COUNTY Napa CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Second  
STATE California CODE 06 COUNTY Napa CODE 055

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: (storage)

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME State of California  
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN VICINITY OF STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Napa County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER 821 Coombs Street  
CITY, TOWN Napa, CA. STATE California 94558

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE California Statewide Inventory  
DATE

1973 DEPOSITION FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
Office of Historic Preservation P.O. Box 2390  
CITY, TOWN Sacramento STATE California 95811

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The little church that the men of wars built nearly 60 years ago has not changed in appearance all that much.

Virtually every stick of wood is still there. Some has been added, however.

An assemblage of rare glass created into a masterpiece cathedral window remains. An alike artpiece has been removed.

The original shingles still are there. But, they've been regulated to concealment under fireproof composition shingles.

The bungalow chapel's small steeple lost its non-sectarian aluminum cross. But it has been recovered and is ready for re-installation.

Originally, the building had a width of 28 feet, eight inches. It was 65 feet, three inches long. It was shaped into an "ell" in 1950 by the addition of 760 square feet at the southeast corner to provide for a multi-use section.

When a new chapel was constructed in 1959, the overwall of the front door was decorated with just the United States eagle emblem that had been a part of the second stained-glass window of the Old Chapel. The six-by-12-foot hole created by removal of the window was enclosed with a finish to match the walls on both sides.

No other alterations -- other than the removal of chapel and pulpit furnishings -- had occurred since it was built, sturdy and diminutively stately.

Landscaping?

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW.			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1918	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1917-1959

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

George MacDougall, State Architect

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Builder: Veterans Home of California

The year was a century ago. Exactly. It was 1877.

The date was December 4.

The setting was a meeting of the Lincoln Post, No. 1, Department of California, Grand Army of the Republic.

The man was Lt. Col. J. J. (James Jerome) Lyon. He'd served with the 21st Missouri Infantry in the war between the States.

He made the motion. It proposed the Veterans Home of California for disabled veterans. His comrades concurred.

They named a committee. And then "the boys in blue" went to work.

It is documented that: "While this committee was not idle, no results were accomplished."

In 1881, they shifted to a new approach. The Veterans Home Association was incorporated, with 20 representatives from the GAR and five from the Mexican War Association.

From donations, a 920-acre farm and oak forest adjoining the village of Yountville (Napa Valley) was purchased in 1882 for \$17,750.

In 1883 they built a three-storied structure for dormitories, hospital, dining room, kitchen, library, offices and chapel. The cost: \$16,130.50.

Officially, that one building and the land became the Veterans Home of California on April 1, 1884.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- A. Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Veterans Home of California. Located at the California Veterans Museum. Oct. 20, 1917; Apr. 9, 1927; Feb. 16, 1929; Aug. 17, 1929; Mar. 15, 1919; Apr. 19, 1919; June 21, 1919; May 16, 1925; June 20, 1925; Oct. 17, 1925.
- B. Annual Reports of the Veterans Home of California to the Board of Directors and to the Governor: 1919, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930-1946.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Two acres

UTM REFERENCES

4249-290

A	[ 1 0 ]	[ 5 5 5 5 4 0 ]	[ 3 7 2 3 0 4 0 ]	B	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]	D	[   ]	[   ]	[   ]

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is roughly 578' x 150' in size, bordered by access roads on the east, west and south. Beginning at a point at which the western and southern roads intersect, go south 150', then proceed northerly 578', turn to the west and proceed 118'. Then proceed north 24', west 32', and back 602' to the point of origin.

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES:

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Harold Vejby, president

ORGANIZATION

The Veterans Home of California Historians'

DATE

July 8, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

Post Office Box 258, Veterans Home

TELEPHONE

(707) 944-2422, Ext. 209

CITY OR TOWN

Yountville

STATE

California 94599

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Knowm Ellen

10/20/77

TITLE

SHPO

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

2/13/78

KEEPER ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

2-13-77

(LEBOWITZ)

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DATE ENTERED	1979

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ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 2

Napa County Historic Resources Inventory  
1973 X County  
Filed with:

Napa Landmarks, Inc.  
P.O. Box 702  
Napa, Calif. 94558

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As the neighborhood of the chapel changed through advancing years, so did the landscaping of the church yard.

In the beginning, the chapel had a surrounding of moderately-sized trees to the north and west. A small orange orchard grew to the south and evergreen trees were developing to the east.

The Old Chapel's closest botanical companion was a Cecile Bruner climbing bush of miniature pink roses.

It was removed in 1974 in a "miracle transplant", thrives today and can be successfully returned to the chapel because "it is entitled to a second miracle".

Planting continued -- shrubs and evergreen trees -- and in its horticultural peak, reached circa 1938, reference developed to "The Little Chapel in the Woods".

Even after the 1959 chapel was constructed, landscape maintenance continued and the "church yard" had expanded to approximately two acres when the Alameda Mall became completed in the late 1950s.

Throughout the area, many trees of the wilderness had been planted, including a stand of 14 California Coastal Redwoods which now has been designated as the Nelson M. Holderman Grove.

However, around 1970 and "in the interest of economy", the grounds crew was drastically curtailed and the chapels yard was shorn of most of its smaller plants.

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Able to care for themselves on their own, the more gigantic trees were spared the hatchet.

Restoration thinking in behalf of the Old Chapel includes new and immediate plantings, where feasible.

"Bring back the 'Grandmark' image as thoroughly as possible," proponents say.

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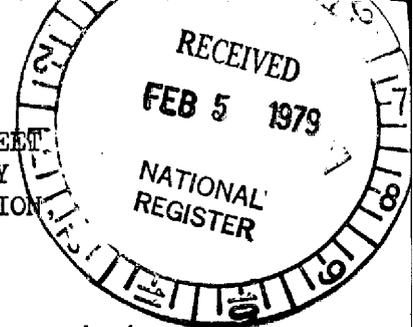
ITEM NUMBER 7

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The Veterans Home of California Chapel, built in 1918, is a simple stucco church reminiscent of the humble English country chapel. Round-arched stained glass windows originally graced the end facades, and a small pointed-arch covered entranceway embellishes the left half of the front facade. The original setting which included an orchard adjacent to the chapel, ivy which covered the building and dense shrubbery is gone.

The interior is notable for its three arched wooden trusses which span and support the pointed wooden ceiling. In 1950 an addition was added to the southwest corner, and in 1959 one of the stained glass windows was removed, and the window space enclosed as part of the wall.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET  
VETERANS HOME CHAPEL (ARMISTICE CHAPEL), NAPA COUNTY  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FOR ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION  
ITEM # 7



The Armistice Chapel is a single, one-story, detached structure. It was designed in the English country Gothic style architecture with a stucco exterior. A simple bell cote or small steeple tower sits flush with the front gable end (Photo #8) and was originally topped by an aluminum cross, which was removed and is now in the possession of the Veterans Home of California Historians. The original shape of the Chapel was rectangular, measuring 28'8" by 65'3". An 18x20' wing of similar style and materials was added to the southeastern corner in 1952. Some time in the 1930's, the original cedar roof shingles were overlaid with red composition shingles in compliance with fire regulations. The covered entrance porch on the northwestern corner also includes the original toilet facilities. (Photo #8) The built-up double doors form an arch and contain all their original hardware, as does the door on the southwestern corner of the building.

The interior, with a height of 25'6", has a series of three Gothic-like trusses, similar in construction to the 14th and 15th century English braced collar roof or wagon roof. (Photo #12) The trusses are composed of a simple king post which in turn is supported by a segmented arch brace. They are made of either fir or pine, and are laminated together by bolts made in the Veterans Home machine shop. They support a series of exposed purlins and roof decking, all colored off gray to match.

Two arched six-by-twelve foot cathedral stained glass windows dominate the northern and southern ends of the Chapel, with two pairs of eight-paned windows on each side. All of the glass is marbled and the northern window depicts a cross (Photo #12) and the southern window depicted the Great Seal of the United States in its central circular portion. (Photo #13) The Seal section was the only part saved for a new building when the window was completely removed in 1959. The altar area is 16'3" by 13' deep, and is flanked by narrow work rooms on either side. All of the original hardware is intact. The lighting fixtures are original, but have been turned upside down. (Photos #12, 13) The original 28 pine pews assembled by Home employee, Ben Tarver, were removed, but remain scattered around the Veterans Home complex.

The chapel was surrounded by a great deal of introduced vegetation, the largest and healthiest of which remain. (Photos #18, 21) A stand of 14 California Coastal Redwoods in the Chapel's yard to the north were planted by Colonel-Commandant Nelson M. Holderman in 1928. Other trees include Portuguese cork oak, Giant Sequoias, scarlet oak, live oak, Blue Spruce, birches, and 1 orange tree. Originally, a Cecile Brunner miniature climbing rose bush was planted on the south side of the porch when the Chapel was built. Another man-made element is the "Manila Gun", captured during the Spanish-American War and donated to the Veterans Home of California around the turn of the century.

When the Chapel was scheduled for demolition in 1974, a Home resident-botanist dug up the Cecile Brunner and transplanted it in his hothouse, awaiting its return to its original home. Plans are also being currently made to return the Chapel's landscaping to its original woody state.

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Growth came rapidly to the community of California men who had served in the conflict with Mexico and with the Abraham Lincoln forces in the Civil War.

In 1886-7, two "cottages" to accomodate 80 more men were constructed. Shanties sprung up.

As the population grew, so did the need for space to serve the spiritual needs. Relief came in 1892 when an addition to the Chabot Cottage made possible a social hall. It took care of non-sectarian chapel requirements, also.

Early in the new century, the lower floor of an 1888 building was converted into the GAR Hall. And it, too, provided new room for worshipers to congregate.

In 1915, the Veterans Home built the Lincoln Theater-Library and the visiting ministers who alternated time to the Home had bigger quarters for preachings.

Two years later, when American men and women were absorbed in the World War, plans were taking shape in minds of men of previous was for a separate structure that would be the Veterans Home Chapel.

They built it with a folksy, country-side appearance on the outside and architecturally artful on the inside.

Carrying out plans of a state architect, men from the Home's maintenance staff and "outside labor", supervised by Chief Engineer

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K. L. Lawrence, completed their work in time for the first services at about the time of the November 11 Armistice.

Historical significance is placed on the interior by the description of restoration architect Dan Petersen (A.I.A.): "The interior of the Chapel has a series of Gothic-like trusses which are constructed similar to the early (14, 15th century) English braced collar roof or wagon roof. The material and finish is very much like that what was being done in the 1915's and on, during the Craftsman Style architectural movement, though this theme is very much in the simple Gothic style."

Total completion was delayed because two cathedral, stained-glass windows "came from a long way off and were a long time getting here". Rarity is added to the beauty of the one window that fully remains today by the fact that the glass is a creation of a "lost art".

Not until October 1, 1929, did the Home have a full-time chaplain. The Rev. Charles Sylvester Vail of Los Angeles assumed duties as protestant pastor and also became a California military captain, a recreation supervisor and the welfare officer.

Catholic worshipers were bused to St. Joan of Arc Church in Yountville. Jewish rabbis, Episcopal vicars and Christian Science readers also came to the Home to serve.

After 12 years, Chaplain Vail retired and the Rev. Claude

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Richmond of Watsonville was appointed his successor. In 1960, Major Richmond entered retirement and former Marine Corps Chaplain H. Marlowe Linke took command of the Veterans Home pulpit.

For the years 1918-1959, the Old Chapel was the locale for worship, weddings, funerals, other ecclesiastical functions and social gatherings. The funeral services always were conducted with military protocol as were the burial rites that followed "up the hill" at the Veterans Home Cemetery. Military motifs often were in evidence, also, at other functions in the Chapel.

When it was replaced by a new church on November 8, 1959, it became a multi-use center for musical, educational, therapudic, patriotic and comraderie events.

Today, after some termite erosion and condemnation by State authorities, its use is restricted to storage and sale by auction of articles of deceased residents of the Home.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET  
VETERANS HOME CHAPEL (ARMISTICE CHAPEL), NAPA COUNTY  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FOR STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE,  
ITEM #8

Before 1892, the spiritual needs of the Veterans Home of California members were met with weekly services held by visiting Napa Valley clergy. The only space available for these meetings was in the first building on the grounds, which had other uses during the week.

With the construction of a social hall in 1892, the newly created space allowed for more worshippers. Then, in the early 1900's, the lower floor of an earlier building was converted into the GAR Hall, thereby increasing the room for religious services. In 1915, the newly built Lincoln Theatre-Library provided larger quarters for the rapidly growing population.

In 1917, construction of the Veterans Home's first chapel was initiated. Captain T. W. Lawrence, Chief Engineer, oversaw its development to its completion in the spring of 1918, Armistice year.

The Veterans Home continued to host visiting preachers of the various denominations in its new chapel. In Sept., 1928, Rev. Charles S. Vail of Los Angeles applied for a job as Chaplain. The Board of Directors was unable to fund such a position until the following July. Even then, the Chaplain's duties were many. Rev. Vail began full-time in October as a Protestant pastor, recreation supervisor, and welfare officer for the sum of \$1800 per year.

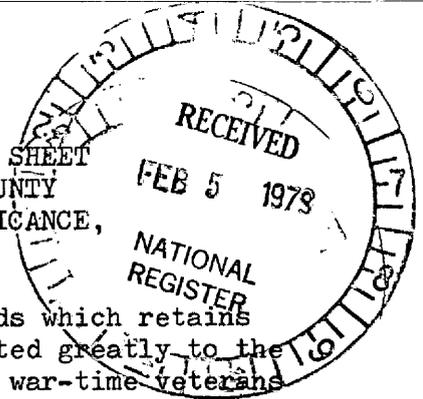
Catholic worshippers were bused to a local church. Jewish rabbis, Episcopalian vicars and Christian Science readers continued to visit and serve.

After 12 years, Chaplain Vail retired and Rev. Claude Richmond, of Watsonville, came as Vail's successor. He increased the responsibilities of his position by offering full Protestant services to the bedridden as well as the ambulatory residents, by giving Bible classes, and by beginning the Home publication, Observation Post. He also planned and oversaw the construction of Memorial Chapel in 1959, which tripled the square footage of its predecessor.

In the years 1918 - 1959, the Armistice Chapel got full use and was the pivotal point for all Home religious functions. It was the locale for regular and special worship services for Home residents and nearby veterans organizations as well as for weddings, funerals with full military ceremony for Home residents and other ecclesiastical functions.

When all these services moved to the Memorial Chapel, the Armistice Chapel continued in use for social gatherings. It was used for Bridge Club and Garden Club meetings, for sing-a-longs, band practice and other social functions. This pattern was maintained until the Home Administration had it condemned and scheduled for demolition in 1973. A stay of execution was granted and today the building is used for storage.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET  
VETERANS HOME CHAPEL (ARMISTICE CHAPEL), NAPA COUNTY  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FOR STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE,  
ITEM #8



One of the oldest surviving structures on the Veterans Home grounds which retains most of its original integrity, the Armistice Chapel has contributed greatly to the welfare and to the social and spiritual lives of the thousands of war-time veterans who have come through the Veterans Home from 1919 to 1959. During that period, the Armistice Chapel was the only structure of its kind in the state of California, as it served the population of the only state facility for veterans.

In the Chapel's time, it served men who had answered their nation's call to war from all over the country. The population of the Home in 1919 consisted of 446 Civil War veterans, 48 from the Indian War and 157 from the Spanish-American War. Well over 75 percent of these men entered their wars from almost every other state in the nation but California. Statistical records are incomplete, but in the years 1917-1946, a total of 17,238 veterans were served by the Chapel. Of that total, 1,592 were Civil War Union veterans, 5,157 saw duty during the Spanish-American War, and 9,843 were first World War military men.

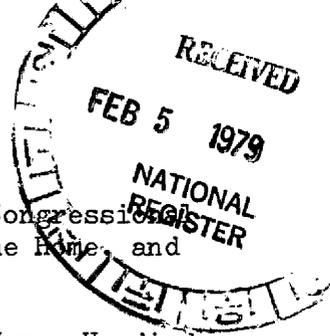
The Chapel was utilized for welfare and social purposes as well as religious. Even after a new chapel was built in 1959, the Armistice Chapel continued to serve the Home population, although in a lessened capacity. For a period of about 15 years, it was used as a headquarters for the Home Band to rehearse and in which to store their instruments and uniforms. It also was used by the Bridge and Garden Clubs for meetings and card games. In the past several years, until very recently, the Armistice Chapel was used first for the periodic sales held by the Properties Office and then for storage.

In 1917, the State Architect, George MacDougall, had his staff design the simple English country Gothic style structure and the plans and location were unanimously approved by the Board of Directors of the Veterans Home of California. Mr. J. S. Dean, representative of the State Department of Engineering, assured the Board that the cost would remain well within the \$5,000 allocated.

Work began and the Home Engineering staff labor was supplemented by local craftsmen. Chief Engineer, T. W. Lawrence oversaw Home employees, E. C. Borman, Ben Tarver, and Walter Tonaschia. Tarver, foreman and carpenter, designed, cut and assembled the Gothic-like trusses, which he laminated with bolts made in the Home's machine shop. No glue was used. He also assembled the 28 pre-cut pine pews that later filled the Chapel. The Armistice Chapel was completed sometime in February or March, 1919, with the exception of steam heat. Furnishings and carpets were added later that year. In May, 1925, the Home's Quartermaster presented bids for the cathedral stained glass windows. The Board of Directors awarded Smith and Company the \$600 contract and the windows were installed satisfactorily by October of that year.

Although is also was used as an extra theatre for plays and musical programs, one of the Chapel's main functions was for the funerals of Home residents and employees. The Home Cemetery had been started many years earlier, but now every veteran who was buried there received a full military funeral at which the Home Band always played and a full procession by caisson to the Home Cemetery. Previous to obtaining a full-time Chaplain, funerals were overseen by local ministers, funeral parlors, and the Home Adjutant.

In the period between 1931 and 1943, 1,049 funerals were performed in the Armistice



Chapel. Four notable funerals deserve recognition. They include two Congressional Medal of Honor recipients, the last Mexican War veteran to reside at the Home, and a leader in the Grand Army of the Republic movement.

Thomas E. Noe had served with the 1st Indiana Infantry in the Mexican War. He died in May, 1919, at the age of 93, soon after the Chapel started functioning. Julius H. Stickoffer, though born in Switzerland, fought with the 8th Cavalry at Cienega Springs, Utah in the Indian Wars. For his "gallantry in action" on November 11, 1868, he received the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1870. Both of these men are buried in the Home Cemetery.

In 1934, Capt. William Hornaday's funeral was held in the Chapel. Capt. Hornaday not only served with the 63rd Indiana at the Battle of Atlanta, recovering the Union colors under fire, but his first enlistment was with the 11th Indiana Zouaves, then under the command of Colonel Lew Wallace (later to become author of "Ben Hur" and governor of New Mexico). Capt. Hornaday served in eleven major engagements plus many minor battles. "After the war, Capt. Hornaday helped form the Grand Army of the Republic, and (has) held many offices in this organization." (1)

The Chapel's most distinguished funeral was the private ceremony for Colonel-Commandant Nelson M. Holderman, who died suddenly in 1953. (See Photo #19 showing Colonel Holderman accepting a donation of altar pieces in front of the altar area). Colonel Holderman had promoted and overseen the Home's growth and development as its commandant for 29 years. He was captain with the 307th Infantry in the famous Lost Battalion, nicknamed by Damon Runyan, then a war correspondent with the New York American. For Colonel Holderman's heroic actions in that Argonne Forest battle, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Silver Star, four Purple Hearts, French Legion Medal and Croix de Guerre, Belgian King Albert Medal, Italian Merit Cross of War, and Portugal's Award of Valor.

While Colonel Holderman was still on active duty at the Presidio of San Francisco, he commanded the Honor Guard that escorted the casket bearing the body of President Warren G. Harding to Marion, Ohio, from San Francisco where he died suddenly in 1923. Not only was Colonel Holderman a personal friend of President Harry Truman, General Henry H. (Hap) Arnold, and Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, but he was also well known by Congressional members and throughout the Pentagon.

In the late 1920's, the Board of Directors and the Home's Commandant began asking, then pleading, for a full-time paid Chaplain. He would be needed more to conduct funeral services and welfare work and to provide entertainment to the population than to minister to the spiritual needs of the veterans. Commandant Holderman saw the position as being similar to that of an Army Chaplain. He would have "the duty of organizing a recreation department within the scope of which would come the theatre, the library and all miscellaneous entertainments." (2) The Chaplain was also responsible for "arranging and supervising schedules for every line of endeavor, which will tend to occupy the minds of the members and to afford an opportunity for mental improvement." (3) His job expanded to include "the supervision of library, bowling alleys, radio and reading room at hospital, theatre, and public day programs." (4)

FOOTNOTES: (1) Sacramento Bee Newspaper, Dec. 17, 1932  
(2) Annual Report to the Board of Directors, 1928  
(3) " " " " " " " " 1929  
(4) " " " " " " " " 1930



The position for Chaplain was created before the money was put into the budget. a result, the Board of Directors received several letters of recommendation for men wishing to be considered for the position. In July, 1929, the Board elected Rev. Charles Sylvester Vail of Los Angeles, Past Chaplain in Chief of the United Spanish War Veterans. He began work on October 1, with the annual salary of \$1800.

He immediately set out to purchase new sound equipment for the theatre. The number of volumes in the already well-established library was 28,964 and had grown by 4,171 in the last year. The Chaplain's work increased as the needs of the veterans multiplied. In 1932, he was appointed Rehabilitation Officer of the Home and he also began a motion picture library chronicling the history of the Home's special days and dedications, during which the current Governor of the state would often make an address.

When the Rev. Vail retired in 1941, Rev. Claude Richmond from Watsonville, came to take over duties. A World War I artilleryman, Mr. Richmond had a college degree in education, with a minor in journalism, plus his divinity degree. He began a weekly mimeographed communication in 1944 called the Veterans Home Communique. He soon expanded it to a tabloid newspaper, printed weekly at San Quentin Prison. Thus was born the Observation Post in 1945. The Chaplain acted as its editor, reporter and photographer, at the same time developing a full professional-quality photographic laboratory for the Home residents. These newspapers today are a valuable source of historical information. Mr. Richmond also created a game room which provided a place for men to enjoy ping-pong, shuffle board and card games.

In 1952, when adding a new wing to the southeastern corner of the Chapel, dryrot was discovered and it was kept under close watch. The new chapel was built in 1959, although the Armistice Chapel continued to be used for a variety of purposes.

The yard surrounding the Armistice Chapel is important to its integrity. Directly to the north, for example, is a stand of 14 California Coastal Redwoods planted by Colonel Holderman in 1928. At the northern-most point of the yard is the "Manila Gun", captured by the U.S.S. Newark on Dec. 11, 1899 at Appari in the Philippines and soon after donated to the Veterans Home of California.

Due to the high degree of the Chapel's architectural integrity, it can be restored to its original state. The aluminum cross which once topped it and the Cecile Brunner rose bush originally planted the same time the Chapel was built are waiting to be returned to their original locations. The southern stained glass window, removed to be used in part in the new chapel in 1959, will be replicated and replaced.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

(Located at the California Veterans Museum)

C. Oral History Interviews:

E. Cleve Borman, Home employee 1905-1952, Chief Engineer 1920-1952.  
Lt. Col. G. L. "Chick" Evans (ret.), former Home Adjutant 1931-1964,  
Home Commandant 1964-1969.

Paul Means, Home Resident and Band Member, 1954-Present

(Many interviews were taken with these people in which incidents were recalled, therefore it is impossible to give specific dates)

(Tapes of interviews on file at the California Veterans Museum)

D. Office of the State Architect, 1500 Fifth St., Sacramento, CA 95814

E. Medal of Honor Recipients, 1863-1973. Prepared for Committee on Veterans Affairs, U. S. Senate, Oct. 22, 1973, California Veterans Museum

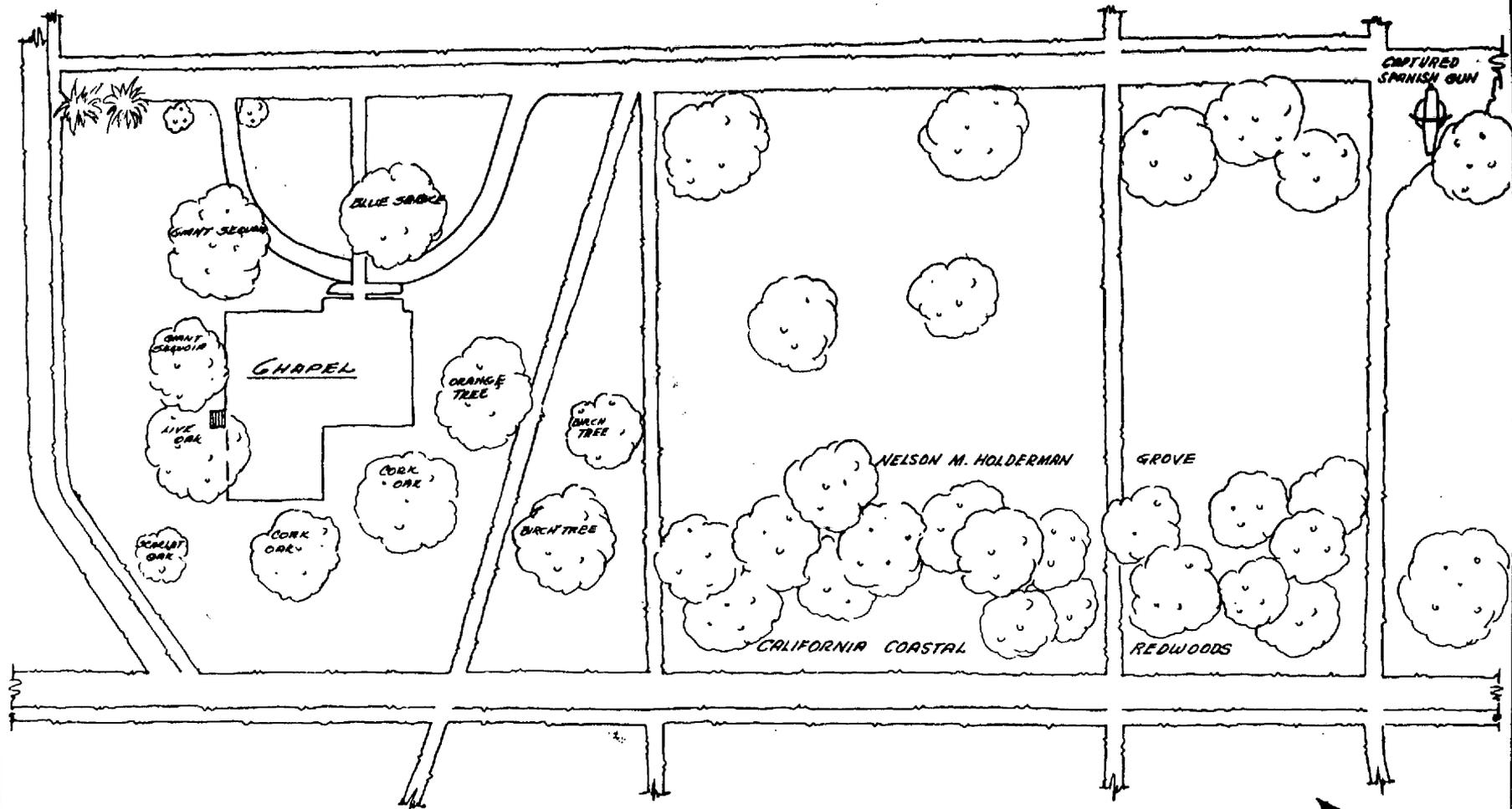
F. Nelson M. Holderman Papers, located at the California Veterans Museum

G. Veterans Home of California Records, Registrar's Office

CHAPEL-MUSEUM RESTORATION ITEMS



1. Restructure termite damage to walls.
2. Restore stucco.
3. Re-roof with fire-resistant wooden (cedar) shingles.
4. Imitate the cathedral window on the south wall.
5. Renovate electrical system and fixtures.
6. Renovate plumbing system.
7. Renovate heating system.
8. Install air-conditioning system.
9. Thermostatically control heating and air conditioning.
10. Restore landscaping.
  - a. Replant hedges and lawn.
  - b. Plant new trees.
  - c. Add to wood-fern plantings.
  - d. Return (transplant) historic Cecile Brunner rose.
11. Cover windows (except cathedral) on the inside only.
12. Install filtered spot lighting system.
13. Repair and replace non-sectarian cross.
14. Renovate small storage room.
15. Improve rest rooms.
16. Redecorate interior walls.



ISOMETRIC DRAWING

VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA  
 "ARMISTICE CHAPEL"

DRAWN BY BOB FREE  
 VETERANS HOME HISTORIANS

Armistice Chapel, showing its location  
in relation to its yard with Nelson M.  
Holderman Grove and captured Spanish  
gun (1899). This is two acres at the  
south end of the 15-acre mall that  
centers the Veterans Home building  
complex.

**FEB 13 1979 NOV 7 1977**