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HISTORICAL LANDMARK MONUMENT IN CITY OF VERNON NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

VERNON, Calif. (August 8, 2018) – On August 7, 2018, at approximately 11 a.m., a literal blast from the past shook the area around Vernon City Hall. The thunderous cannon blast was part of a planned artillery demonstration marking the start of a program to commemorate the unveiling and dedication of a replacement plaque for California Historical Landmark Number 167, the La Mesa Battlefield, also known as the Battle of Los Angeles.

The Battle of La Mesa was fought a short two miles east from the current location of Vernon City Hall on January 9, 1847. Over 1,000 men exchanged fire from rifles, cannons and lancer attacks while battling each other across the plains of La Mesa during the Mexican-American War. The battle marked the final California conflict in the war as the Treaty of Cahuenga was signed three days later. In March of 1935, the State of California installed California Historical Landmark Plaque No. 167 to memorialize the site as one of California’s most significant historical landmarks. The original plaque remained at the location of the battle until it was identified as missing in 2012.

On Tuesday, Vernon City Officials, the Native Sons of the Golden West, civic leaders, members of the U.S. Marine Corps Historical Company, and members of the local community gathered at Vernon City Hall to witness the dedication of the replacement plaque and to celebrate the unveiling of this historical monument. “We are honored to provide a site for the public to visit, enjoy and learn about the Battle of La Mesa,” declared Vernon City Mayor Yvette Woodruff-Perez as she addressed those in attendance. “We hope that you leave here with a better understanding of our history.”

The Native Sons of the Golden West performed the official dedication and unveiling of the plaque. Set against the backdrop of the American flag, the U.S. Marine Corps Color Guard opened the ceremony with the presentation of colors. The program included a narrative of the Battle of La Mesa by historian Steve Clugston dressed in full regalia from the time period, followed by performances from the Vernon City Elementary School Dance Team and the Middleton Elementary School Folklorico group. The event also featured several pieces by Mariachi Alegria de la Vida, a band comprised of local youth ranging in ages from 8 to 15 years, and closed with a special performance that included the City’s Chief of Police on guitarron and Mayor Woodruff-Perez on violin.

The event was attended by elected officials from the neighboring cities of Huntington Park, Maywood, and Bell as well as well representatives from the Office of U.S. Congresswoman Lucille-Roybal Allard, and Assemblymember Miguel Santiago. Representatives from the Office of Senator Ricardo Lara and the Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis were also present and delivered formal commendations acknowledging the City’s efforts to replace the plaque.

The historic La Mesa Battlefield site was initially marked on September 9, 1926, by four large granite boulders weighing between 6 ½ and 9 tons each. Upon three of the granite boulders were placed bronze plaques engraved with the battle logistics and commemorating the military commanders of the American forces. The original monument was placed in front of the Administration Building of the Union Pacific Los Angeles Stockyard in Vernon, and was later
moved to its current location at Vernon City Hall. The original Historical Landmark plaque remained at the location that marked the exact site of the battlefield until it was identified as missing in 2012. Tuesday’s ceremony marked the culmination of a lengthy undertaking by the California Office of Historical Preservation, the Native Sons of the Golden West and the City of Vernon to replace the original plaque and reunite it with the four large granite boulders from 1926. Together, the boulders and plaque form a historical monument that honors the history and the brave participants of the Battle of La Mesa. Located outside of Vernon City Hall, the monument is accessible to the public at all times.

For more information about this event please visit www.cityofvernon.org.

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The Native Sons of the Golden West were established in 1875 as a fraternal organization to preserve the Spirit of ‘49 and California’s rich history. The organization currently has over 7,000 members statewide and has raised millions of dollars for Cleft Palette and the preservation of California’s history.

The California Office of Historic Preservation was established to promote the preservation of California’s irreplaceable and diverse cultural heritage. To date, the California Office of Historic Preservation has placed over 1,000 historical landmark plaques throughout the state.

The City of Vernon was founded in 1905 to create jobs in California. Vernon’s 1,800 businesses create more than 105,000 jobs in the Los Angeles area – including 55,000 jobs within the City’s 5.2 mile boundary. The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation designated Vernon as California’s ‘Most Business Friendly City.’ Vernon generates more than $330 million in state income and sales taxes, $1.1 billion in taxable spending. Vernon’s businesses provide more than 4.4 billion in salaries and wages annually for workers in Los Angeles County. For more information, go to www.cityofvernon.org.

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