

## **Union Cemetery**

Union Cemetery, a 501 C 13 nonprofit cemetery, is Kern County's historical cemetery that was created in 1872 with the burial of Colonel Thomas Baker. Since 1904 it has operated under the care of the cemetery's Board of Directors. Part of our mission is to honor the legacy of various groups that have played significant roles in helping to shape our community. In addition to traditional private burial plots and crypts, Union Cemetery also provides community benefit by hosting events such as the National First Responders Day, Memorial Day, Dia De Los Muertos, and others.

Union Cemetery provides educational community tours to celebrate the rich history of those buried there, including local heroes of war dating back to the Civil War.

Currently several monuments adorn the grounds of Union Cemetery celebrating the contributions of local groups. Union Cemetery seeks to raise funds to build a Veterans and First Responders Monument that will highlight the sacrifices and contributions of local first responders, as those still serving. In addition to Union Cemetery being the final resting place of military veterans from the Civil War to present, the first two California Highway Patrolmen statewide killed in the line of duty were from the Bakersfield area, one killed in 1929 and the other in 1930. In addition to the Civil War, Union Cemetery has interred on these hallowed grounds from the Spanish American War, World War I, World II, the Korean War, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Cold War.

The design of the Union Cemetery Veterans and First Responders Monument proposal incorporates light gray granite from California as its main feature, and a series of bronze colored medallions representing all 6 branches of the U.S. Armed Forces and other bronze colored medallions representing first responders, including law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, and others. A brief narrative of the purpose of the monument will adorn its vertical surface, and dramatic lighting will illuminate its features.

In October of 2021 Union Cemetery conducted its inaugural First Responders Recognition Day and it was met with such great community support, the idea began to construct a fitting monument to commemorate the service and sacrifice of our First Responders, but to incorporate a new veterans monument into its design. A committee was formed of community members and the idea moved closer to reality with a prime location at the entrance to our Memorial Park being decided to construct this beautiful tribute. Our goal is to have significant progress underway by October 28, 2024...the date of our next First Responders Recognition Day.

Recently Union Cemetery obtained a Silver Rating with Candid / Guidestar, and we seek to have the Union Cemetery Veterans and First Responders Monument Fund housed at the Kern Community Foundation for maximum community impact.

Contributions to 501 C 13 nonprofit cemeteries like Union Cemetery are tax-deductible as long as those funds are used for the betterment of the entire cemetery. Contributions made to purchase individual burial plots, headstones and crypts are not tax-deductible. We welcome donations from our community to help make this handsome and fitting monument a reality. We hope you will consider donating to this legacy project to honor the men and women who risked it all so we can live the lives we do today. Not only to remember those who have passed away but those who continue to serve in these honorable callings.