Present at Sacramento Valley National Cemetery were two dozen members of both the Sacramento Valley and Golden Gate chapters and guests.

President Ken Blue called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. with the Pledge, a moment of silence and a reading of “A Sailor’s Prayer.”

Ralph Buell, (left) a member of “Bugles Across America,” who played for us at our April meeting, played “Heave Ho.”

Blue read the 2012 proclamation from the White House for Maritime Day, May 22.

Vice President Bob Ulrich introduced Arlene Salvador, who had helped us set up today’s event, and Cynthia Nunez, the director of the cemetery, who welcomed us and said a few words, especially thanking us for the bench. We learned that, at present, there are about 250 Merchant Mariners buried here.

Buell played “America the Beautiful.”

Ulrich said a few words about the beginnings of the Merchant Marine, who strengthened the Continental Navy as Privateers during the American Revolution. He thanked those who donated toward the bench, including the Golden Gate Chapter, the North Bay Chapter, the Sacramento Valley Chapter and individual members and families within the Sacramento Valley Chapter.

James Harris, of (right) of the cemetery program committee, invited us all to the upcoming Memorial Day Services at the cemetery.
Ulrich read a poem and we had a moment of silence for the four members of Sacramento Valley Chapter buried here.

Bill Fairfield took the mike and thanked Ulrich for heading the project, raising the money and working with a vendor to procure and engrave the bench. Ulrich also worked with the cemetery officials to meet their specifications and have it placed. He asked Ulrich and Blue to sit on the bench and, when they were seated, said we could now “formally dedicate this bench.”

Buell played “Taps.”

The ceremony concluded by 11:30 a.m. and most of us went to the nearly IHOP for lunch and more sea stories and chatter.

Respectfully submitted, Mona Schmiedel, Secretary