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Perris Parade Pays Tribute to Veterans

Sunny skies, pleasant temperatures and a sometimes brisk breeze made for a majestic setting at the annual City of Perris Veterans Day Parade.

A total of 50 entries—military vehicles, classic cars, marching bands, dance groups, honor guards, color guards and Polynesian culture performers—made their way down D Street from American Legion Post 595 to City Hall.

A flyover of vintage airplanes announced the beginning of the Nov. 7 parade. American flags, the California state flag and banners from the various military branches festooned several entries and unfurled beautifully in the morning breeze.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch, a Navy veteran, noted the ideal conditions for the annual salute to America's men and women in uniform.

"What a great day for a parade!" Busch said. "It's nice to be able to honor our veterans for what they've done for our country and what they do for our community. It makes me very proud."



A flyover of vintage airplanes signaled the beginning of the annual Veterans Day Parade in Perris on Nov. 7, an event that drew 50 entries and hundreds of participants and observers.

City officials noted that many communities have scrapped their Veterans Day Parade in recent years as a result of tight municipal budgets. Perris officials have no intention of allowing that to happen, Busch said.

"The City of Perris knows it is worthwhile to honor our veterans and we will continue to fund this important civic activity," Busch said.

City Councilman David Starr Rabb, a Navy veteran who served in the Middle East, noted that the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day—later renamed Veterans Day—takes place in 2018. The day was first commemorated to mark the end of World War I, touted as "the war to end all wars." Sadly, wars persist throughout the world today, Rabb said, and Perris is honored to remember the men and women who serve in harm's way.

"It is a great event and I am happy the City of Perris hosts it," he said. "This parade shows our commitment to our veterans, past and present."



Perris City Councilman-elect Mark Yarbrough, State Sen. Richard Roth and Perris Mayor Daryl Busch share a smile prior to the start of the City of Perris annual Veterans Day Parade.

City Councilwoman Rita Rogers she is proud to represent a community that "honors the men and women who guard our freedoms and risk their lives that we may enjoy our liberties."

"There can be no better tribute to honor our veterans," Rogers said.

City Councilman-elect Mark Yarbrough, whose daughter and son are in the military, called the Veterans Day Parade "one of my favorite events, bar none." Yarbrough noted that 13 Civil War veterans are buried in the Perris City Cemetery, having served the American cause long before the City incorporated in 1911.

"To be able to honor our veterans is beyond special to me," he said.

Yarbrough's daughter, Andrea, is an Army sergeant who has completed tours of duty in Germany and Korea. Her twin brother, Schuyler, is a corporal assigned to a tank unit with the Marines and Camp Pendleton and has been deployed to the tense border separating North and South Korea.



Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers greets the crowds gathered along D Street during the Veterans Parade.

Dignitaries also included retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Richard Roth, a California State Senator; Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley and parade Grand Marshal and Vietnam Veteran Benny Villegas.

"This is absolutely a great community event," Roth said. "Perris is a great community and remembers Veterans Day better than just about every other community. It is imperative that we take time and honor the veterans who have given us the lives we enjoy today. Perris has always been a very patriotic community and I am sure it always will be."

Ashley, a Perris Valley resident, said events like the annual parade remind the City that "we can never forget the sacrifices of our veterans."

"We owe them all," Ashley said. "You can always count on this to be a special day."



Perris City Councilman David Starr Rabb shows off his enthusiasm as he greets bystanders at the annual City of Perris Veterans Day Parade.

Crowds lined the parade route, snapping pictures and videos and waving their support for the participants. City volunteers from the Perris Citizens Patrol also worked the event.

One of those volunteers, Gene Rasmussen, served with the Navy in Vietnam. Rasmussen was part of a five-man river patrol boat that provided security for the harbor at Da Nang and along the Perfume River near Hue. His duty also took him to the demilitarized zone between North and South Vietnam. He served during the Tet offensive in 1968, which saw some of the heaviest fighting during the war. He was 19 years old.

His service left him exposed to Agent Orange and he contracted cancer as a result. But Rasmussen harbors no ill will toward the military or the U.S.

"I was proud to serve," said Rasmussen, who left the Navy as a 3rd Class Petty Officer. "I think it's great the City of Perris recognizes and honors its veterans. This is the day we feel we have been recognized."



CMI Battalion Sgt. Maj. Mehran Hossain, 17, puts cadets from the California Military Institute through their paces prior to the start of the Veterans Day parade.

About 200 cadets from the California Military Institute participated, including a marching platoon, color guard, armed platoon and the school band.

Battalion Sgt. Maj. Mehran Hossain, 17, put the cadet through their paces, inspecting uniforms and keeping a close eye on the younger cadets to ensure they maintained properly military bearing and order. Mehran would like to receive an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy and then pursue a career in the Marines. His time at CMI has taught him leadership skills, including organizational skills, time management and logistics. He's led CMI cadets performing Color Guard duties at San Diego Padres games, Los Angeles Clippers games, during drill competitions and when CMI students feed the area's homeless.

Mehran said he hopes Perris veterans who watched the parade took notice of the care and spirit of the CMI contingent.

"I hope they see this and appreciate how much we appreciate what they have done for our country," he said.



Vietnam veteran and Perris Citizens Patrol volunteer Gene Rasmussen said he appreciates the City's commitment to honoring men and women who served in the military.

The following is a list of winning entrants in the Perris parade.

Bands – 1st Place:	CMI – Band
Bands – 2nd Place:	Innovative Horizons
Classic Cars – 1st Place:	'56 Ford Thunderbird
Classic Cars – 2nd Place:	'29 Ford Speedster
Classic Cars – 3rd Place:	'51 Chevy Deluxe
Commercial – 1st Place:	VFW – Perris Post 888
Commercial – 2nd Place:	RTA
Community – 1st Place:	American Heritage Girls
Community – 2nd Place:	Lyrical Leaders
Community – 3rd Place:	Perris Elem. School Dist.
Equestrian – 1st Place:	Perris Mounted Posse
Float – 1st Place:	CA Regional Pageants
Float – 2nd Place:	American Legion Auxiliary
Junior Cheer – 1st Place:	St. James Catholic School
Junior Dance – 1st Place:	City of Perris – Hip Hop 1
Junior Dance – 2nd Place:	Boys and Girls Club
Military Unit – 1st Place:	CMI – Color Guard
Military Unit – 2nd Place:	Perris High – Unarmed
Military Unit – 3rd Place:	Moreno Elem. Marching
Military Excellence:	Perris High – JROTC
Motorcycle – 1st Place:	American Legion Riders
Senior Cheer – 1st Place:	St. James Catholic School
Senior Cheer – 2nd Place:	Perris Panthers Cheer
Senior Dance – 1st Place:	Paloma HS Polynesian Dance
Senior Dance – 2nd Place:	City of Perris – Hip Hop 2
Senior Dance – 3rd Place:	Divas in Pink
Senior Drill – 1st Place:	Perris High JROTC
Senior Drill – 2nd Place:	Knights of Columbus

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