



Perris News

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Perris Makes March 30 "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans" Day

Perris City officials are rolling out the welcome mat for Vietnam veterans at the March 30 City Council meeting.

The City will declare March 30 "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" and are inviting former soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who served there to come to the Council chambers and receive the appreciation that many people feel is long overdue.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed the legislation last year naming March 30 "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" and many cities throughout California are remembering the occasion.

"It's not the politician who give us the right to assemble or the journalist who give us the right to free speech or the minister who provides us freedom of religion," said Perris City Councilman Al Landers. "It's the soldiers, men and women, who protect our freedoms with their lives. Without their sacrifice, we wouldn't even have a country."

Landers knows first-hand the cost of war.

His brother, Richard Landers, was killed in action in Vietnam in 1965. A member of the vaunted 101st Airborne Division, Richard Landers was just 19 years old. He never saw the son who was born after he died.

Al Landers said he escorted his brother's remains home when they arrived from Vietnam.

His mother "grieved for him until the day she died," Landers said. Even today, May 3—the day the family was notified about Richard Landers' death—remains a somber day.

"We owe our soldiers so much," Landers said. "You never forget the loss."

City Councilwoman Joanne Evans, who served in the Marine Reserves during Vietnam, said veterans of that war never received the recognition they deserved. The war was unpopular with many politicians, the media and academia.

Evans said Americans returning from the war zone sometimes were spit on and labeled "baby killers." Almost 58,000 Americans were killed in Vietnam.

"It was a bad time for the U.S.," she said. "It was a bad time for people who were trying to do their duty."

Evans said Perris is home to many veterans. The City is home to American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts. Soldiers from the Civil War to the present are buried in Perris' local cemetery.

"It's important for those who served honorably and nobly to know the City of Perris cares," Evans said. Mayor Daryl Busch, a Navy veteran, will read the proclamation during the City Council meeting, which begins at 6 p.m. on March 30.