



Perris News

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Perris Proclaims "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans"

An emotional Al Landers accepted a proclamation from the City of Perris honoring Vietnam veterans and welcoming them home from an unpopular war that continues to cause heartache and pain for many who served.

Landers, a Perris City Councilman, spoke Tuesday at the City Council meeting where the "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" proclamation was read. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed legislation commemorating March 30 as the welcome home date.

For Landers, the Vietnam War remains personal. His brother, Richard Landers, was killed in 1965 at the age of 19, never seeing the baby son who was born three months after his death. Al Landers said he escorted his brother's remains to their final resting place.

After receiving the proclamation, Landers addressed the audience, which included about 10 Vietnam Veterans from Perris. He recalled that after his brother's death, the Landers family was honored with a ceremony sponsored by the 101st Airborne Division, the unit in which his brother served.

"It meant a lot to us then, and you mean a lot to us now," Landers said.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch is a Navy veteran and Councilwoman Joanne Evans served in the Marines. Her husband, Iral Evans, served with the Navy in Vietnam. Community Services Manager Walter Carter III, who also attended the City Council meeting, retired from the Air Force. His career included Vietnam War service.

Busch and Evans, who took turns reading the proclamation, noted that Vietnam was a "highly politicized war that still evokes strong feelings among veterans and people who disagreed with US policies at the time."

But they said it is "important that we set aside these differences to honor and thank the men and women who fought to preserve the freedoms that we have today."

The war in Vietnam claimed 58,000 Americans lives, including 5,822 Californians and 75 Riverside County residents. Latest estimates place the number of soldiers still listed as missing in action at 1,720.

"Despite their heroic achievements, their honorable and faithful service, despite the wounds and the horrors they saw many Vietnam Veterans were scorned, and then forgotten by many of the countrymen they fought to protect," Evans said.

Retired Air Force veteran Lynn Durbin, who served 33 years before retiring in 2002, hailed the proclamation and the City's recognition ceremony.

"It's about time," she said. "It made my night. This City Council and Mayor are doing a lot of things right. I am really pleased at the reception we received."

Durbin came to the Council meeting with her husband, Don Durbin, who retired after 36 years with the Air Force and fellow veterans Benny Villegas, Tim Moore, Allan Beaton and Phil Driscoll. They all acknowledged Landers and the loss his family suffered.

"I got a bit teary-eyed," Lynn Durbin said.

 [Read the official proclamation...](#)



Perris City Councilwoman reads the "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans" proclamation at Tuesday's City Council meeting. Next to Evans are Perris City Councilman Al Landers and Mayor Daryl Busch. The City presented Landers with the proclamation in honor of his brother, who was killed in Vietnam.