



Perris News

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Perris Pride on Display at Annual Veterans Day Parade

Perris residents by the hundreds showed their red, white and blue patriotism during the City's annual Veterans Day Parade, an extravaganza that featured more than 50 dancing units, marching bands, equestrian riders, classic cars and military vehicles.

"Veterans have done a lot to make us free," Mayor Daryl Busch, a Navy veteran, said before the start of the parade.

"Being the freest country in the world, sometimes we don't realize what we have and that veterans have secured our freedom with their sacrifices. This is a great way to show our support."

Busch rode in a classic Corvette along the parade route, which ran from D Street to San Jacinto Avenue. Mayor Pro-Tem Rita Rogers rode in a 1950 Crosley; City Councilman Mark Yarbrough rode in a race car that runs at the Perris Auto Speedway. City Councilwoman Joanne Evans took charge of the activities at American Legion Post 595, which hosted a VIP breakfast for dignitaries. City Councilman Al Landers and City Clerk Judy Haughney helped announce the parade.

An enthusiastic crowd gathered early to witness the parade.

The audience included many veterans who proudly wore caps and jackets identifying themselves as current or former members of the U.S. military. City officials said this year's parade route allowed more people to congregate on sidewalks to witness the pageantry. Some veterans and visitors took advantage of a double-decker tour bus to participate in the parade.

Rand and Darlena Niblet came out to see their son, DarRand Niblet, march past as part of the California Military Institute. Rand Niblet completed two tours of duty as an Army helicopter crash-and-rescue specialist. Sometimes the work involved pulling injured crew members from their damaged aircraft. Other times Niblet said he removed flight recorders known as "black boxes." Still other times, his duties called for him to remove the remains of men killed in action.

"I am very proud of my service," he said. "We gave our lives and did our duty. I think it's great the City of Perris remembers its veterans with a parade."

Darlana Niblet called the Veterans' Parade "a great time to remember all those veterans who have gone on."

The Perris City Council includes several members with ties to the military. Mayor Busch completed his service in a US Navy destroyer while still a teen-ager. Councilwoman Joanne Evans is a former Marine. Councilman Al Landers' brother, Richard, was killed in action while serving in Vietnam. Councilman Yarbrough's family includes children who have served or are serving with the Air Force, Army and Marines.

Evans said she believes veterans provide the backbone on which this country stands.

"We have to remember we owe our freedom to our veterans," she said. "An event like a parade brings the community together. Everybody loves a parade."

Landers said he is proud the City supports its veterans. Perris recently opened a veterans' resources center at its D Street campus.

"I honor the veterans who are here and those who have passed away," Landers said. "So many made the ultimate sacrifice for the freedoms we have. I always say our veterans are our real American Idols. I urge all people to keep our veterans in their thoughts."

Yarbrough said Perris has enjoyed a relationship with the military dating back more than 100 years. Civil War veterans rest in the Perris Valley Cemetery. The City incorporated in the shadow of March Air Force Base (now March Air Reserve Base) and Perris residents have long served at that facility.

"This City is all about veterans," he said. "I am glad to be part of this ultimate tribute."

Rogers called the Veterans Day parade a "special occasion when we can honor those veterans who have served our country so well."

"They fight for our freedoms every day," Rogers said. "We in Perris take pride in being able to show our support for veterans."

Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley said most cities do not host a Veterans Day parade. He praised Perris for its ongoing and deep commitment to the nation's military.

"Perris is a small town that continues the tradition of holding a Veterans Day parade," he said. "I think that's very special."

Retired Army Maj. Fred Gerdes served as parade grand marshal.

Gerdes, who teaches JROTC at Perris High School, received a plaque honoring his service. The ROTC contingent at Perris High School is one of the tops in the nation and numbers 180 students.

"I'm overwhelmed," he said. "I believe this is a reward for all the kids who go out and do good things."

Perris City Staff who helped make the Veterans Day parade a success included Darren Madkin, Maria Mathey, Sarina Brannon, Josh Estrada, Rachel Rodriguez, Erica Tello, Allen Yun, Steve Pedigo, Eddie Gutierrez, Raul Castillo, Jose Zelaya, Arturo Garcia and Juan Lemus.



Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans and City Councilman Al Landers present Perris High School JROTC Instructor Maj. Fred Gerdes with a plaque for appearing as Grand Marshal.



Perris City Clerk Judy Haughney and City Councilman Al Landers at the reviewing stand. They announced the parade.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch and City Councilman Mark Yarbrough share a laugh before Saturday's Veterans Day Parade.



A military team marches past.



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Rita Rogers: Parade is a special occasion to honor veterans.



Perris residents Rand and Darlena Niblet watch the parade as it moves along.