



## Perris News

Contact: Joe Vargo, Perris Public Information Officer  
Phone: 951-956-2120  
[jvargo@cityofperris.org](mailto:jvargo@cityofperris.org)

### National American Legion Commander Visits Southern California

The national commander of the American Legion visited Southern California recently to talk with the rank-and-file members of the nation's largest veterans' service organization.

Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans was among the dignitaries Clarence Hill met during his brief stopover in the area.

Evans, a former Marine, serves as a public relations consultant to Hill at the national level.

Evans presented Hill with a City of Perris lapel pin during a formal dinner with 200 Legionnaires from around California.

"It's a great honor to have Commander Hill visit us," Evans said. "He is a career Navy officer who has given his life in service to our country and our veterans. I am pleased he has chosen to visit this area. The American Legion has and will continue to fight on behalf of our military veterans, whether it is to lobby for better medical care or educational opportunities for our current and former veterans or to preserve the American ideals that this nation was founded upon."

Hill served 19 years at sea in a 28-year Navy career that saw him command cruisers, frigates, destroyers and PT boats.

He took part in the first Gulf War, serving as commander of the guided missile frigate, USS McInerney. He served with the Sixth Fleet in Italy. He also commanded a Communications Station in Scotland and attended the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, where he received two Master's degrees. He retired as a Captain.

Hill said the American Legion continues lobbying for increased benefits and attention to illnesses and medical conditions afflicting returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan, including post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. He said the Legion also is working to resolve the nearly 1 million unsettled claims filed with the Veterans Administration.

In a particularly high-profile case, the Legion also came to the defense of World War II Medal of Honor recipient Van Barfoot, who was threatened with legal action by his homeowner's association for flying the U.S. flag at his Virginia home. The association eventually backed down.

Hill said the American Legion currently is assisting with "Operation Comfort Warrior" to raise money for veterans wounded in action who need items not provided by the government "to help with the healing process." Those include ipods, DVDs and similar items.

"I have visited wounded troops at Walter Reed (Army Medical Center), Bethesda (Naval Hospital) and Brooke (Army Medical Center)," Hill said. "Most of them just want to get back to their buddies. This is the best force of U.S. military personnel the country has ever had. It's the best trained, the best equipped, the best motivated. They are all volunteers and they serve because they want to maintain our freedoms. The American Legion is there to support them."

Asked to name his Christmas wish for 2009, Hill said he wishes all veterans will be "safe in the performance of their duties, that they will perform those duties with courage and conviction and that their families will have the best Christmas. And I wish for the end of war."



Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans, a former Marine, attaches the City of Perris' lapel pin on a suit worn by American Legion National Commander Clarence Hill.



Hill and Evans exchange greetings during his visit to the American Legion Post 329 in Norco.