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9/11 Heroes Remembered at American Legion 'Patriot's Day' Event



PERRIS, Calif. (September 11, 2019) -- The American Legion Post 595 joined forces with the City of Perris, County Public Safety representatives and members of the Perris Chapters of the VFW Post to honor fallen heroes on September 10, 2019.

Local officials, residents and veterans gathered in unity, remembering those who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the terrorist's attacks against the United States in New York, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001. Breakfast was served, the pledge of alliance made and attending veterans were honored.

The room was filled with veterans of foreign wars, both young and old. Many had wrinkles on their face, representing a lifetime of service. Others had traded in a camouflage uniform for a police badge or a fire fighters' helmet.

Local attorney and former Marine Joshua Naggar gave a speech on the structural unity of the day, reminding us all that after the attacks, Americans were able to set aside differences to grieve in unity. In fact, on December 18, 2001, Democrat and Republican Senate and Congressional representatives were able to set aside their difference and unanimously approved an amendment to title 36, United States Code, to designate September 11 as Patriot Day. This new amendment to Chapter 1 of Title 36 of the United States Code has become Public Law No. 107-89.

"I ask us all to introspect about the discord that may have contributed to the events of September 11," said Naggar. "Contrast the discord with the unity that was written into the law, so we can all remember that unity is what will help us move forward as a nation."

Perris Mayor Michael M. Vargas, Council Member Rita Rogers, and Riverside Sheriff Chad Bianco, as well as Perris City Manager Richard Belmudez, Assistant City Manager Clara Miramontes, Assistant City Manager Isabel Ramirez and other various Perris city staff were at the event to show their support for Patriot's Day.

Riverside Sheriff Chad Bianco also spoke at the event and talked about how service and unity are at the core of what the country stands for.



"The country has a very short memory and days like this remind us of what we represent," said Bianco. "With all the political discourse, it's good for us to come together in unity and remember our heroes and what this country stands for."

Mayor Vargas spoke briefly to highlight the importance of appreciating these veterans and first responders who sacrifice daily to protect the freedoms all Americans enjoy.

"It is important that we recognize our first responders and our veterans," said Vargas. "It's about remembering them because they are a part of the force that keeps us living free in our society."

Council Member Rita Rogers, who is from New York, commended the American Legion Post for their recognition of such an important day and was thankful for the unity displayed in the event.

"As a New York native, the events of 9-11 really hit home for me, so it is good to recognize those who sacrificed for us 18 years ago," said Rogers. "The Spirit of Unity that was present today is refreshing and it's always important for us to recognize those who have gone the extra mile."

As the event closed and hands were shook, the sentiments of unity and gratitude was displayed by an old, yet important tradition.



Noticeably, just off stage left, a POW-MIA Table Setting remained in place, representing the somberness of those who have not returned home. The table setting is an important part of the American Legion, who describe the table as The Missing Man Table, or the Fallen Comrade Table. It is a semi-official place of honor in some dining facilities of the US armed forces in memory of fallen, missing in action, or prisoner of war military service-members. The table serves as the focal point of ceremonial remembrance, originally growing out of US concern of the Vietnam War POW/MIAs. It's description from the American Legion website reads as:

- "The small table is set for one, representing the frailty of one prisoner, alone against his or her suppressors.*
- The table is usually set close to, or within sight of, the entrance to the dining room. The table is round showing our everlasting concern for our POW/MIAs.*
- The cloth is white symbolizing the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms.*
- The single red rose signifying the blood they may have shed in sacrifice to ensure the freedom of our beloved United States of America. This rose, reminding us of the family and friends of our missing comrades who keep the faith, while awaiting their return.*
- The yellow ribbon stands for the yellow ribbons worn on the lapels of the thousands who demand with unyielding determination a proper accounting of our comrades who are not among us tonight.*



- A slice of lemon reminding us of the bitter fate of those missing, captured and held as prisoners in foreign lands.*
 - A pinch of salt denoting the tears of our missing and their families who long for answers after decades of uncertainty.*
 - The Holy Bible represents the strength gained through faith in our country, founded as one nation under God, to sustain those lost from our midst.*
 - The lighted candle reflects the light of hope which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors, to the open arms of a grateful nation.*
 - The glass is inverted symbolizing their inability to share the evening's toast."*
- Just like those POWs, those who gave their life on September 11, 2001 are heroes. We remember these heroes because they cannot come home, we honor them because of the sacrifices they made, and we unite together to make sure their sacrifice was not in vain.

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