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## Perris Veterans Remembered on Memorial Day



American Legion Post 595 Commander Mike Weir recites the names of Perris veterans who have died in the last 12 month. To the left of Weir is Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 888 Commander Tim Moore, while Army veteran Bruce Allen prepares to strike a bell in their memory.

The City of Perris joined with veterans groups to remember the nation's war dead in a somber ceremony May 28 at the Perris Valley Cemetery.

Perris Mayor Michael Vargas, Mayor Pro-Tem Malcolm Corona and City Councilmembers Tonya Burke and David Starr Rabb represented the City at the Memorial Day remembrance.

The ceremony included the reciting of the names of 13 Perris veterans—including former Mayor and Navy shipboard radar operator Daryl Busch—who have died in the last year. It also featured the appearance of several Patriot Guard Motorcycle riders, the playing of Taps and the placing of wreaths on war memorials at the cemetery, the final resting place for hundreds of Perris veterans, including 13 from the Civil War and two from the Spanish-American War.

### Never forget

Vargas remembered his dad and his wife's grandfather, both veterans of World War II and Korea.

"It's always an honor to give honor to those who have served us and sacrificed for our freedom," Vargas said. "It's important we don't forget our veterans for what they've sacrificed and given to us to preserve our freedom."

Corona said he was proud to take part in the 45th annual Perris commemoration of Memorial Day.

"We can never forget the veterans who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country," Corona said. "We're here to show that their sacrifices will never be forgotten and always remembered."

Burke said the sacrifices of veterans living and dead ensure American freedoms enjoyed today.

"It's always an honor to celebrate our veterans and remember those who have passed on," Burke said. "Their sacrifices ensure the civil liberties we enjoy and sometimes take for granted. Veterans have always played a significant role in our community and, as a City, we have always taken great pride in our military. We must carry on their legacy so people will know that our veterans are here and have served us proud."

Rabb, a Navy veteran who served during the Global War on Terror, said Memorial Day "honors the people who have made the ultimate sacrifice and kept our country moving forward."

### The price of freedom

Keynote speaker Altie Holcomb, a retired Marine captain and 20-year military veteran, noted the bloody cost of American freedom: 700,000 killed in the Civil War, 116,000 in World War I, 406,000 in World War II, 36,000 in Korea, 58,000 in Vietnam and more than 7,000 in conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. More than a million Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice.

"They are not merely numbers representing lives lost for a greater good," Holcomb said. "They died so we can criticize our government."

Holcomb is a veteran of the Gulf War and Iraq War who has served a company commander, about naval ships and at U.S. Central Command. He said he has never encountered a veteran who enlisted to earn riches and fame. Far fewer people will ever visit the markers of a fallen soldier, sailor, airmen or Marine then will travel to see the graves of celebrities like Elvis Presley or Michael Jackson.

"But those who put on a military uniform earn something money can never buy—respect," Holcomb said.

### Life and legacy

Holcomb concluded his remarks by paying tribute to former Mayor Busch, who served 17 years as the City's top elected official. Busch completed a hitch in the Navy, moved to Perris from the Midwest, worked as a banker, owned and operated a restaurant before being elected in 1999. His tenure as mayor is the longest in the 107-year history of Perris.

"Daryl Busch was one of the most active residents in this history of this town," Holcomb said. "His life and legacy will be felt for generations."

Tim Moore, commander of Perris Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 888 and Michael Weir, commander of American Legion Post 595 concluded the Memorial Day ceremony, taking turns reading off the names of the 13 local veterans who died in the last year.

As they read the names, Army veteran Bruce Allen struck a bell in their honor. The tolling of the bell symbolized the deceased veterans now reside in "Post Everlasting."

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