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## 2017 Veteran's Day Parade



A flyover of four vintage airplanes announced the kickoff of the annual City of Perris Veterans Day Parade on Nov. 4.

Brilliant sunshine and pleasant temperatures provided an awesome backdrop for the annual City of Perris Veterans Day Parade, which featured an assortment of marching bands, color guards, drill teams, military vehicles and dignitaries.

Grand Marshal Dennis Romano, who spent 32 years in the military, was honored prior to the start of the Nov. 4th festivities with a proclamation and statue by Perris Mayor Michael Vargas, City Councilman Malcolm Corona, City Councilwoman Rita Rogers and members of American Legion Post 595, where Romano is a member. Also recognized was Romano's therapy dog, Murphy, who assists him in getting around following a stroke.

State Senator Richard Roth, D-Riverside and; Assemblyman Jose Medina, D-Riverside, and Sheriff Stan Sniff, joined Perris elected officials in taking part in the parade down D-Street, which included more than 40 entries. A four-plane flyover of vintage aircraft provided an inspiring tapestry for the pageantry below.

### Freedom's Cost

Vargas remembered his father, Sgt. Joe Vargas, a veteran of World War II and Korea.

"Those who serve, have served or have paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom deserve our utmost respect," he said. "Freedom comes with a huge price. The City of Perris is pleased to host this annual parade as our way to recognize and honor those who have served. What a glorious day to host this parade!"

Mayor Pro-Tem David Starr Rabb, a Navy veteran who deployed to the United Arab Emirates as part of the Global War on Terror, said the parade is "always a great event and a great way to honor our veterans."



Rays of early-morning sunshine backlight some of the many dignitaries who attended the Nov. 4 Veterans Day Parade in the City of Perris: City Councilman Malcolm Corona, Assemblyman Jose Medina, D-Riverside, Perris Mayor Michael Vargas, Mayor Pro-Tem David Starr Rabb, City Councilwoman Tonya Burke, City Councilwoman Rita Rogers with her grandson, Jordan, and Riverside County Sheriff Stan Sniff.

"It's important to remember the sacrifice our veterans have made in all the nation's wars," said Rabb, a Gunner's Mate Second Class in the Navy.

One million Americans have died defending the U.S. since the Revolutionary War. Perris has hosted remembrances since Civil War veterans marched through Downtown Perris in 1891, long before the City incorporated. Thirteen Union veterans from the Civil War lie in the Perris Valley Cemetery, along with more than 900 others from all wars since.

City Councilwoman Tonya Burke said the country owes its existence to the men and women who put on the uniform and stand in harm's way.

"It's important to show our appreciation for their service to keep us free," Burke said. "It's great to honor our veterans and their families."

Burke said the City displays banners of Perris residents currently serving in the U.S. military, a continuing commitment to those in uniform.

City Councilman Corona said the Veterans Day Parade allows residents "to give honor and thanks to our veterans who served and continue to serve us."

"It's a great way to show we support them and it's a great way to get our community together," Corona said.



Perris City Councilman David Starr Rabb completed the parade route while cruising along on roller skates during the Veterans Day Parade.

City Councilwoman Rogers called the annual Veterans Day Parade one of the highlights of her tenure as an elected official. She's attended each parade in her 18 years on the City Council.

"We have a wonderful sunny day so we can salute the veterans who have done so much for the City of Perris and our country," Rogers said. "No one deserves the recognition more than our veterans who work every single day to protect our freedoms."

City Clerk Nancy Salazar spoke about her son, Navy Corpsman Joseph Salazar, who after his service attended nursing school to pursue a career as a registered nurse. Joseph Salazar deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, during his time in uniform.

"This day is our way of telling our veterans we appreciate everything they've done for us," Salazar said.

Asked to sum up her feelings about her son's service, Salazar said "I'm proud beyond words."

Assemblyman Medina said he always enjoys getting the chance to spend time in Perris. The City retains its small-town charm, people show their support by attending community events like the Veterans Day Parade and residents appreciate what the City does for them.

Medina said Perris reminds him of Ojai, where he grew up as a kid.



Perris City Clerk Nancy Salazar thanked her son, Joseph, for his service as a Navy corpsman, saying she is proud of him "beyond words."

"I've always had a special affinity for Perris," Medina said.

### From Navy to Coast Guard

Grand Marshal Romano began his military career in the Navy in 1968 and served two tours of duty as an aviation electrician's mate on the aircraft carrier Midway, serving the legendary F-4 Phantom fighter-bomber that served as one of the backbones of American military power in Vietnam.

Following his discharge, Romano said he missed the military life so he enlisted in the Coast Guard, where he spent the next 25 years. His service in that branch of the armed forces included stints during the first Gulf War and following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, when he provided harbor security.

"I enjoyed the camaraderie and getting things done," he said. "In the Coast Guard, we do what has to be done and we serve with people who are as motivated as we are."

Romano retired in 2010, completing 32 years of military service. Two months later, he suffered a stroke.

"I should have stayed in the service," he said.



Parade Grand Marshal Dennis Romano, who served in the Navy and Coast Guard, with his service dog, Murphy, ride down D Street during the City of Perris annual Veterans Day Parade.

Romano called it a "great honor" to serve as Perris Veterans Day Parade Grand Marshal.

"I'm proud because I'm representing all veterans and active duty service members," he said.

Vietnam veterans Gene Rasmussen and Gary Loomer, members of the Perris Citizens Patrol, provided traffic control for the parade.

Rasmussen served as a Third Class Petty Officer in the Navy in Vietnam. He calls his military service one of the best things that ever happened to him.

"I was a 17-year-old high school dropout and juvenile delinquent," he said.

After his service, he spent 41 years as a probation officer. Rasmussen said he appreciates the City of Perris for celebrating each Veterans Day with a parade.

"The City is really into doing things for veterans," he said.

Loomer, a heavy-equipment operator in the Army who spent 1965 in Vietnam. He said of his time in uniform: "I did my job. I was proud to do it." Then turning his attention to the Perris Veterans Day Parade, Loomer continued: "It's good to know there are people who care."

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