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Memorial Day in Perris

Perris veterans, residents and elected officials gathered on Memorial Day to pay respects to the men and women of the armed forces who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of American freedoms.

About 100 people gathered Monday, May 25 at the Perris Valley Cemetery during the annual Memorial Day ceremony, continuing a long tradition of the City honoring the nation's war dead.

Dignitaries in attendance included Mayor Daryl Busch, Mayor Pro-Tem Tonya Burke, City Councilman David Starr Rabb, former Mayor Jesse Washington and former City Councilman Mark Yarbrough and his wife, Shelly, who is president of the Val Verde Unified School District board of trustees.

This year marked the 33rd anniversary of hosting the Memorial Day ceremony for Joanne Evans, a former Marine and member of Perris American Legion Post 595. The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 888 in Perris collaborate on the annual ceremony.

Evans said Perris traces its Memorial Day services to 1892, when City residents held services at the grave of Civil War veteran John Reynolds, one of 13 Civil War and 800 veterans from all wars interred at the Perris Cemetery.

Evans asked everyone also to remember today's men and women in uniform, particularly "those who are serving today and those who are in harm's way."



Keynote speaker Air Force Col. Dave Pavey reminds the audience attending the Perris Memorial Day service that nearly 1 million Americans have been killed in defense of their country since the Revolution.

Keynote speaker, Air Force Col. Dave Pavey, reminded the audience since the Revolution "nearly one million men and women in the Armed Forces have sacrificed their lives while defending America in time of war."

"We can best honor their sacrifice by remembering their families, who have lost so much. Long after the battlefield guns have been silenced and the bombs stop exploding, the children of our fallen warriors will still be missing a parent. Spouses will be without their life partners. Parents will continue to grieve for their heroic sons and daughters that died too early."

Pavey summed up his remarks by urging Americans to honor the fallen by making sure that "their sacrifices are remembered and that their service to this nation is always be honored."

Mayor Busch, who served as a radar operator in the Navy, said the City honors its veterans because "each of them has dedicated their personal time and effort to protect our country" and many have paid the ultimate price.

"Perris has always been proud of its veterans," Busch said. "We've shown respect to our military all the way back to the Civil War."



Members of a Memorial Honor Detail fire a rifle salute during the May 25 Memorial Day ceremony at the Perris Valley Cemetery.

Mayor Pro-Tem Burke said the solemn ceremony reminds everyone that Memorial Day is not just about a long weekend, barbecues and store sales.

"Freedom isn't free," Burke said. "Ceremonies like this show our respect for all our military—especially our fallen heroes. It's important to remember what this day really means."

Councilman Rabb, a Navy gunner's mate, praised the event organizers for their long history of hosting such outstanding tributes to America's fallen military.

"It is important to remember the veterans who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the country and to honor our veterans for what they continue to do on behalf of our country," Rabb said.



Dignitaries attending the May 25 Memorial Day ceremony in Perris included: Mayor Daryl Busch, former City Councilman Mark Yarbrough, former Mayor Jesse Washington, Mayor Pro-Tem Tonya Burke, Master of Ceremonies Joanne Evans, City Councilman David Starr Rabb, American Legion Post Commander Jim Bieger and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 888 Commander Tim Moore.

The ceremony included a three-rifle volley from Memorial Honor Details 45 and 52 and the playing of Taps. American Legion Riders from Post 595 presented the National Colors at the start of the ceremony and cadets from the California Military Institute served as the Honor Guard.

Evans, the master of ceremony, read off the names of 20 Perris veterans who died in the last year. A bell sounded as each name was announced, reminding the audience that the former military members now reside in "post everlasting."

Perris resident Silvia Hernandez accompanied her twins, CMI cadets Ruben and Raquel Torres, as they took part in this week's ceremony. Hernandez said several of her relatives who served in Vietnam and during World War II are buried in the Perris cemetery.

"Because of their service and sacrifice, we are able to stand here today," Hernandez said.

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