

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Celebrating Service and Sacrifice: Veterans Day Ceremonies Honor Rivera, Hendricks, and Powell

Ceremonies on St. Thomas and St. Croix Honor Lifelong Service

Community Center / **Published On November 12, 2023 08:48 AM /**

Staff Consortium **November 12, 2023**



A collage of pictures taken during Saturday's Veterans Day event in Frederiksted, St. Croix. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

The VI Office of Veterans Affairs, in partnership with the American Legion District 10, observed Veterans Day on Saturday by hosting simultaneous ceremonies on St. Thomas and St. Croix.

This day is not just a holiday but a sacred observance—a time to honor, remember, and express gratitude to those who have served and continue to serve. The U.S. Virgin

Islands stood united in ensuring the legacy of their veterans is preserved and celebrated for generations to come.

On St. Croix, a ceremony was held at the waterfront in Frederiksted, honoring distinguished veterans including Major General (Ret.) Renaldo Rivera from St. Croix, MSG (Ret.) Wilburn E. Hendricks from St. Thomas, and Frank "Jimmy" Powell Jr. from St. John, each with a storied history of service and dedication to the nation and the Virgin Islands.

Major General Renaldo Rivera, the 12th Adjutant General in the history of the United States Virgin Islands, served from March 2007 until his retirement after 35 years of combined military service. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Law Enforcement Administration and has completed several military education courses.

Wilburn Elric Hendricks, born in St. Thomas, served in the U.S. Army and later in the Virgin Islands National Guard as an Army musician. He retired from the US Postal Service after 37 years of service and continued his service in the National Guard for over 27 years.

Frank "Jimmy" Powell Jr. served in the United States Army from 1965 to 1967, earning several medals during his service in Vietnam. Upon returning home, he joined the Virgin Islands Police Department and served for 20 years.

Patrick D. Farrell, virector of the V.I. Office of Veterans Affairs, reflected on the tradition's longevity and expressed gratitude to the community and parade participants for their impressive turnout. "From the time I was a little boy, I remember participating in these parades," Mr. Farrell recalled, highlighting the perennial commitment to honor veterans. "Thank you to our partners, community and participants in the parade. We had an awesome turnout," he said.

Delegate to Congress, Stacey E. Plaskett, recognized the valor of Virgin Islands veterans, emphasizing their role as family, neighbors, and inspiration in the community. "They are our family, neighbors, and our inspiration. Our Veterans who come from all walks of life have not only defended our liberties but truly enriched our community," she remarked. "They are not just our protectors, they are our family, neighbors, and our inspiration. For generations, Virgin Islanders have served without hesitation and those of you who continue to serve no matter the limitations, you are the bedrock of our great nation. Here in the Virgin Islands the spirit of service runs deep with our Veterans."

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. spoke about initiatives to support veterans, including the introduction of the Army PaYS program and the importance of veterans in maintaining peace and stability. "We must acknowledge how great it is to live in a country where you don't have to worry about civil unrest, where food and water is abundant and where you can speak your mind," he said.

Keynote speaker Eddy L. Charles shared his personal journey, highlighting a lifetime of service from cub scout to soldier.

Senate President Novelle E. Francis Jr. expressed the collective gratitude of the 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands and acknowledged the profound impact of veterans in shaping the territory into a place of courage and patriotism. "There is no one here today

that can say that their life has not been shook by the service and sacrifices of our Veterans. In fact our lives have been lifted by the courage and patriotism of our veterans. Veterans are our teachers, police officers, business owners, medical professionals and service providers, relatives, and neighbors,” he said.

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