



City of Arts & Innovation

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City of Riverside to Unveil New Portraits of Medal of Honor Recipients Lara and Duran

Ceremony scheduled for 6:15 p.m. Nov. 14 at Riverside City Hall

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside will unveil new portraits of the city’s most recent recipients of the Medal of Honor, SSgt. Salvador J. Lara and Spc. Jesus S. Duran, during a ceremony at 6:15 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 14, at Riverside City Hall, 3900 Main Street.

The two Riverside men received the nation’s highest military honor in 2014 in a White House ceremony in recognition of acts of courage and valor decades earlier. They join Ssgt. Ysmael “Smiley” Villegas as Riverside’s three Medal of Honor recipients. Villegas received the recognition in 1945 for acts of bravery and heroism earlier that year.

Lara and Duran were honored locally soon after the White House ceremony by Mayor Rusty Bailey and the Riverside City Council, which invited surviving family members to a reception at City Hall. Since then, a library in Casa Blanca has been named for Lara and an Eastside library has been named for Duran.

The portraits are being unveiled following the completion of an ongoing fundraising effort at the first City Council meeting after Veterans Day, which is Saturday (11/11). They will remain in the City Council chambers along with an existing portrait of Villegas.

“Riverside is a historic military town, and we always do our best to celebrate our veterans,” Bailey said. “I encourage all residents of Riverside and the surrounding area to attend our Nov. 14 meeting and give these American heroes, and their families, the honor they deserve.”

Lara was recognized for his actions in Italy on May 27-28, 1944, when he led his rifle squad in neutralizing multiple enemy strong points and inflicting large numbers of casualties on the enemy.

Duran was recognized for heroism in Vietnam when, on April 10, 1969, he fought off enemy troops that had ambushed his unit and defended two seriously injured American soldiers from advancing enemy troops.

“Many communities consider it a great honor to be affiliated with even one Medal of Honor recipient, and Riverside is home to three,” Mayor Pro Tem Jim Perry said. “These brave men represent the best of us, and it is an honor to participate in an event that brings much-deserved recognition to their actions.”