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You are invited to stand with us to honor the service and sacrifices of our military veterans.

The City's annual Military Veteran Tribute is on Saturday, Nov. 7, at 2 p.m. at Veterans Memorial Plaza, 298 E. Renfro St. (corner of Renfro and the I-35W service road). Burleson Mayor Pro Tem Dan McClendon is the emcee and Command Sgt. Major Retired Bill May is the guest speaker.

The event includes the posting of colors and a ceremonial wreath, a firing party, bagpipes, and patriotic music. You'll have to look up to see the Burleson Police Department's honor guard do the honor salute and the playing of "Taps" from the balcony of the B&G Building.

Police Chief Billy Cordell will do the honors with the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Meghan Gardner, a Burleson ROTC student, is singing the "National Anthem" and her fellow ROTC members will present the wreath. The Burleson Fire Department Honor Guard will present the colors and Steve Pruitt will play "Amazing Grace" on the bagpipes. The finale is the singing of "Salute to the Armed Forces."

Command Sgt. Major Retired Bill May knows what it means to serve his country. He retired in 2013 after 30 years in the United States Army. His culminating assignment was as the Commandant of the III Corps and Fort Hood Non Commissioned Officer Academy, the largest NCO Academy in the Army. Today, he serves as a regional coordinator with the education and employment initiative (E2I), and helps recovering service members find employment.

May is a tested and proven combat leader with extensive experience in tactical operations, organizational development, strategic planning, strategic resource management, and performance management and evaluation. In his current role, the command sergeant major retired operates with the goal of engaging recovering service members early in their recovery process to identify the skills they have, career opportunities that match those skills, and any additional skills they will need to be successful and participate in desired educational and/or employment opportunities. This Department of Defense program is available to

all recovering service members in all branches of the Armed Services as well as all components of those services (Active, Guard, and Reserve).

While on active duty, the command sergeant major performed in every Armor and Cavalry leadership position from Fire Team Leader to Command Sergeant Major as well as a variety of strategic leadership positions worldwide. His military awards and decorations are numerous.

The guest speaker lives in Kempner, Texas. His civilian and military education includes a bachelor of science in liberal studies degree from Excelsior College as well as a graduate from the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy Class #54 as well as the Pre-Command Course. He is married to the former Britta Dirks. They have one daughter, Kimberley Phillips, who is married to Staff Sergeant Alex Phillips. Kimberly and her husband have one son, Logan.

The City-owned Veterans Memorial Plaza includes a fountain; bricks engraved with the names of local service members; the bronze eagle and Purple Heart memorial that were unveiled in 2009; and the names of veterans from the Johnson County Veterans Memorial – World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam – were placed in the ground next to the Operation Remember kiosk in 2010. A POW monument was added in 2011.