

Features



Annual Wreaths Across America Honors Veterans

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Bloomfield, Missouri - It was a gorgeous day at the Missouri Veterans Cemetery in Bloomfield. The sun was shining, the temperatures were warm and hundreds of volunteers of all ages converged to place beautiful Christmas Wreaths on veterans' graves. It looked to be a record breaking turn-out for the 8th annual Wreaths Across America.

A green wreath with a red ribbon laid across the tombstone of a veteran. It was a simple image, but a powerful message. A message of honor, remembrance and gratitude.

In 1992, Worcester Wreath found themselves with a surplus of wreaths nearing the end of the holiday season. Remembering his boyhood experience at Arlington, Worcester realized he had an opportunity to honor our country's Veterans. With the help of Maine Senator Olympia Snowe, arrangements were made for the wreaths to be placed at Arlington in one of the older sections of the cemetery, a section which had been receiving fewer visitors with each passing year.

In 2007, the Worcester family, along with veterans, and other groups and individuals who had helped with their annual Christmas wreath ceremony in Arlington, formed Wreaths Across America, a nonprofit 501-c3 organization, to continue and expand this effort and support other groups around the country who wanted to do the same. The mission is simple: REMEMBER, HONOR, TEACH.

On December 13, 2008, the U.S. Congress unanimously voted to establish Wreaths Across America Day on the second or third Saturday of December.

Along with scores of other communities around the country, including Arlington National Cemetery, our community came out strong and gathered at the Missouri Veterans Cemetery in Stoddard County on Saturday, December 17, 2016.

Mr. Randy Dunn served as Master of Ceremony. A Moment of Silence for those fallen, prisoners of war, missing in action, and to honor those who have served this great nation. Jack Gillies conducted the Pledge of Allegiance and Kara King sang a most beautiful National Anthem. Pastor Ronnie Stevens of the First General Baptist Church said the Invocation.

Wreaths of Service were placed by those representing the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Merchant Marines, and POW/MIA.

Benediction was performed by Pastor Stevens and the firing volley was performed by the Stoddard County Veterans Honor Guard followed by Taps.

Following the brief ceremony, volunteers scattered throughout the hillside at the cemetery to place a wreath at each headstone in the cemetery. This was the 8th year for the Wreaths Across America at the Missouri Veterans Cemetery in Bloomfield.

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