

# AMERICAS GREATEST HEROS

Each wreath honors all servicemen and women for their selfless sacrifice – and that of their families who are without loved ones during the holidays.

*You are not forgotten*

In 1971, while the Vietnam War was still being fought, Mary Hoff, the wife of a service member missing in action and member of the National league of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, recognized the need for a symbol of U.S. POW/MIAs, some of whom had been held in captivity for as many as seven years.



## *Call to Action*

“No one should pass an American in uniform without saying, ‘Thank you, we are grateful.’ Always be mindful that they are prepared to risk all of their dreams so that all of us can reach ours.”

- former Secretary of Defense  
William Cohen

## *Remembering* OUR HEROS

That is the message that Wreaths Across America would share with all veterans. From one generation to another, we will NEVER FORGET that the freedoms we enjoy came at such a great cost.





## *The Arlington* WREATH PROJECT

The tradition of laying wreaths to honor our veterans began in 1992, when Morrill Worcester had extra wreaths at the close of the holiday season. Remembering the sacred grounds of Arlington National Cemetery, they donated 5,000 wreaths to be placed at headstones. One man's gesture has now grown into a national movement with the founding of Wreaths Across America.

**REMEMBER • HONOR • TEACH**

## GOLD STAR MOTHERS

The American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. was formed to provide support to mothers who lost children in war. The name derives from the custom of servicemen and women's families hanging a Service Flag in the window of their homes, with those who lost their lives represented by a gold star. Membership in the Gold Star Mothers is open to any American woman whose child has died in the line of duty. GSM provides support to its members, volunteers in support of veterans, and fosters a sense of patriotism and respect for members of the Armed Forces. Gold Star Mother's Day is observed each year on the last Sunday in September.

[WWW.GOLDSTARMOMS.COM](http://WWW.GOLDSTARMOMS.COM)

## THE MEDAL OF HONOR

Our nation has a rich and varied history of rewarding acts of individual gallantry in the military, perhaps beginning when the first purple cloth heart, named The Badge of Military Merit, was presented by George Washington in 1782. Reinstated in 1932, the Purple Heart was given to those wounded in World War I or who possessed a Meritorious Service Citation Certificate. In the Civil War, a medal was given to those who "most distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action, and other soldier-like qualities, during the present insurrection." Congress made the Medal of Honor a permanent decoration in 1863. Almost 3,400 service-people have received the award for heroic actions in the nation's battles since that time.

## WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

Each year, wreaths are delivered to veterans' cemeteries around the country as part of annual wreath-laying events. Wreaths Across America also provides materials to teach about the sacrifices made to preserve our freedoms, and thousands of volunteers take a quiet moment to show their gratitude and appreciation.

We invite you to participate in a Wreaths Across America ceremony in your community. Help us Remember, Honor, and Teach - by thanking a veteran.