



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Wreaths Across America Achieves Goal to Honor Every Veteran
Buried at Arlington National Cemetery**

*Over 70,000 volunteers place 240,815 wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery –
In total, 901,000 wreaths nationwide at over 1,100 locations for National Wreaths Across America Day*

ARLINGTON, Va. — December 12, 2015 — “What about my son?” It was a simple, yet powerful question asked by a grieving father when the supply of donated veteran’s remembrance wreaths fell one short of his son’s headstone at Arlington National Cemetery. It was that father’s heart-felt plea that lead Vietnam veteran and Wreaths Across America board chairman, Wayne Hanson, to pledge that no one is ever forgotten and every fallen hero’s grave would be honored.

Today, Wreaths Across America (WAA), along with over 70,000 volunteers, honored that pledge by placing remembrance wreaths on 240,185 headstones at Arlington National Cemetery – every grave and the columbarium. In total, over 901,000 remembrance wreaths were placed in over 1,100 locations nationwide on National Wreaths Across America Day.

“We are humbled by the outpouring of support that helped ensure that no headstone stood uncovered this year at Arlington National Cemetery,” said Hanson. “Wreaths Across America is honored to be joined in this sacred place by so many veterans, volunteers and family members as we pay tribute to our fallen and remember their sacrifice on behalf of a grateful nation.”

Each live, balsam remembrance wreath is a gift of respect and appreciation, donated by a private citizen or organization and placed on the graves by volunteers as a small gesture of gratitude for the freedoms Americans enjoy. For centuries, fresh evergreens have been used as a symbol of honor and have served as a living tribute renewed annually. Wreaths Across America believes the tradition represents a living memorial that honors veterans, active duty military and their families.

What began as a pilgrimage by Maine businessman, Morrill Worcester, to deliver 5,000 wreaths he donated to Arlington in 1992, has become a national mission based on a simple yet powerful idea: Say their names so we never forget and they are never forgotten.

Every year as wreaths are distributed, Karen Worcester, executive director of Wreaths Across America, reminds volunteers of Morrill’s vision to say their names, “In truth, a person dies twice; once when we stop breathing and a second time when somebody mentions our name for the last time.”

Events at Arlington began with the arrival of a mile-long convoy of ceremonial vehicles, including tractor-trailers, buses, motorcycles and cars carrying wreaths, veterans, Gold Star Families and supporters. The convoy began in Maine and was tasked with transporting the wreaths for Arlington after participating in a journey down the East Coast to spread Wreaths Across America’s mission to Remember, Honor, Teach. The group stopped at schools, memorials and other locations in Maine, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland, before arriving at Arlington this morning.



With the McClellan Arch as a backdrop, an inspirational opening ceremony featured music by the U.S. Army Band “Pershing’s Own,” the presentation of the colors by the Army Joint Color Guard, welcoming remarks by WAA chairman Wayne Hanson, and a live performance of the song “Arlington” by country music star Trace Adkins.

Also attending the Arlington event were convoy Co-Grand Marshals Vietnam Veteran Gordon F. Kelly and Navy veteran and historian Carmine Pecorelli; First Lady of Maine Ann LePage; countless Gold and Blue Star families including Lorna and Scott Harris-Patten who lost their son, Spec. Dustin Harris in 2006 in Iraq – Scott drove one of the convoy tractor-trailers that bears the image of their son.

About Wreaths Across America

Wreaths Across America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, begun by Maine businessman Morrill Worcester in 1992. The organization’s mission, Remember, Honor, Teach, is carried out in part each year by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in December at Arlington, as well as hundreds of veterans’ cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and beyond. For more information or to sponsor a wreath please visit www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org.

Press contact:

Amber Caron

(207) 513-6457

acaron@kempgoldberg.com

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