



## Wreaths Across America Story

Morrill Worcester of Harrington, Maine, was a 12-year-old paperboy when he won a trip to Washington, D.C. He will never forget his first trip to our nation's capital, and Arlington National Cemetery made an indelible impression on him. This experience followed him throughout his life and successful career as a wreath maker, reminding him that his good fortune

was due, in large part, to the values of this nation and the veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

In 1992, Mr. Worcester had 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 aid of former Maine Senator Olympia Snowe, arrangements were made for the wreaths to be placed at Arlington in one of the older sections of the cemetery that had been receiving fewer visitors with each passing year.

Several other individuals and organizations stepped up to help as plans were underway. Blue Bird Ranch, Inc. generously provided transportation to Virginia. Volunteers from the local American Legion and V.F.W. Posts gathered with community members to adorn each wreath with traditional red, hand-tied bows. Members of the Maine State Society of Washington, D.C., helped to organize the wreath laying, which included a special ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

The annual tribute went on quietly until 2005, when a photo of the stones at Arlington, adorned with wreaths and covered in snow, circulated the web. Suddenly, the project received national attention. Thousands of requests poured in from people wanting to help with Arlington, to emulate the Arlington project at their National and State cemeteries, or to share their stories and thank Worcester for honoring our nation's heroes.

Unable to donate thousands of wreaths to each state, Worcester sent seven wreaths to every state, one for each military branch and one for P.O.W./M.I.A. In 2006, with the help of the Civil Air Patrol and other civic organizations, simultaneous wreath-laying ceremonies were held at over 150 locations nationwide.

In 2007, the Worcester family, along with veterans and other groups and individuals who had helped with their annual veterans wreath ceremony in Arlington, formed Wreaths Across America, a non-profit 501c (3) organization, to continue and expand this effort, and support other groups around the country who wanted to do the same. The yearlong mission of the organization is simple: **REMEMBER the fallen. HONOR those who serve. TEACH the next generation the value of freedom.**

In 2025, Wreaths Across America and its national network of volunteers placed over four million veterans' wreaths at 5,594 participating locations in the United States and beyond. This feat was accomplished with help from millions of volunteers across the country, a third of whom were children.

National Wreaths Across America Day will be held this year on **Saturday, December 19, 2026**.

Wreaths Across America would not be possible without the help of volunteers, active organizations, and the generosity of the transportation industry, which offer invaluable support to WAA's mission.

**You can help in many ways — visit [www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org) to learn more and get involved!**