

Wreaths Across America aims to remember, honor, teach of our fallen service members this holiday season

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
December 12 2015 1:24 PM



ALTON - For the hundreds of thousands of fallen veterans laid to rest in our country's national cemeteries, every stone has a story.

In its ninth year at the **Alton National Cemetery**, **Wreaths Across America** has honored the fallen by placing wreaths and each and every gravestone in remembrance of the ultimate sacrifice that the brave men and women of our armed services may have gone through.

“The whole purpose of today is to remember, honor and teach.” Wreaths Across America chairperson and organizer **Margaret Hopkins** said before the event.

Chaplain Bernie Caldwell of A Few Good Men Marines led the event with an invocation, praying for the fallen and current serving members of our active troops, in hope that some day, they can safely return home.



Children from the **Eunice Smith School of Alton** were paired with veterans to honor each grave with a simple wreath with a red ribbon. After each wreath was placed, the veterans and the students both gave salutes to the fallen men and women buried in the cemetery. The students also sang beautiful renditions of the national anthem and *God Bless America*.

A stunning Rifle Salute and a beautiful rendition of *Echoing Taps* by **Scott Waldrup** and **Chris Jarden** echoed through the nearly bare trees of the national cemetery.

The **Illinois Patriot Guard** lined the sidewalks and assisted the veterans in any way necessary throughout the event.

In the state of our current world, Hopkins believes that this event is extremely important.

“It’s extremely important with everything that has happened in our country recently and with the events in Paris that we remember who have fought for our country and continue to fight for our freedoms today.”



[CLICK HERE OR LOOK BELOW FOR A PHOTO GALLERY OF THE WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA CEREMONY:](#)