

Wreaths Across America event in Alton exudes Christmas spirit

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - When someone thinks of Christmas time around the Riverbend region, one event that exudes the holiday spirit is the annual Wreaths Across America gathering in Alton.

Wreaths Across America was held last Saturday, December 16 at Alton National Cemetery and once again it was filled with emotion and the holiday spirit.

“We ordered extra wreaths because we wanted to expand our mission,” Margaret Hopkins, long-time organizer of the event, said. “We allow some extra wreaths to be put at some other veterans’ graves. The Boy Scouts come and unload the semi of wreaths and carry them down to the cemetery to set up. I am always amazed with what the Boy Scouts do.”

Alton’s ROTC color guard participate in the ceremony along with the Alton Veterans of Foreign War Post 1308 rifle team. St. Ambrose fourth-grade students also assisted in the laying wreaths and the St. Ambrose chorus performed the National Anthem this year.

Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, volunteers remember, honor and teach with the ceremony, which also takes part at Arlington National Cemetery, along with 1,200 additional locations in all U.S. states.

Hopkins said it is amazing to her every year when she looks out at the sea of wreaths in the National Cemetery.

“I stand and see a picture develop in 10 minutes and the white headstones are adorned with a wreath. It is very special to me. By Jan. 20 we have them cleaned out.”



