

# National Wreaths Across America wreath-laying ceremony under Margaret Hopkins becomes huge tradition

by Leanne Guthrie, Reporter  
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ALTON - The National Wreaths Across America wreath-laying ceremony has become an event people throughout the region will remember forever because of the volunteer leadership of Margaret Hopkins, the founder, and others who donate their time to the cause.

Alton National Cemetery hosted its annual wreath-laying ceremony to honor fallen veterans as a part of the National Wreaths Across America event Saturday, Dec. 15. All 530 veterans graves at Alton National Cemetery were decorated with balsam wreaths during the ceremony. Margaret Hopkins first brought the event to Alton 12 years ago and has been helping organize the event ever since.

“During the ceremony students from West Elementary School were paired with a veteran in each row of graves,” Hopkins said. “While the ceremony progressed they moved in sync and placed wreaths across each grave. At the end, each grave was decorated to honor our fallen veterans.

“The ceremony is a wonderful way to remember those who served our country and have the community come together in remembrance.”

The ceremony was 30 minutes and remembered and honored veterans through the laying of remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country’s fallen heroes. Each fallen veterans name was said out loud to respect and thank them for their service.

The ceremony also featured performances of many patriotic songs, as well as a rifle salute and presentation of additional wreaths to honor arms forces.

Wreaths Across America is a national event that takes place yearly to remember our veterans during the holiday season and throughout the year. Over one thousand cemeteries participate across the country every year. The mission is to remember fallen veterans, honor those who serve and teach children the value of freedom.



[Steven Spencer also contributed to this story.](#)