

Annual Alton Wreaths Across America Another Memorable Ceremony

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - The Wreaths Across America Program continued its long-time quest to honor fallen heroes in the National Cemetery in Alton last Saturday. Wreaths were placed at all the gravesides by a host of volunteers.

Chaplain Bernie Caldwell, a Marine, did the invocation. The USAF - ROTC Alton Senior High presented colors and members of the Alton High School Chamber Choir performed the National Anthem at the beginning of the ceremony.



Margaret Hopkins, director of the Alton Wreaths Across America event, explained the history of the event across the country and how millions of wreaths on that day were positioned in local and national cemeteries to accomplish the mission.

“This year, the theme is 'Find A Way To Serve,’” she said. “We are doing that exactly here. The call to serve can be accomplished in many ways. We are honoring that here today for those who served us and still serve us. We all have something to give, whether it be time, resources, or ideas. We hope you reflect on this service and find time to serve.”

One of the key components of Wreaths Across America is the teaching part, she said.

“This is why we try to involve so many young people in this activity,” she said.

Those who participated in the ceremonial wreath laying were:

- Sgt. Nick Crawford, U.S. Army.
- Chief Petty Officer Larry Goss, U.S. Navy.
- Sgt. Maj. Lonnie Saffell, U.S. Marine Corps.
- CCM Sgt. Bill Moyer, U.S. Air Force.
- PO 1st Class Stephen Fielder, U.S. Coast Guard.

- ROTC Cadet Major Kian Summers, U.S. Space Force
- ROTC Cadet 2nd Lt. Rose McDonald, U.S. Merchant Marines
- John Rain - Representing POW/MIA

Veterans and students collectively placed the wreaths in position along the gravesite. Alton Post 1308 did a rifle salute. Peter Melenic and Meredith Rulo performed Taps.





