

"Wreaths Across America"

Fort Snelling National Cemetery
Minneapolis, MN, 13 DEC 08

RCIC: "Indian John" SE Metro RC

We stage at the Old Fort Snelling Cavalry Barn, members started arriving 30 minits before the staging opened. 73 PGR members signed the waver.

Held a briefing with the RC's, ARC's from multiple sectors, passed out Locations and went over the morning events.

Held a briefing for all members, Introduced the **New SE Metro New ARC Holly**. Holly has been a huge helped in the background for the last 2 years for "WAA" and other research for me. This year Holly called and said she as ready to take on the role of a ARC for the SE Metro.

A Great Big Thank You to the 14 members that helped with the pick up and placement of the 38 cases of Wreaths and the 60 Wreaths from Blaine. Farthest Distance Award goes to Cannon Falls and Ramsey.

At the End of the event a member came up to me with a **\$20.00 donation** to the MN-PGR for the Wreaths, he asked not to be identified.....Thank You Sir, we will see you on the Flag Line.

Set up a Flag Line at the Branch Monuments (14 PGR, Branch Veterans)
Set up a Flag Line at the Monuments down Left & Right Side of Mallon Road (68 PGR Members)
Set up a Flag Line around the Main United States of America's Flag Pole

Some of Key Points of the Ceramony

Held **One full Minute of silence to remember the fallen**, the prisoners of war, the missing in action and honor those who have served and are serving this great nation's armed services.

Posted The Colors.

Now the family of SSG James Wosika, Jr., (Wass ik a) James Sr., Kathie and friends will lay a holiday wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the **United States Army**. They are escorted by Civil Air Patrol Cadet

Now William Leroy Namen will lay a holiday wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the **United States Navy**. They are escorted by Civil Air Patrol Cadet

Now the family of LCpl Scott Modeen, Kim and Tom, Guido and Beth and friends will lay a holiday wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the **United States Marine Corps**. They are escorted by Civil Air Patrol Cadet SGT Mark Albrecht.

Now Howard Wilson will lay a holiday wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the **United States Merchant Marines**. He is escorted by Civil Air Patrol Cadet

Now the family of Thomas Burnett and friends, Major Janelle Gates of will lay a holiday wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the **United States Air Force**. They are escorted by Civil Air Patrol Major Janelle Gates.

Now the family of Chris Baker will lay a holiday wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the **United States Coast Guard**. They are escorted by Civil Air Patrol Cadet

Now Cindy McLean, Patty Kelley and members of the St. Paul Chapter of Blue Star Mothers of America will lay a holiday wreath in honor of the **93,852 United States Servicemen from all branches of the service whose last know status was either Prisoner of War or Missing in Action. These individuals have never returned to their families and homes.** We shall not forget you. They are escorted by Civil Air Patrol Cadet

Throughout the cemetery today, you may notice members of the Minnesota Patriot Guard standing silently by the graves of men who died in Iraq, and Afghanistan. Some of you have family members at these sites. Wreaths will be present there for you to place.

In a few moments, those who wish may move to Section "T" of the cemetery – located at the north end of the cemetery, about ¼ mile away. You will see Civil Air patrol cadets at Section "T" to direct you. Wreaths will be placed on gravesites in that section. All are welcome to help with this decoration.

FSNC: Section DS, Section B-1

Tim & laurie LeonHardt

FSNC:Section 1,

I arrived at the staging area about 8:45 and assisted in making sure people in attendance had all signed in. I was then assigned to Section 1 which needed to have two wreaths placed. I was told to use my discretion on who I allowed to place the wreaths but that was an easy one for me, I had a young lady approach me and say "Oh you are Dawn Sherwood" and she immediately asked if she could please have the honor of placing the wreath for SSgt Andrew P. Nelson he was a personal friend to her and it would mean the world to her if she could do this today, I told her absolutely you may have the honor, she then started to apologize in advance that it was going to be very hard for her and she will have a lot of tears I told her no need to apologize and I will be right there for her if she needs a shoulder to lean on and she was very receptive to that.

I had my sister in-law and my nephew (13 years old) with me and I thought it would be a very good experience for him to have the honor of presenting the wreath for Maj. Curtis D. Feistner and I was right he felt so honored and just kept thanking me the whole day for letting him come with me and participating in this event.

The service was wonderful, but I wouldn't expect less. After the service PGR dismissed to go to their locations, I arrived in section 1 and was unable to locate any wreaths, we then located SSgt Nelson and he already had a wreath, but the girl that I gave the honor to dropped to her knees and shed a lot of tears I remained there with her to give her comfort and just gave her a big hug, she then started sharing stories with us about him and she shared with me the story of the lipstick marks on top of his headstone she said his fiance visits all the time and that is what she leaves him with each visit kisses on his head....that was a tear jerker for me. I then tried to locate Maj. Feistner and that took us quite sometime, I actually had to call for help Birdie came to my rescue and helped me find him he then in turn called you and asked if we had more wreaths? and you brought us 4 more wreaths you gave one to Derek my nephew to place and we all shared in a moment of silence together. It was a very touching experience and I am so honored to be with MN PGR. After that we went around and picked up wreaths that had blown over and we stuck them back into the ground.

Dawn Sherwood

FSNC:Section 7,

Just pass along my thanks to everyone who was there that day. The Gold Star families that we all care so much about do notice that we continue to be there to honor their Hero and know that we continue to care for them. Each and every member that can be there even once on any given day keeps making a difference. I continue to be both humbled and proud to be a part of the Patriot Guard.

Birdie Metro, Metro SRC

Saturday December 13, 2008 couldn't have been a more beautiful day for Wreaths Across America. The weather cooperated with sunshine, and "balmy" (as some described) temperatures. After much planning, and a great turn-out, the mission was very successful. Family and friends of all ages were at Ft. Snelling for a sentimental ceremony, and to lay wreaths at the headstones of our fallen soldiers. The PGR members stood quietly in sections throughout the cemetery with a wreath and flags flying, awaiting family members of soldiers. If no one was able to come, then we laid the wreath with respect and honor.

After laying a wreath at their son's grave, Thomas Burnett Sr. and his wife expressed their appreciation with hugs and waves to all of us. (She was upset that she forgot her Flight 93 pins to hand out, though).

When the wreath's were laid, families gone, we stood down, feeling more humbled by this special day. That is, except for Santa ??, who made his rounds to some sites. Wreaths Across America is one of the PGR's bigger missions, and "Thank You" to everyone who made it a success.

Holly Frost, SE Metro ARC

Mr & Mrs Burnett came up to me shook my hand, and asked me if I was the person that gave him the PGR mission pin. I responded that I wasn't, but that we all might look the same. I believe that kind of broke the ice. I let mom and dad start the conversation, and I responded in kind. I gave Mom the wreath, and she layed it directly in front of the stone marker, on the ground. There wasn't any place else to put it. I commented how well they had decorated (the site), as there was a large wreath present, along with two floral vases flanking both sides of the marker. Both mom and dad thanked me for being there for their son, and i responded it was my honor and privilege to be there. I remember saluting, as mom layed the wreath.

Most importantly, as dad was leaving, he told me how proud he was of his son. I responded by telling him, "that the entire nation was proud of his son, and that his son set an example for all of us."

PS: mom said she wished she had brought a 9-11 pin, as she gets lots of stuff like that from Pennsylvania. She described the pin, as a airplane, with 93 (the flight number) on it. That is what we talked about at the American Legion.

James Mortel

FSNC:Section 9A, Section Mem D,

In our sector we had 21 Patriot Guard Members for 17 sites. We have two families that arrived and placed there wreaths with the lost loved one. Our PGR members also assisted one additional family that arrived but was not part of our assigned placements, we assisted with clearing snow and anchoring the wreath holder they brought to there loved ones resting place. After ensuring that the remaining family members were not present at our other assigned sites the PGR member assigned to each position placed the wreath in honor of each veteran. After cleaning up our area, several PGR members searched our assigned sector for wreaths that had been blown over and re-anchored them.

One of our families was the Dave and his Wife. Dave stood at his son's site. After he and his wife placed there wreath they approached and we talked about Josh and his service.

Rick Williams "Soldierboy" SE Metro ARC

FSNC:Section 12,

We had a real good turnout at the horse barn. John held a pre staging meeting before we left for fort Snelling cemetery. We assigned people to each ARC and RC for the grave sites. We departed the staging area and got the flag line set at the cemetery. After the program was over we all departed to our assigned sites. We stood the sites for about thirty minutes and then went back to the main flag pole and had coffee, hot dogs and pastries. Some of the pgr went over to the American Legion on Portland and 66th. It was a successful mission.

Dennis Mehrer "Silverado" SE Metro ARC

FSNC:Section 16,

FSNC:Section 17, FSNC:Section 18,

I had 5 Members with me, for 5 Heroes in the 2 sectors, I placed the 4 in section 17 and sent Jerry Teeson to section 18 where there was only 1 Hero to be honored. None of the Families for Section 17 showed up. After about 25 minutes, We placed the wreaths, had a silent Moment to honor the hero as they were standing by, and came back to the Monuments.

John Redfield, SW Metro RC

FSNC:Section 18, I stood by the grave site of Robert Gulfoil for about 45 minutes. No one came to visit. I placed the wreath at the foot of the grave marker.

Jerry Teeson

FSNC:Section 20A and 20B, After the ceremony, we proceeded to our assigned sections. There was one wreath to be placed in each section. Each one of us took a wreath and placed it at the Headstone. Then we stood in honor of our heroes and waited to see if any family members would show up. After about 20-30 minutes we stood down and returned to the main area.

Reece Hoelscher, Mankato ARC

FSNC:Section 25,

FSNC:Section 30,

Most of our experiences at Ft Snelling at the service sites. Not often do we get all the way through the cemetery to the actual interment sites. Going to section 30 was a different experience for the 8 of us. A long drive and not as developed as the rest of the cemetery. Time will fix that!

Three parts of the day were personally moving for me.

- The laying of the wreaths at the branch monuments. Watching the Wosika, Modeen, and Burnett family be escorted to lay the wreaths brought tears to my eyes

- In section V where there are mostly ground markers.. scratching around for 20 minutes under the snow to find the marker of a member's grand father. He was a horseshoer in WWI

- Watching the MNPG members set back upright all the wreaths that had fallen over

Doug Bley, NW Metro RC

FSNC:Section R,

The Family may have been at the gravesite previous to our arrival, because the tobacco offering was on the grave. At 12:30 we placed the Wreath, Saluted, and departed.

Joe & Pat, Hastings VA Home "HOTH"

FSNC:Section S,

We stood by the Grave until 12:30 and when no family members had approached us to lay the Wreath, we respectfully placed the wreath, Saluted, and departed.

Joe & Pat, Hastings VA Home "HOTH"

FSNC Section T,

Hey Indian.....always an honor to participate in FSNC events....and this one in particular - especially since it was a national event. I believe it went very well, and perhaps the cemetery could ensure that they have as many signs posted as possible marking the various sections. Also curious why the flags at each of the markers were not flown for this event ? The participation at section T was enhanced by the impromptu singing of songs after the laying of the wreaths....significantly added to the solemnity of the memorial atmosphere. What a blessing to have been in attendance for this ceremony.....Looking forward to our next opportunity to honor our heroes.

"Rat" Johnston, SE Metro ARC

Thank you for the opportunity of being part of such a great group of people . I was assigned to Rat (I don't know his first name) and I think we were in section "T". Thank's again and have a great day !!

Keith

FSNC:Section Y,

Keith Mackenroth, 60, New Hope, placed a wreath at the gravesite of a soldier at Fort Snelling National Cemetery as part of the nation-wide Wreaths Across America ceremonies held Saturday, December 13, 2008. The program, started 15 years ago, is expected to have more than 100,000 wreaths placed at the headstones of veterans at about 350 locations. Mackenroth served in the Navy during the Vietnam War on an aircraft carrier named the USS Ticonderoga. Mackenroth, whose parents are buried at Fort Snelling, is also a member of the Patriot Guards organization.

Jim Gehrz, \Star Tribune <http://www.startribune.com/galleries/11792021.html>

**Respectfully Submitted,
RCIC: "Indian John" SE Metro RC**

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John P. Thompson III "INDIAN JOHN"
STG1 (SW) (PJ) US Navy 1981-1997
Ride Captain for South East Metro, MN
metrose@mnpatriotguard.org

It's about "Honor, Dignity and Respect"