



REMEMBER  HONOR  TEACH

**WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA**  
SATURDAY, DEC. 12, 2009



Dec. 2, 2009

## **Allies gather for border ceremony to honor veterans**

**CALAIS, Maine** – Wreaths Across America will honor the service and sacrifice of military veterans from the United States and Canada with a Dec. 5 wreath exchange on Ferry Point Bridge, which spans the St. Croix River and connects Calais and St. Stephen, New Brunswick.

“Our mission is to remember the fallen, honor those who serve and teach our children the value of freedom,” said Karen Worcester, executive director of Wreaths Across America. Worcester and her husband, Morrill, are the owners of Worcester Wreath Co. in Harrington, Maine, and the founders of Wreaths Across America.

The HART (Honoring Allies and Remembering Together) Ceremony on the border, scheduled to begin at 11:45 p.m. EST, was organized to recognize all veterans, including young men and women from Canada who are serving or served in the U.S. military. Participants will include the American Gold Star Mothers, the Canadian Mothers of the Memorial Cross and Silver Cross, the Civil Air Patrol (the auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force), Cadets Canada (the Department of National Defense) and dignitaries representing both nations.

Following a parade, cadets from the Civil Air Patrol will escort the Gold Star Mothers and Cadets Canada will escort the Silver Cross Mothers to the center of the bridge, where the Gold Star Mothers will present a Worcester remembrance wreath to the Silver Cross Mothers for placement nearby at the Cantatoph Memorial Monument in St. Stephen. Weather permitting, a Blackhawk helicopter from the Army National Guard will conduct a flyover during the ceremony as well.

Civil Air Patrol, a major partner of Wreaths Across America, is helping coordinate the border ceremony. “It’s a huge honor,” said Col. Dan Leclair, commander of CAP’s Maine Wing, which is actively involved with Wreaths Across America.

Dignitaries invited to attend the border ceremony, and later scheduled to make speeches at a reception at Washington County Community College in Calais, include U.S. Sen. Susan Collins and U.S. Rep. Mike Michaud from Maine’s congressional delegation as well as Maine Gov. John Baldacci. CAP National Commander Maj. Gen. Amy S. Courter and Maine National Guard Maj. Gen. John W. Libby also will attend.

The bridge event kicks off a full week of activity for Wreaths Across America, which provides remembrance wreaths for wreath-laying ceremonies at more than 400 veterans cemeteries and memorials nationwide and 24 other national cemeteries abroad.

Wreaths Across America began in 2006 as an offshoot of the Arlington National Cemetery wreath project, which was started in 1992 with the annual placement of wreaths donated by Worcester Wreath Co. Today, it is a monumental initiative, with partners like Civil Air Patrol, the Patriot Guard Riders, the Maine State Society of Washington, D.C., and other veterans’ groups participating, not to mention the tens of thousands of private citizens who sponsor wreaths for the wreath-laying ceremonies.

“Laying the wreaths is an honor to our veterans, a service to our communities and a learning experience for our members,” said Courter, who is delighted Civil Air Patrol is involved in this patriotic cause. CAP units will lead almost half of the Wreaths Across America observances this year and will participate with other color and honor guards at many additional locations. CAP cadets and officers will lay wreaths at Arlington as well.

This year’s national Wreaths Across America observance at Arlington will be on Dec. 12, and will feature 16,000 wreaths donated by Worcester Wreath Co., Wal-Mart, the USO and other corporate sponsors. The wreaths will be transported on a 750-mile journey from Harrington, Maine, after a sendoff ceremony on Dec. 6, and will arrive at Arlington on Dec. 12. The route is one the longest annual veterans’ celebrations as patriotic Americans, veterans groups and other local organizations like CAP show their support for the project with parades and ceremonies at more than 20 stops along the way. As many as 700 motorcyclists from the Patriot Guard Riders, an organization of more than 65,000 whose primary mission is to attend the funerals of fallen heroes nationwide, will accompany the trucks to Arlington.

The convoy will arrive at Arlington on Dec. 12, in time for the national Wreaths Across America ceremony and moment of remembrance, which begins at 8:30 a.m. EST at the McClellan Arch, near the entrance to the cemetery. At the same time, other Wreaths Across America observances will be held simultaneously at veterans’ cemeteries and memorials throughout the U.S.

Visit [www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org) for more information about Wreaths Across America and participating locations.

*Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is a nonprofit organization with 58,000 members nationwide. CAP, in its Air Force auxiliary role, performs 90 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and was credited by the AFRCC with saving 72 lives in fiscal year 2009. Its volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and counter-drug missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The members play a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to more than 23,000 young people currently participating in CAP cadet programs. CAP has been performing missions for America for 68 years.*

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