

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wreaths to be laid on all graves at the Albert G. Horton, Jr., Memorial Veterans Cemetery; Ceremony to be held December 12

SUFFOLK – Evergreen wreaths honoring Virginia’s veterans will be placed on all gravesites in the Albert G. Horton, Jr., Memorial Veterans’ Cemetery on Saturday, December 12, 2009, as part of the national Wreaths Across America observance.

The Wreaths Across America ceremony at the Horton Veterans Cemetery will begin at 11:45 a.m. on Saturday, December 12, with a musical interlude by Fleet Forces Band, followed by the Joint Forces Color Guard, the National Anthem sung by Marie Bliss, and the invocation. At noon, Major Dean Gould, Virginia Civil Air Patrol, will read the Wreaths Across America tribute. The same tribute will be read simultaneously at veterans’ cemeteries around the U.S., linking participants in honoring the service and sacrifices of the nation’s veterans. The ceremony will feature active duty service members from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard escorting veterans to place wreaths on their respective service markers. A Korean War veteran and POW will place the POW/MIA wreath.

Brigadier General Ed Dyer, USA (Ret.), will be the guest speaker for the ceremony. Following his speech, Dr. David Lotz, playing the bagpipes, will lead guests from the cemetery pavilion to the burial plots where active duty volunteers will place the final 25 wreaths. The Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Ft. Story Chapel Choir will sing “Blades of Grass” and “Pure White Stones.” The ceremony will conclude with a bugler from the Fleet Forces Band playing TAPS.

Jeanne Banks, along with the Tidewater Tidal WAVES, the local unit of WAVES National, led a group of volunteers in raising more than \$14,000 to purchase 2,150 wreaths for the headstones at the Horton Veterans Cemetery. Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, members of the Patriot Guard Riders, and active duty personnel will begin placing wreaths on the headstones at 10 a.m., Saturday morning.

Members of the Wreath Society partner with Wreaths Across America, a nonprofit organization, to remember, honor and teach our younger generation about the service and sacrifices of our nation's veterans. This year, approximately 350 similar ceremonies will be held across the nation. The tradition of laying wreaths began in 1992 when the Worcester Wreath Company, Worcester, ME, donated wreaths for the headstones of fallen heroes in Arlington National Cemetery. In 2006, they expanded their efforts to include veterans' cemeteries around the country and Wreaths Across America was born.

The Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery is one of two state-operated veterans' cemeteries in Virginia. A similar, yet smaller, ceremony will be held at the Virginia Veterans' Cemetery in Amelia.

The Albert G. Horton, Jr., Memorial Veterans Cemetery is located at 5310 Milners Road, Suffolk, VA. The public is encouraged to attend.

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