

# **WreathsForTheFallen.org**

## **Section Leader and volunteer Briefing Meeting**

**December 6, 2014**

- I. The sign in sheet was passed around and available for everyone to sign. It was a great turnout with everyone eager to participate in the wreath laying ceremony which will be held on December 13, 2014. All section leaders and others involved with the wreath laying ceremony were asked to attend this meeting to prepare for the National Remembrance Ceremony at the MN State Veterans Cemetery at Camp Ripley MN. There were 32 members/volunteers present, Zach Janssen, Cassandra Janssen, Rev Shirley Nelson, John Thomas, Bob Mare, Charlie Makidon, Debi Makidon, Roger Rothstein, Diann Bates, Carl Bates, Carrie Johnson, John Orlando, Lydia Sasse, Chuck Katka, Jerry Patton, Fran Magnan, Norv Pervier, Jayme Storlie, Freddie Barbeau, Ron Robbins, Dick McConnell, Rick Johnson, Bill Kokett, Marit Klein, Jason Olson, Bob (Fuzzy) Christians, Jim Parent, Bill Balaski, Dick Raveling, Justin Doerfler, Rich Cauley and Gloria Cauley. Several other members were present but did not sign the sign in sheet.
- II. The meeting was at the Canteen Bar by the main gate at Camp Ripley. It started at 11:10 with John Thomas conducting the meeting. This was a meeting / briefing for the section leaders and volunteers for the wreath ceremony that would be held on Saturday December 13, 2014. All section leaders and volunteers had received emails regarding the meeting. There will be 3800 wreaths placed this year. Last year there were 3549 wreaths placed. Pledge of Allegiance was recited at the beginning of the meeting.
- III. Detailed sheets were passed around that listed all section leader's names, phone numbers, email addresses and the section they would be working in.

The sheet also had names and contact information for everyone helping with the information table, KIA wreath laying, parking, refreshment table and anyone who has volunteered their service in any other way. There will be 7 sections that will have wreaths placed along with the columbarium and wreaths for the KIA's. Some wreaths will stay at the ceremonial area and some kept on hand for future burials this winter. John also provided a map of the cemetery showing how the sections were laid out so everyone had a reference to where all the sections were located. The information table will be inside of the committal building with several members available to help visitors with any questions they may have and to help visitors find the section they may be looking for. All volunteers will have some type of name tag identifying them as a member of WreathsForTheFallen.org. A donation jar will be placed at the information table. Tables will be provided by the cemetery. The cemetery will also have 2 staff members available to help us the day of the ceremony.

- IV. **Guidelines for section leaders** – John prepared and passed out a printed set of guidelines to be followed by all section leaders the day of the ceremony. These guidelines were very detailed and informative which will be extremely helpful to everyone and are to be followed very closely by everyone. These guidelines covered everything from staging the wreaths, communications, family members laying wreaths, information cards, refreshments, actual laying of the wreaths, special sponsored wreaths, parking, ceremonial area wreaths and maps. It also made mention of the timing of the ceremony and laying the wreaths. Everyone was asked to review their copies and call John with any questions.
- V. **Staging** – Staging of the wreaths will begin at 7:30 a.m. – no later. Delivery trucks will be there around 7:30 and will begin unloading as soon as they arrive. Bob Schule made up a sheet for the Truck Route and Staging Plan so everyone who is there early to help unload the wreaths would know how many wreaths to stage at each section.

- VI. **The actual Ceremony** begins at 11:00 a.m. sharp. This is the same time that all National Remembrance Ceremony's take place in the United States, and some international ceremony's as well. The Ceremony should take around 20 minutes. No wreaths are to be placed until AFTER the ceremony with exception this year of the KIA wreaths which will be placed at 10:00 am, with the wreath being laid by a Patriot Guard member and/or family members if present. Each section will have someone who will stay with the wreaths until it is time for the wreaths to be placed after the ceremony. Our organization will be responsible for the entire ceremony this year. John had received a list of responsibilities from David Swantek, the Director of the Cemetery. A program has been prepared listing the parts of the ceremony and everyone who will participate. New this year will be the playing of TAPS. Programs will be passed out prior to the ceremony.
- VII. **KIA's wreaths** were discussed by several members. It was decided to have more discussion at a later date since this meeting was designated to be a Section Leaders Briefing and not a General Meeting. Many members were not aware of some of the issues that were brought up so it was decided to address this issue at a general meeting where this issue would be on the agenda. A date and time for the meeting will be set up after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year and emailed to all the members via email.
- VIII. **Special Grave Specific Requests** to place wreaths will have a special index type card with all the information on the card – name, site number and date of death. Each section leader will get the box of cards – each of those cards needs to be checked off after the wreath is placed and returned to the section leader. This will verify that all special requests have been placed and verified. After the special request wreaths have been placed then all other wreaths will be placed by a volunteer.
- IX. **Placing wreaths**—John went over the details of laying the wreaths – which is also listed in the guidelines. This included how the wreath should be laid,

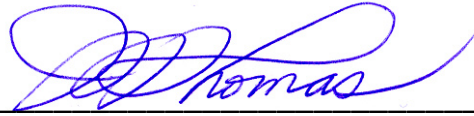
at what angle and the wire not to touch the marker. Section leaders will tell everyone laying a wreath the correct way to place the wreath.

- X. **2 way radios** will again be provided by Long Lake Conservation Department which will greatly aid in the communications and in case of an emergency. Roger Danielson, Rick Johnson and Jim Parent will be in charge of parking. We talked about logistics of parking and the need to have lots of help and be able to communicate with each other.
  
- XI. Other important details were included in the guideline.
  
- XII. **The Patriot Guard** will have a flag line at the ceremony. Post mission and recap will be at the Canteen following the ceremony.
  
- XIII. **Wreath Removal** will be on Saturday – January 31, 2015 beginning around 11:00 am. Everyone who is able is asked to help on this day. The American Legion Post 46 might have a flag disposal after the wreaths are removed.
  
- XIV. Other discussion included comments about the **wreath procurement** process this year. It was decided that next year, (2015) we would have a meeting to discuss the wreath procurement process and maybe set some policies and guidelines in place based on price, quality, availability, delivery, support, integrity and workmanship of the wreath and the wreath provider. It was a good discussion with lots of comments from many members. The notice for this meeting, or the meeting where this will be on the agenda, will be emailed to all members after the date has been set. Please watch your emails for dates, times and location of meetings.

After a Q & A session the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Carrie Johnson, Secretary

Minutes approved by:



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John Thomas, President

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO ATTENDED THE MEETING AND HELPED IN  
ANY WAY TO MAKE THIS EVENT SUCH A GREAT SUCCESS.

It is an amazing accomplishment to be able to place a wreath at every  
grave site at the cemetery. Thanks to all of you!