

Airmen, civilians lay wreaths at Arlington

by Senior Airman J.G. Buzanowski
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12/19/2005 - **WASHINGTON (AFPN)** -- Despite the cold, wind and snow, about 75 people gathered at Arlington National Cemetery on Dec. 15 to lay more than 5,000 wreaths on gravesites, including four at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Since 1992, members of the armed forces, civil air patrol, veterans of foreign wars and several civilians have gathered to take part in the project, a brainchild of Maine resident Morrill Worcester.

Mr. Worcester owns and operates a holiday decoration company. Thirteen years ago he had a holiday wreath surplus and thought back to his youth. At age 12, he'd won a trip to Washington, D.C., and Arlington National Cemetery was one of the most memorable places he visited. His first thought was to bring the extra 4,000 wreaths there.

"We couldn't do anything in this country if it wasn't for the people who gave their lives to protect us," Mr. Worcester said. "It's a great honor to be able to come here and pay our respects."

In 1993, rather than bring leftover wreaths, he planned for the event. Since then, he's driven to Arlington every year with volunteers and a truck full of decorations.

Word got around to other agencies, such as the civil air patrol and the National Reconnaissance Office, and several people wanted to help.

"That first year, there were just a few of us, and it took us five or six hours to get them placed," Mr. Worcester said. "This year, we had extra help and got done in about an hour."

This was the fourth year Tech. Sgt. Lisa Rodier helped honor those buried at Arlington. She described the event as "very emotional" and something everyone should do at least once.



ARLINGTON, Va. (AFPN) -- Tech. Sgt. Scott Glassic places a wreath on a headstone. He was one of hundreds of volunteers who gathered at Arlington National Cemetery to place more than 5,000 donated Christmas wreaths. The 14th annual wreath laying event is the result of Worcester Wreath Company's owner Morrill Worcester's, childhood dream of doing something to honor those laid to rest in the national cemetery. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Jim Varhegyi)

“You get a feeling you can’t get from anything else,” Sergeant Rodier said. “These people sacrificed their lives for me and my children, so why can’t I sacrifice a little time for them?”

Anyone interested in participating with this event next year should contact Wayne Hanson at (703) 971-4148.