

Remembering Veterans

California Post commemorates vets through Wreaths Across America

Nov 25, 2019

December brings a slew of decorations, but a wreath adorning the tombstone of a veteran tops the list for hordes of volunteers annually.

While the month's decorations speak the holiday language, National Wreaths Across America Day dictates an all too familiar message for veterans everywhere — *Remember, Honor, Teach.*

For Bill Rogers, a Life member of VFW Post 3225 in Clovis, Calif., the pilgrimage alongside others in the community across Academy and Red Bank cemeteries distributing wreaths captures the essence of paying tribute to fallen veterans.

“It’s all about remembering our veterans that won’t be with us during the Christmas time,” said Rogers, who served as an Air Force police officer in Vietnam in 1971-72. “We’ve been doing it for about five years now, honoring them twice a year.”

Rogers and 40 other Post 3225 members join a community of volunteers that include boys and girls scouts at the Clovis Veterans Memorial District twice a year, decorating 350 graves with wreaths in December and U.S. flags on Veterans Day.

“We start in Clovis and end at Red Bank, which is about five miles east of town,” Rogers said. “Red Bank is also on the side of a mountain, so putting up flags there makes for a neat sight as we honor our veterans.”

Post 3225 joins legions of VFW Posts worldwide yearly in honoring veterans through the Wreaths Across America initiative, whose humble beginnings in 1992 snowballed into a network of volunteers that continues to grow today.

According to the Wreaths Across America website, the organization peaked in 2014 by draping 1,000 locations that included Puerto Rico and 24 overseas cemeteries with more than 700,000 ardent, red wreaths to commemorate veterans.

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But it's WAA's commitment to teaching the younger generations that brings remembrance and honor for veterans full-circle.

In the case of Post 3225, the passing of member Dennis Van Zandt last year exemplifies the bond a generation makes in continuing tradition.

"Honoring one of our own means a lot to us," Rogers said. "He passed away last year, and he used to help as a cook during our Veterans Memorial pancake breakfast fundraisers, so now his daughter has stepped into that role to help us out. She will join us in honoring her father and other veterans this year as well."

VFW members can join their Post's tribute to fallen veterans at this year's National Wreaths Across America Day slated for Dec. 14. For more information, visit wreathscrossamerica.org.

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