



NEWS

CAP National Headquarters
Public Affairs
105 S. Hansell St.
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112
Toll free: 877-227-9142, x250

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Remember, Honor, and Teach – Local Civil Air Patrol unit helps honor Azle’s military veterans through Wreaths Across America

Wreath-laying tribute on tap for Dec. 18 has become a CAP holiday tradition



Azle, Tx. – Every December, there is a holiday tradition observed around the world where thousands of CAP officer and cadets along with other community civil and charitable organizations gather in remembrance of those who have served our great county. At this ceremony, we present the colors, call out each service in honor, and place wreaths on the headstones at our local Azleland Memorial Park. Our local event is conducted at the same time other ceremonies are taking place across the nation.



“Civil Air Patrol has been a proud partner in Wreaths Across America since the nonprofit was founded in 2007,” said former CAP National Commander Maj. Gen. Mark Smith. “Thousands of service-minded CAP members across America tap into the initiative each year — selling wreath sponsorships to the public, laying wreaths and conducting ceremonies to mark the day with pomp, circumstance and patriotism.”

“Each and every wreath is a gift from an appreciative person or family who knows what it means to serve and sacrifice for the freedoms we all enjoy, fulfilling our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach,” said Karen Worcester, executive director of Wreaths Across America.



Azle Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol, began holding this ceremony locally in 2013 and each year spends time during the few months ahead of the ceremony date seeking sponsors for the wreaths that will be laid. The current count of Veteran’s laid to rest at Azleland Memorial Park is approximately 500. The goal of the unit is

that no grave will go without a wreath.

However, in 2020 and again this year, the Azle squadron has faced extreme challenges to meet this goal and has fallen short wreaths to cover all the graves. Understandably, local businesses with community safety in mind, have not granted our request to setup a table to talk with the community members directly about this opportunity and collect these sponsorships. “We have been limited mostly to utilizing social media to get the word out to our local community. Members of the squadron make a huge effort to talk to their family and friends, but the progress has been slow. We need community support to make this happen. On Wreaths Across America Day, we locate each grave, pause, say the veteran’s name out loud, and render them a salute. If we have a wreath to lay, it is then placed neatly on the grave for the holiday season. But each year it is heartbreaking to leave many graves without a wreath”, stated 1st Lt Ronda Kilian, Public Affairs Officer, CAP. She continued, “we would love to help the program expand to other cemeteries as well, but so far, we are still working on providing 100% coverage at Azleland each year.”

Wreaths to be placed this December must be sponsored by November 30, 2021 to reach the goal of 500. Currently 181 wreaths are sponsored. Each wreath is \$15 to sponsor and is an opportunity to join our great nation in saying ‘thank you’ to our veterans. Each sponsorship will ensure that a wreath is hand-crafted of all-American balsam and hand-tied with a red velvet bow is sent to Azleland here where a CAP or community volunteer will place it on the marker of a fallen hero. The Azle squadron is asking for community members and businesses to consider helping this effort. Wreaths may be sponsored through the unit’s website at www.azle.cap.gov/waa-tx456 or by contacting the unit at azle@txwg.cap.gov to make arrangements. The QR Code below may be scanned with a smart phone and it will directly link to the Wreaths Across America sponsorship page for the unit.



Civil Air Patrol, the longtime all-volunteer U.S. Air Force auxiliary, is the newest member of the Air Force’s Total Force. In this role, CAP operates a fleet of 560 aircraft, performs about 90 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and is credited by the AFRCC with saving an average of 82 lives annually. CAP’s 66,000 members also perform homeland security, disaster relief and drug interdiction missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. In addition, CAP plays a leading role in aerospace/STEM education, and its members serve as mentors to over 28,000 young people participating in CAP’s Cadet Programs. Visit www.GoCivilAirPatrol.com or www.CAP.news for more information.

CAP contact info:

Ronda Kilian –ronda.kilian@txwg.cap.gov– 817-778-0778