**Wreaths for Boscawen**

**Saturday, December 14, 2019 at 10:30 AM**

**Overview:**  Each year, the Blue Star Mothers of New Hampshire sponsors Wreaths for Boscawen.  This event is intended to bring the community together to honor the veterans and family members interred at the NH State Veterans Cemetery and throughout the world.  Wreaths are sourced locally and paid for through generous donations made by individuals and businesses throughout New Hampshire. Please go to [www.bluestarmothersofnh.org/wreaths-for-boscawen](http://www.bluestarmothersofnh.org/wreaths-for-boscawen) to donate/sponsor a wreath.

This event started in 2007 and was inspired by Wreaths Across America, which is a national program where wreaths are sourced through a company in Maine.  Over the past several years, we have moved toward sourcing wreaths locally because it is cheaper ($8 locally verses $15 through WAA) and it supports NH jobs and economic growth.  Starting in 2020, Wreaths for Boscawen will always occur on the first Saturday in December and all wreaths will be sourced locally.

**Why we do not do every headstone.**  We are often asked about placing wreaths on every headstone.  While we appreciate this sentiment, we also balance that goal against the approximate $45,000 cost (which will continually increase) of putting wreaths on each headstone.  The Blue Star Mothers and cemetery leadership made a decision to limit the number of wreaths purchased and placed through this program to between 33% and 50% of all headstones in the cemetery.  We made this decision to limit our fundraising in the hopes thatour generous donors would also consider contributing to other worthy causes throughout the state (veteran homelessness, mental health awareness and treatment, hunger, Veteran Service Organizations, etc.).  Any extra funds from the current year will rollover to start the fundraising for following year’s wreaths. We LOVE our wreaths, but we also recognize that they will be collected and disposed of in January.  *Importantly, we always welcome families and friends to purchase a wreath locally and place it on their loved one’s headstone separate from the Wreaths for Boscawen event*.

**The day of the event.**If you have not attended this event personally, we encourage you to do so!  It is a beautiful, solemn, enjoyable day to honor our veterans and families.  That said, we are always seeking ways to increase safety, efficiency and enjoyment.  This year we are going to do things a bit differently.  Prior to the event, a small group of volunteers will attach bows and place wreaths in box trucks. On day of the event, the box trucks with wreaths will be strategically positioned throughout the cemetery.  We will have a very brief opening ceremony at 10:30 AM at the Circle of Flags.  Participants will then move to any box truck they wish and wait in line to receive wreaths to place on headstones.  Wreaths will NOT be handed out until 10:30 AM.  In addition, please remember during our Wreaths for Boscawen event to take time to read the names on the headstones to the left and right of where you place the wreath so that we remember ALL those who are interred here.

We will hand out a maximum of two (2) wreaths per person (including children).  We want to make sure that as many people as possible have an opportunity to place a wreath.  Even if you donate 10 wreaths (which we welcome), we will only hand out wreaths two at a time. After careful placement, you are welcome to return to the line to pick-up two more wreaths.  Wreath donations are for the interred veterans and their families, they are not reservations to place a specific number of wreaths.  In addition, we cannot guarantee that you can place a wreath on a specific headstone during the event.  If you want to place a wreath on a specific headstone, we recommend doing so prior to December 14th or by positioning a person at the headstone before 10:30 AM and having someone else in your group bring you a wreath.

This event is about our community coming together to honor ALL veterans and family members.  By placing a wreath on any headstone, you are honoring your friends and loved ones interred at the NH State Veterans Cemetery or at any other location around the world – including those whose remains are lost, MIA, or otherwise scattered.  The act itself is the tribute to your loved ones and all of our heroes.

Throughout the event, we will have music playing on the carillon system and refreshments (including warm drinks) available in the maintenance area.  In addition, the CSM Stanley and Renate Arnold Veterans Heritage Learning Center will be open for visitors to learn more about the service and sacrifice of our NH veterans.  At 12:00 PM at the Circle of Flags, the Civil Air Patrol will conduct a ceremony to honor all branches of service.  All are highly encouraged to attend.

Arrive a bit early to allow time to park.  Dress warm.  We look forward to seeing you on December 14th at 10:30 AM for this awesome event.

Wreaths will be taken down on Saturday, January 11th at 10:30 AM.  All are welcome to attend!