

WreathsForTheFallen.org

Section Leaders Briefing Meeting

December 5, 2015

- I. The Section Leader Briefing was held on Saturday, December 5th 2015 at the Canteen at Camp Ripley at 11:00am. All officers, section leaders, volunteers in staging, parking and information personnel were invited to this meeting to prepare for the National Remembrance Wreath Laying Ceremony that will be held at the MN State Veterans Cemetery at Camp Ripley MN on Saturday, December 12th at 11:00 am.

- II. A sign in sheet was passed around and available for everyone to sign. It was a great turnout with 26 volunteers present. Those that signed in were, John Thomas, Rev Shirley Nelson, Carrie Johnson, John Orlando, Lydia Orlando, Jerry Patton, Norv Pervier, Jayme Storlie, Freddie Barbeau, Ron Robbins, Brenda Robbins, Richard McConnell, Rick Johnson, Bob (Fuzzy) Christen, Jim Parent, Bob Kmitch, Chuck Katka, Joyce Tveit, Ken Tveit, Laurie Christenson (CAP), Bob Thome, Bob Larson, Denise Larson, Blair Francis, Tanya Haaf and Laura Becker Palister.

- III. The briefing started at 11:10. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited at the beginning of the meeting.

- IV. Detailed sheets were passed around that listed all section leader's names and contact information and the section they would be working in. The sheet also had names and contact information for everyone helping with the information table, parking, refreshment table and anyone who would be in charge of a specific area. If anyone would not be able to attend the ceremony they were asked to notify John, one of the officers or the section leader so that we could find someone else to help out.

There will be 7 sections that will have wreaths placed along with the columbarium. Some wreaths will stay at the ceremonial area and some kept on hand for future burials this winter. There will be 4,198 wreaths placed this year. John prepared and handed out '**Guidelines for Section Leaders and Wreath Placement**' to everyone present. This covered every topic that would be pertinent for the wreath laying ceremony. Some of the topics were Communications, Parking, WiFi, Refreshments, Staging Information, Wreath Placement, Sponsored Wreath Placement, Marker Information, Ceremonial Area Wreaths and Emergency Information. It also included a map of the cemetery showing the specific sections and the parking area. 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 should 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 staff members available to help us the day of the ceremony.

V. **Guidelines for section leaders** – These guidelines were very detailed and informative which will be extremely helpful to everyone and are to be followed very closely by everyone. There are a few changes from prior years so the guidelines need to be reviewed. One of the big issues is the policy on the 2nd interment markers.

VI. **Staging** – Staging of the wreaths will begin at 7:30 a.m. Trucks will arrive at 7:00-7:30 am. A truck route and staging plan worksheet will be provided to everyone who will be helping to unload the wreaths at each section. Yellow ribbon will be surrounding the pile of wreaths at each section after the correct # of wreaths have been allocated.

VII. **The Wreath 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. The Ceremony should take around 20 minutes. No wreaths are to be placed until AFTER the ceremony. There will be NO special wreaths placed for the KIA's. Each section will have someone who will stay with the wreaths until it is time for the wreaths to be placed after the ceremony. WFTF.org will be organizing the entire ceremony this year. John had received a list of responsibilities from David Swantek, the Director of the Cemetery. A program for the ceremony will be available prior to and during the ceremony. Norv Pervier will be the MC for the program.

VIII. **Special Grave Specific Requests/ Index Cards** – Each section leader will have index type cards with all the information on the card for the grave specific requests. These cards will be in numerical order. Lots of time was spent explaining the importance of these cards and how they should be handled. They need to be returned to the section leader after the wreath has been placed and then returned to the Information Desk. 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.

X. **The Patriot Guard** will again have a flag line at the ceremony. Post mission and recap will be at the Canteen following the ceremony.

XI. **Ambulance**- There will be an ambulance on site this year.

XII. **Wreath Removal** will be on Saturday – January 30, 2016 beginning around 11:00 am. Everyone who is able is asked to help on this day. The American Legion will also have a flag disposal after the wreaths are removed.

Q & A session – several questions were asked and answered.

Closing Prayer – Reverend Shirley Nelson

Meeting was adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Carrie Johnson, Secretary

Minutes approved by: _____

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.**