Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

Scouts honor veterans with Wreaths Across America at Fort Drum

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- Members of Fort Drum Cub Scout Pack 26, Boy Scouts of America Troop 26 and Girl Scout Service Unit 512 joined other community volunteers Dec. 14 in Memorial Park to participate in National Wreaths Across America Day.

Fort Drum’s Memorial Park was among roughly 4,600 locations nationwide where volunteers placed wreaths to honor the memory of veterans.

“This is a nice way to show our respect for veterans and make this is great community event for people to get involved,” said Jamie Kieffer, Fort Drum site coordinator for the Wreaths Across America event. “It’s just nice to have something for the Scouts to participate in where they can show support for our veteran community.”

Scouts provided a color guard for the ceremony, and then individuals laid wreaths in front of the Military Mountaineers Monument for each branch of the armed forces, for prisoners of war (POWs), and for Gold Star Families. Attendees also placed wreaths at the pedestals along Heroes Walk, which honors the 10th Mountain Division’s fallen warriors.

This was the second year Carter Gragg participated in the wreath-laying as a Cub Scout Pack 26 member, but he attended as a family member before that.

“This is something you can do for kindness and being helpful,” he said.

Shelby Stemper, with Girl Scouts Troop 50298, said she remembered feeling worried when her dad deployed, and what he did to make her feel better.

“It was very scary to know he was gone and he might not come back,” she said. “We just wanted him to be safe. And sometimes he sent souvenirs from where he was – that way we knew he was OK.”

Shelby said her father helped a lot of people in his job, so volunteering with Wreath Across America is her way of giving back.

“It’s really special to get to be a part of something to help honor those who lost their lives fighting for freedom,” she said.

In 2023, volunteers placed more than 3 million veterans’ wreaths at participating locations worldwide, with a third of the participants being children.

“I think it’s important that we do this to remember those who’ve served, and remember what they did,” said Timothy Childers, with BSA Troop 26. “Part of the Scout’s Oath is about serving your country. Being here to do the wreath ceremony, in my opinion, is a way we can do that.”

Wreaths Across America is a nonprofit organization founded in 2007 with the mission of remembering the fallen, honoring those who serve, and teaching the next generation the value of freedom. This year’s theme is “Live With Purpose” to draw inspiration from the stories of volunteers whose community service impacts countless others.

Kieffer said that Scouts participate in a variety of community service activities throughout the year. These include fundraisers, coat drives, beautification and clean-up projects, some of which support Fort Drum organizations like the Thrift Shop or Mountain Community Homes.

“I think volunteering in the communities we live in is important,” Timothy said. “The community gives so much to us, so we have to remember to give back sometimes.”

For more information about Wreaths Across America, visit [www.wreathsacrossamerica.org](https://usg01.safelinks.protection.office365.us/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.wreathsacrossamerica.org%2F&data=05%7C02%7Clisa.r.albrecht.civ%40army.mil%7C1bb81af877a3497f4aa608dd1de75ce1%7Cfae6d70f954b481192b60530d6f84c43%7C0%7C0%7C638699601852224296%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=7GQpQQg6%2BwbaB%2FSkZeNJuvL4t9PQDgt%2FQSzBfcyKFQw%3D&reserved=0).

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Photo Captions:

Members of Fort Drum Cub Scout Pack 26, Boy Scouts of America Troop 26 and Girl Scout Service Unit 512 joined other community volunteers Dec. 14 in Memorial Park to participate in National Wreaths Across America Day. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)