



**February 2022**

**NEWS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS ST. LOUIS COUNCIL 3335**

## **St. Louis Church Participates in Wreaths Across America Honoring Our Deceased Veterans**



**The blessing of the wreaths by Fr. Thomas Hamm; the 21 Gun Salute, and the bugling of taps by the VFW Post 4464**

Thanks to our female counterparts, the Catholic Women's Club (CWC), our parish family, namely St. Louis Church participated for the first time ever in the nationwide "*Wreaths Across America*" project at the parish cemetery.....something we knights never even thought of. The women simply picked up the ball and ran; they went out and did it. Thank you, dear women, particularly the CWC president, Margo Marazon for this initiative. May our participation in the "*Wreaths Across America*" become an annual tradition every Advent in our parish.

**The goals of the Wreaths Across America movement** are: REMEMBER the fallen; HONOR those who served; and TEACH our children the value of freedom.

The program on December 18 opened at the gazebo of the parish cemetery with a welcome, introduction of the VFW Honor Guard, a series of beautiful prayers led by Fr. Thomas Hamm, and a moment of silence with some 25 parishioners and relatives of deceased veterans attending.

**The names of our 26 deceased veterans buried at the St. Louis Church cemetery were read.** The year of death is in parenthesis. *Thirteen of them were knights*, namely James Davison Jr.; (Army, 1989); Dr. Joseph Brady (Army WW II, 1994); Fred Edelmann (Army, 1995); Eric Roderick (West Point Cadet, 1999); William Dressel (2000); Jacques Bishop (Army, 2001); Joseph Bokovitz (Army, 2002); Gerald Gust (Air Force, 2005); Juan Gomez Jordan (Army, 2007); Louis Ford (Coast Guard, 2008); Robert Murphy (Navy, 2018); Robert Schopis (Marines WW II, 2019); and Everett Ray King (Air Force, 2021. Patriotism is the fourth pillar of the KofC in addition to Charity, U:nity, and Fraternity, *Other vets honored* were: Gordon Baker (Air Force, 2011); Jerry Brown (Army, 2011); John Churchill (Army, 1972); Donald Cox (Army WW II, 2014); Joseph Fenderbosch

(Army, 1992); Dr. Frank Ford (Army, 1967); Stephen Geremesz (Army Air Corps WW II, 1986); Emil Janko (Army, 1992); Herbert Loomis (Marines WWII, 2009); Richard Mershon (Navy, 1978); Donald Polcyn (Air Force, 2018); William Prosen (Army Korea, 1991); and Franklin Richards (Army WWII, 1966). The women and families of the deceased laid the wreaths on each grave.

A contingent of the local VFW Post 4464, led by Commander Bill Mangus, gave a 21 gun salute and their bugler played taps. The VFW has provided a great service in assisting at countless ceremonies and burials of veterans in Gallia County. Our pastor then blessed the wreaths, which were placed on the 26 graves of our departed veterans.

**How did the “Wreaths Across America” movement start?** Years ago a 12 year old paper boy by the name of Morrill Worchester won a trip to Washington D.C. sponsored by the Bangor Daily News of Harrington, Maine. His visit to the Arlington National Cemetery, where 400,000 veterans mainly as well as eligible dependents and national leaders are buried, left a deep impression upon him. Later he founded the Worcester Wreath Company. In 1992 the company had a surplus of wreaths that he wanted placed on hundreds of graves at the

Arlington National Cemetery. What a wonderful way to honor the millions of veterans who served our country and put their lives on the line for something bigger than themselves.....to preserve the freedoms and founding principles of the United States of America!

With the aid of Maine Senator Olympia Snowe, arrangements were made for the wreaths to be placed at Arlington in one of the older sections of the cemetery that had been receiving fewer visitors with each passing year. As plans were underway, a number of other individuals and organizations stepped up to help. James Prout, owner of the local trucking company Blue Bird Ranch, Inc., generously provided transportation all the way to Virginia from Maine. Volunteers from the local American Legion and VFW Posts gathered with members of the community to decorate each wreath. A special ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was added.



**On the left is the laying of the wreaths at the St. Louis Church Cemetery in Gallipolis. Typical (center) is the grave of Fred Edelmann, who served**

his country as an army soldier, a civilian engineer, and a volunteer fireman. His legacy is our monthly KofC Rosary before all of the Masses on the First Saturday and the First Sunday of every month. On the right is a view of the wreaths at a section of the Arlington National Cemetery.

In 2005 a photo (above) of the tombstones at Arlington, adorned with wreaths and covered in snow, circulated around the internet. Suddenly, the project received national attention. Soon a movement developed to place wreaths on graves of veterans in local cemeteries all over the country. In 2007 the Worcester family, along with veterans and others formed “Wreaths Across America, a non-profit 501-(c)(3) organization to spread this movement (see <https://wreathscrossamerica.org/>).

Today 2,500 locations are involved across the USA and St. Louis Cemetery is one of them. On December 18, 2021 the faithful of St. Louis Church joined in at our cemetery under the leadership of the Catholic Women’s Club. Next year they will do the same at 2 pm on Saturday December 17.

Women, the CWC needs YOU to become a vital force in this parish and make a difference in the parish community. Call or text its president, Margo Marazon at 740-707-2567. The same as the Knights, the CWC needs more younger members to give balance, renewed energy,

and creative ideas. May the knights and the CWC grow to become indispensable aids to the renewal of our parish, complementing each other and also working together for the common good of our parish family. Thanks to Patty Hays for taking the photos and Oscar Bastiani's insights. .

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**Monthly Business Dinner Meeting - *Monday February 28 at 6:30 pm, preceded by either Mass or Rosary at 5:30 pm in the church.***

Prayer is essential to our success. Members are urged to attend both it and the meeting that follows with supper, great fellowship, decision making on future activities, planning, and coordination. The input of every knight is most valuable. Our Council is as strong as each knight makes it. That begins with YOU! We cannot be an effective Council without the Lord's help and guidance together with your participation. Some of the men make great sacrifices to attend the meetings. May all do the same! Talk up the meetings and get your brother knights to attend. ***The next 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month Dinner Meeting will be on Monday March 28 at 6:30 pm.*** Please talk it up. We're struggling to reorganize and be as active as we were before the Covid-19 pandemic. With your help we can become a Star Council again as we were in the past.