



Civil Air Patrol

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Winchester Composite Squadron
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News Release

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Civil Air Patrol, Wreaths Across America to Honor Veterans

Winchester, VA – The Winchester Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol, have partnered with the Wreaths Across America program this year by volunteering to conduct a ceremony at the Winchester National Cemetery on Saturday December 13, starting at 12:00 Noon EST. Seven ceremonial wreaths will be placed to remember those who served, honor their sacrifices, and teach our younger generations about the high price of our freedoms. Specially made wreaths for Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Merchant Marines and POW/MIA veterans will be placed on memorials during a unique ceremony that will be coordinated simultaneously at over 350 participating locations all across the Country and around the World.

“Our squadron is excited and honored to help take this wonderful program to a new level in Winchester,” said Lieutenant Colonel Charles Gittins, squadron commander at the Winchester Composite Squadron. “This is the community’s opportunity to honor these heroes that made a tremendous sacrifice for our nation, and America is better off today because of that sacrifice.”

Gittins indicated the squadron’s long-term goal is to generate enough wreath sponsorships for every headstone at the veterans Cemetery. “No other goal is acceptable, as far as I am concerned. Every one of the vets and their immediate family members buried there gave of themselves to preserve the American way of life. It is the least we can all do on their behalf for the freedom they have ensured for us all,” he said.

To achieve this goal, the Winchester Composite Squadron is calling upon the residents, businesses, and community groups of the Winchester and the surrounding areas for assistance with sponsorships. Wreath sponsorships are \$15 dollars each, with a portion of the proceeds returned to the Winchester Composite Squadron which helps to defray the costs to help support their cadet programs, emergency services, and aerospace education missions. Sponsorships are accepted throughout the year.

The public and media are invited to attend this ceremony, and also help with the placement of wreaths if they desire before the ceremony begins

Page 2

Wreaths Across America is a nationwide program started in 1992 by the Worcester Wreath Company of
“Citizens Serving Communities; Above and Beyond”

Harrington, Maine. What began as a way for the company to put to good use excess unsold wreaths they manufactured for each holiday season, has evolved into a charitable organization with the mission of remembering the fallen, Honor those who serve and teach our children the value of freedom.

The program originally centered on Arlington National Cemetery and other veterans cemeteries in the northeast. In 2006, Wreaths Across America went nationwide, and partnered with the Civil Air Patrol on both fundraising and volunteer support for the hundreds of simultaneous ceremonies across the country.

The Civil Air Patrol is the official Auxiliary of the United States Air Force, and conducts over 90 percent of the nation's inland air and ground search and rescue operations for the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. In addition, they provide aerial imagery, damage assessment, communications relay, and limited cargo haul support to Federal, State, and local officials. They maintain a vibrant cadet program focused on developing the nation's emerging leaders, and strive to develop a better understanding of aviation and space exploration contributions to society.

The Winchester Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is a nonprofit organization with members from the surrounding counties. Resources include qualified ground and air crews, CAP aircraft, ground vehicles and communication equipment, distributed across the Greater Winchester Area for immediate deployment. CAP volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and counterdrug missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The squadron also performs other community service such as providing Color Guard for ceremonies, sports events and parades, help at community events and with parking control at festivals. The Squadron also educates groups and schools in drug free activities for a better way of life.

For more information about Wreaths Across America or to sponsor a wreath please visit www.wreathesacrossamerica.org.

For Winchester Composite Squadron inquiries, please contact the Lt Colonel Charles Gittins, Commander at 540-662-9036, e-mail cgittins@aol.com or Major CJ Muncy, Deputy Commander of Cadets at 540-551-9968, or e-mail cjmuncy@earthlink.net