



Township of Belleville
New Jersey

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Belleville Participates in Wreaths Across America

*About 50 Residents Pay Their Respects to Hometown Heroes
Who Served Their Country*

BELLEVILLE, NJ – Dec. 21, 2020 – Belleville gathered Saturday to pay its respects to its hometown heroes, the ones whose grave markers were still covered by snow and whose head stones were still showing traces of the recent storm.

About 50 residents placed wreaths with red bows near the resting places of some 90 veterans buried at snowy St. Peter's Church cemetery.

Whether it was members of Girl Scouts Troop 20340 or members of American Legion Post 105 and other residents, those who took part in the event did so with grateful spirits and heavy hearts.

This was the fourth year that the township took part in Wreaths Across America, an annual event that was inspired by the placing of some 250,000 wreaths annually at Arlington National Cemetery.

Wreaths Across America fundraises year-round and uses that money to purchase wreaths for organizations such as the Belleville Historical Society, which organized Saturday's local event.

After Father Ivan Sciberras led the assembled in prayer and blessed the wreaths, Mayor Michael Melham placed the first one. Melham has made it an annual tradition to pay his personal respects to former Belleville Mayor Waters – a World War I veteran.

"This annual event reminds us that we always owe these men and women a debt for their service to our country – even in death," Melham said. "It was heart-warming to see so many Belleville residents take part in this event and remember those who served our country."

Michael Perrone, president of the historical society, said veterans of the Spanish-American War, the Civil War, World War I, World War II and the Vietnam War are buried in the cemetery.

He said that members of the historical society also laid wreaths at the cemeteries at the Dutch Reform Church and the Christ Episcopal Church.

They spent part of Sunday laying wreaths at the resting places of Belleville-born veterans buried in surrounding towns. They did the same at the graves of Medal of Honor recipients who live in surrounding communities.

Wreaths Across America estimates that a total of 1.7 million wreaths were laid at headstones across the country last weekend.

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