



## VA AOH VET Affairs Update

DEC 2020

Officers, Presidents, Brothers,

See attached monthly Bugle to share with your veterans and division members. If you want to add a rep to the distro, please send me their name and email.

**The National Museum of the U.S. Army is open** – The National Museum of the United States Army celebrates over 245 years of Army history and honors our nation's Soldiers—past, present and future—the regular Army, the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard. It is located at FT. Belvoir, VA and is now open! You have to reserve a time block in order to keep the numbers low due to COVID-19, however admission is free (<https://www.thenmusa.org/timed-entry-ticketing/>). Use the below address for GPS (1775 Liberty Dr, FT. Belvoir, VA 22060). Since it is new, the GPS may not recognize the address. The below link goes to directions:

<https://www.thenmusa.org/visit/directions-parking/s>

**Free National Park Pass for Veterans** – Do you like nature? Do you visit National Parks? The National Park Service in partnership with Operation Live Well would like to thank military personnel and their families for their service and invite them to enjoy their national parks. Beginning on Veterans Day, November 11, 2020, Gold Star Families and U.S. military veterans receive free access to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including national parks, wildlife refuges and forests. The free access program is a way to thank America's veterans and Gold Star families for their support of our country and to encourage them to explore recreational opportunities on their public lands and waters.

**Sweats for Vets** – Over the past 16 years, the local Knights of Columbus and the Ancient Order of Hibernians have collected and distributed thousands of new sweat outfits to our veterans in residence (or local patients) at the Veterans Medical facility in Martinsburg, WVA. This year's program to secure 800 new sweat outfits is now underway for distribution in early January 2021. Attached is a list of items that they are looking for.

**Check on your friends during the holidays** – We recently had Thanksgiving, a time of comradery and family. However not everyone has friends, or a family. Let's keep in mind and contact those who may be lonely, veteran or not, AOH or not. Reach out and invite them over, or talk to them on the phone and let them know you care. A phone call can be the difference in someone's life, and can even save a life as well.

**Wreaths Across America** – Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day (DEC 19<sup>th</sup>), their mission is to Remember, Honor and Teach. It is carried out by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as at more than 2,100 additional locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea, and abroad. From the Revolutionary War to present day conflicts, our veterans are devoted sons and daughters, fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers. They come from all backgrounds in life to place those lives on the line for our freedoms. The wreaths show appreciation during the holidays, as they cannot return home to their families. Due to COVID-19, this year will have many restrictions:

DEC 13<sup>th</sup>: Family pass holders only will be welcomed to lay wreaths at their loved ones' graves from 0800-5 pm. The cemetery will be closed to the general public.

Dec 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>: Cemetery is closed to the general public, enabling the Military District of Washington and The Old Guard Soldiers to safely place wreaths on graves.

DEC 19<sup>th</sup>: A small group of Wreaths Across America team members will place wreaths in designated sections of the cemetery, while the event will be broadcasted for the public. The link will be sent by Wreaths Across America as it gets closer.

DEC 20<sup>th</sup>: Cemetery re-opens to the public to place graveside tributes of privately purchased flowers or wreaths in accordance with the floral policy ([www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Funerals/After-th-Funderal/Floral-Wreath-Tributes-at-Gravesite](http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Funerals/After-th-Funderal/Floral-Wreath-Tributes-at-Gravesite)) More info on the event and how to purchase wreaths will be located via their website ([www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org)).

**All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914** – The Western Front, Christmas, 1914. Out of the violence a silence, then a song. A German soldier steps into No Man's Land singing "Stille Nacht." Thus begins an extraordinary night of camaraderie, music and peace. The Christmas Truce occurred on and around Christmas Day 1914, when the sounds of rifles firing and shells exploding faded in a number of places along the Western Front during World War I in favor of holiday celebrations. During the unofficial ceasefire, soldiers on both sides of the conflict emerged from the trenches and shared gestures of goodwill.

A remarkable true story, told in the words and songs of the men who lived it. All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914, recounts an astounding moment in history when Allied and German soldiers laid down their arms to celebrate Christmas together, sharing food and drink, playing soccer, singing carols and burying each other's dead. In some places along the Western Front the truce lasted a single night, and in others it

endured until New Year's Day. This dramatic re-telling weaves together firsthand accounts by 30 World War I soldiers with music including patriotic tunes, trench songs and Christmas carols.

<https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/christmas-truce-of-1914>

**Crossing of the Delaware River** – During one of the darkest moments of the American Revolution, GEN George Washington led his Army over the frozen Delaware River on the evening of December 25<sup>th</sup>, 1776. The famous Crossing of the Delaware led to the battle of Trenton and a string of victories that revived the cause. Facts about the crossing can be found below:

<https://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/the-revolutionary-war/washingtons-revolutionary-war-battles/the-trenton-princeton-campaign/10-facts-about-washingtons-crossing-of-the-delaware-river/>

**Christmas at Mount Vernon** - Christmas past meets Christmas present at George Washington's estate. Just as the Washingtons celebrated the holiday with family and friends, you can start a new tradition of visiting Mount Vernon this holiday season. With Christmas carols, a winter glow, and fireworks, Mount Vernon has something for everyone in Dec. See more at:

<https://www.mountvernon.org/plan-your-visit/things-to-do/christmas-at-mount-vernon/>.

V/R,

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