

MUSTANG CLUB OF GREATER KANSAS CITY



Text by B. Whiteside
Photos by Jim Peterson

December 11, 2010, was a busy but meaningful day for members of the Mustang Club of Greater Kansas City. It was a blustery morning when a group of members trekked out from Kansas City and north to Leavenworth, Kansas, home of the federal, military, and state penitentiaries. There, our group participated in the “Wreaths Across America” ceremony at the Leavenworth National Cemetery, a celebration founded by the Worcester Wreath Company some 15 years ago, starting at Arlington National Cemetery.

Arriving at the cemetery, the group was greeted by the host and other volunteers. The ceremony began with the posting of the colors, a history of the event, acknowledgement of all branches of the Armed Services, followed by a twenty-one-gun salute and taps being sounded. Our group, along with other volunteers, followed the period dressed “Minute Men” honor guards to the top of a section of the cemetery where we were each handed a fresh-cut cedar wreath. From there, each person carried the wreath to a headstone whereas the wreath was presented. This is a highly moving event, allowing each of us to pay tribute to these most honorable men and women of our Armed Forces, taking time to read the name of the person to whom the wreath was being presented. A moment of prayer and thanks were given for that person. During this time, I recall that not a word was spoken; a silence covered the area as we paid our honor. Club members also honored Col. Billy Whiteside—one of our own past members who is buried at the Cemetery. Col. Whiteside served in the Army for 31 years and his 1965 Wimbledon White coupe was present during the event.

Mustang Club of Greater Kansas participating in the

ceremony were Bill and Nancy Bloom; Jack and Grace Bosic; Jim Peterson; Pam Riden; Tom and Cheryl Younger; Eric Whiteside; and Bill Whiteside.

Throughout the year, our club sponsored several fund-raising efforts to help offset the cost of wreaths for this cause. A big “Thank You” goes to club members Bill and Nancy Bloom for bringing this celebration to the club’s attention, organizing the fundraisers, which took place at area cruise nights, car shows, and other events that would allow us to set up. Close to 1,000 wreaths were presented at the cemetery.

For more information regarding this celebration, and about participation, log on to www.WreathAcrossAmerica.com or visit www.WorcesterWreath.com.

During this same day, yet another group of our members participated in ringing bells at two locations in suburban Kansas City for The Salvation Army. These groups had a blast as they greeted shoppers and broke out in sing-a-longs throughout the day. When the kettles were turned over to Salvation Army at the end of the day both kettles were quite full. This is the third year our club has participated in bell ringing with the Salvation Army. It was reported that two years ago our kettles topped any one-day-donation drive in the history of the local chapter. We are eagerly waiting to see if we surpassed our previous dollar amount.

The holiday spirit didn’t stop there, members were encouraged to bring canned goods and non-perishable items to our annual Christmas party. We filled a barrel that was to be turned over “Harvesters”—a local Kansas City food bank. The club was also involved with Salvation Army’s “Angel Tree,” gathering gifts, be it toys or clothing for children whose names were on the tree.

These, too, were gathered during our club’s Christmas party and delivered to Salvation Army for distribution.