

# Wreath service for veterans held Saturday



## VETERANS CHRISTMAS WREATH SERVICE HELD

BY ROUNETTE JOHNSON

For The Times

The first Veterans Christmas Memorial took place on Saturday, Dec. 15, at 10 a.m. at Francis Marion Park in Georgetown.

The ceremony was in honor of the Wreaths Across America Program founded by businessman Morrill Worcester of Maine in 1992.

The laying of wreaths began at Arlington National Cemetery in memory of those who had died in service.

Today the laying of wreaths has expanded to 50 states and beyond.

The ceremony on Saturday began with the presentation of colors by the Knights of Columbus Assembly 3272.

As the colors were being presented, many veterans from surrounding areas stood in salute as Dillon Moore sang the National Anthem.

Father Patrick Stenson from Precious Blood of Christ Catholic Church in Pawleys Island prayed and allowed a moment of silence for the school shootings in Connecticut where 20 children and 6 adults were killed.

"Heavenly Father bless these wreaths we pray and remember all the men and woman who willingly gave all, that others will have freedom."

Father Pat served in allied forces in Europe as a chaplain.

Retired Col. Ron Gilbert was the emcee.

Prior to the laying of wreaths he thanked Colonial Florist for supplying the wreaths and said the freedom we enjoy today has not come without a price.



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**Above, Ret. Col. Ron Gilbert, center, stands with representatives of the U.S. Merchant Marine and POW/MIA.**

U.S. Army Sergeant First Class Sabrina Todd of Myrtle Beach and Staff Sergeant Tony Grant of Pawleys Island laid the first wreath in memory of those who served in the Army.

Retired Maj. Gen. Gerald Harmon (U.S. Air Force), Herb Bailey, commandant (U.S. Marine Corps) and retired Captain Dean Brown (U.S. Navy) laid the second wreath for all three branches. Petty Officer Daniel Warren and Petty Officer Tyler Underwood laid the third wreath for those who served in the U.S. Coast Guard and Merchant Marine.

Retired Major Samuel R. (Dick) Vaughn laid the fourth and final wreath for those who were Prisoners of War and those missing in action.

The closing ceremony included Taps

played by Tyler Elling and the Knights of Columbus retired the colors.

After the ceremony, many veterans walked to the wreaths staring in silence.

James Grapes took off his hat in front of the wreaths as a symbol of respect.

Retired Colonel Ron Gilbert said it was a great event.

"In the next two years maybe we can move this ceremony to each cemetery and continue this ceremony yearly."

Ricky Gray of the Knights of Columbus said being part of this ceremony was an honor.

"I hope it grows in the future to a bigger ceremony," Gray said.

American Legion Post 114 and VFW Post 6444 assisted in coordinating the ceremony.