

Ceremony honors veterans buried at Camp Polk Cemetery

Close to 50 people gathered at the Lodge at Aspen Lakes on Saturday morning to honor veterans buried at Camp Polk Cemetery as a part of the national Wreaths Across America program.

The ceremony was originally scheduled to be held at the cemetery, but due to heavy snowfall event organizers made the decision to move the event indoors.

Working with the Sisters V.F.W. Post 8138 and American Legion Post 86, the colors were posted at 9 a.m. and Sisters High School student Alana Lukens sang the National Anthem.

Camp Polk Cemetery was one of over 1,100 locations participating in the Wreaths Across America program this year. The theme this year was "Say Their Names" — because it is believed a person "dies twice," once when



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK
Brig. Gen. Martha Meeker.

they take their last breath, and later the last time their name is spoken.

The event allowed those in attendance a chance to remember not how the soldiers and sailors died, but how

they lived.

"Lying in cemeteries throughout this nation are men and women who gave their lives so that we can live in freedom and without fear," said speaker Martha Meeker, Brigadier General, U.S.A.F., retired.

"Our nation stands as a shining beacon of liberty and freedom to the world," she continued. "We thank those who gave their lives to keep us free and we shall not forget you. We shall remember."

Remembrance wreaths for each branch of the military were placed along with a moment of silence for prisoners of war and those who never have returned to their home and families.

Location coordinator Erin Borla spoke on the historical significance of Camp Polk Cemetery to Sisters.

"I urge each of you today, after this event, to drive down Camp Polk Road and experience Camp Polk Meadow as it was in 1865 when Oregon's Company A set up the original camp through the winter of 1865-1866," she said. "Not much has changed. This snow-covered meadow is just as beautiful now as it was then."

Each of the 39 veterans interred at Camp Polk Cemetery had their names read, accompanied by the ringing of a bell and the symbolic placement of a wreath. One of the original Camp Polk soldiers, William N.

Cox, Oregon Company A, who is buried at the cemetery, was honored as well.

Coordinators thanked the many people who sponsored wreaths or donated services, especially Aspen Lakes Golf Course and the Cyrus family, who stepped in when the weather turned poor and allowed the event to take place in their facility.

"Each wreath is a gift of

appreciation, from a grateful America," Meeker said.

The wreaths will be moved to Camp Polk Cemetery at a later date, when snow accumulation has gone down and headstones are safely accessible.

For more information about Wreaths Across America or to participate next year visit www.wreathacrossamerica.org.



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK
An honor guard of Sisters veterans.



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK
Jeri Buckmann presented a wreath.

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