

## Wreath-Laying Tribute Connects Veteran Community During the Holidays



Even during the joy of the holiday season, many veterans' families are coping with a painful void from the loss of a loved one -- a hero, who made the ultimate sacrifice. The empty seat at their dinner table is the heavy reminder they face every year. It is during the difficult holiday hustle and bustle that loved ones come together to remember, honor, and teach; the powerful mission that drives [National Wreaths Across America Day](#). With more than 2,500 participating locations, this annual wreath-laying tribute honors the brave servicemen and women who gave their lives for their country.

For Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) veterans Matthew Glisson and Ozzie Nelson, there is no better time to come together and express their appreciation for their fellow brothers and sisters.

"This gives us the opportunity to pay our respects for our family that isn't here anymore," Matthew said. "Giving my time and honoring my brothers and sisters means everything to me. They have given the ultimate sacrifice for everyone that is out here today and it's really great to see how many people turned out to show their support."

With almost 50 years of service combined, Matthew and Ozzie have personally experienced the impact of war, including losing family and friends in battle. These are difficult memories that trigger a whirlwind of emotions so many others feel, especially during the holidays. One way Matthew and Ozzie channel those feelings and honor their fellow servicemembers is participating with [WWP's Alumni Program](#) to place a wreath on a veteran's headstone, say their name aloud, and thank them for their service and sacrifice. An action that may seem simple, yet, when surrounded by an empowering community that has endured the same, it provides those involved an incredible sense of connection and solace.

"The significance of this whole event inspired me," Ozzie said. "Christmas really evokes a feeling of family and I

don't have many here in the area, but WWP has become that family for me. Through events like these, I can join other veterans to honor and remember."

It's a powerful way to transcend borders and branches while embracing each other for support and empathy. It is a moment in time when the military community can come together to celebrate the lives of American heroes. The holiday season is undoubtedly a tough time for those who have lost a loved one, especially in battle. It is a grim reminder that freedom isn't free. There are fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters who will never return home. Honoring their lives during such a special occasion allows the veteran community to have the space to cope, [support to heal](#), and the [connection](#) needed to know they are not alone.

**Contact:** Krissty Andaur - Public Relations, [kandaur@woundedwarriorproject.org](mailto:kandaur@woundedwarriorproject.org), 904.760.6957

### **About Wounded Warrior Project**

Since 2003, Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) has been meeting the growing needs of warriors, their families, and caregivers — helping them achieve their highest ambition. [Learn more](#).

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