**Be a Part of the Wreath Laying Ceremony at**

**The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier**

This year we are able to be a part of the wreath laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery. A total of 4 students are able to participate. Since many of our students will likely want to be involved, we are asking interested students to write an essay expressing their desire to be selected. *The essay should include why the student wants to participate, what it would mean to him/her, and any personal interpretations of the patriotism, symbolism, and honor attached to this memorial ceremony.* The student should do some research on the ceremony, prior to writing, in order to gain background knowledge and understanding of the Tomb of the Unknowns, the Changing of the Guard, and Arlington National Cemetery itself, however, this essay should *NOT* be a research report, but rather a personal, reflective essay.

**Essay Guidelines:**

* There is no length requirement, but be sure the essay fully expresses the student’s thoughts and feelings.
* The essay should be typed, with a title and a cover sheet. The cover sheet should include the student’s name, advisory teacher and the date.
* **This essay will be turned in to Ms. Rodgers (Room 232) on or before Jan. 17th.**
* A panel of SHJH teachers will judge the essays.

**Description of the Ceremony:** Please look over this brief explanation of the ceremony, provided by The Department of the Army, to determine if you want to participate. *Do not be worried about this! ☺ It is a very simple, yet beautiful ceremony, and you will be allowed to practice just prior to the actual ceremony. You can do it!*

This ceremony is memorial in purpose and patriotic in nature and will be conducted for nonpartisan patriotic groups only when permission is granted by the Superintendent, Arlington National Cemetery.

The ceremony is conducted in the following manner:

* Five minutes prior to the scheduled ceremony time, those chosen to place the wreath should meet the host (a member of The Guard) at the top of the steps in front of the Memorial Display Room for an orientation on the procedure to be followed in the ceremony.
* The remainder of the group will assemble on the steps between the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Memorial Display Room.
* The wreath party will be formed and escorted by the host. They will then descend the steps, without pause, and halt in a pre-designated position in front of the Tomb.
* The party will halt, the bugler will take his position, and on signal from the host, the wreath bearer will come and present the wreath to the group. As they move forward to place the wreath the host will give the command of “Present Arms”. All civilians present will place their right hand over the heart. After the wreath is in position at the Tomb the group will return to position beside the host. The host and wreath bearer will come to “Present Arms”.
* When the group has returned to their position beside the host the bugler will sound “Taps”. On the host’s command of “Order Arms” the host will turn and guide the wreath party back up the steps to the entrance of the Memorial Display Room. This concludes the ceremony.
* Organizations participating in public wreath laying ceremonies shall remain silent during the ceremony. Organizations are not authorized to make remarks, speeches, nor offer audible prayers.

**Dress Code for Wreath Party:**

If the student is selected to be part of the wreath laying ceremony, there are certain things they will need to keep in mind while packing for the trip. These are the instructions from Arlington National Cemetery:

The personal appearance and dress of those participating in the ceremonies at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier will adhere to the dress standards expected of such dignified occasions. At a minimum the following dress code will be followed:

**Males** – *a collared shirt, casual slacks, and appropriate shoes are required.*

**Females** *– a blouse, casual slacks, skirt or dress, and appropriate shoes are required.*

The following things are considered inappropriate: blue jeans, patched pants, shorts of any kind, tank tops, halter tops, tee shirts, shower type shoes, tube tops, and shirts that expose the midriff.

The Superintendent, Arlington National Cemetery, or his representatives have the right to prohibit a person not meeting dress requirements from participating in the wreath laying ceremony.

\*\*Students selected will dress in the appropriate clothes/shoes for the ceremony before we leave the hotel on this morning, but should take their comfortable, casual touring clothes on the bus with them, and will be given time to change afterwards.

This is a great opportunity for our students, so please encourage them to give this some thought. I promise to take lots of pictures so you can see your son/daughter in the ceremony, if they are chosen! ☺