


Measuring Service in Terms of Effort and Sacrifice



Source: www.TurfMagazine.com

WASHINGTON, D.C.-I signed up as a volunteer for the July 22 PLANET Renewal &  Remembrance beautification event at Arlington National Cemetery. I asked to be put on a work crew. The PLANET folks assigned me to Team Eagle captained by Ken Taylor of John Deere Landscapes.

To be truthful, I didn't do much work, at least in terms of what ultimately was accomplished. Didn't have to thanks to the co-workers on Team Eagle. I loaded several 40-pound bags of lime into the hoppers of spreaders, and policed our work area, mostly by gathering empty lime bags for later disposal. But mostly I stayed out of the way of volunteers that knew what they were about. *(Right: Team Eagle at the 2013 PLANET R&R at Arlington National Cemetery)*

More experienced lawn specialists operated the stand-on Perma Green spreaders. I didn't protest when younger, stronger volunteers pushed LESCO walk-behind spreaders back and forth on the rows separating the white headstones. And Jesus "Chuy" Medrano, of Denver-based CoCal Landscapes, limed large sections of our work area aboard a John Deere tractor pulling a much larger spreader.

In all, more than 450 volunteers lent a hand in improving the grounds and gardens at the 160-acre site the morning of July 22. Most arrived at the Cemetery just after sunrise, grabbed a sweet roll made available by PLANET, rubbed their faces and necks with sunblock, put on neon work vests, hats and work gloves and, after finding and getting their assignments from their assigned work teams, trooped over to the opening ceremony at the Memorial Amphitheater.

Then it was off to their assignments.

To get a deeper measure of what the event is all about, please read some of the other coverage of the event on this special *Turf* enews, in particular Turfco turf expert (and Vietnam War U.S. Army medic) Robert "Bob" Brophy's heartfelt address that sent the volunteers to their work assignments.

My contributions are miniscule in light of what Arlington National Cemetery signifies and compared to the PLANET volunteers that return to perform service year after year. Rather than even the smallest measure of pride I'm humbled just to be associated with them.