**A Guide to Submitting an Op-Ed**

**A note for WAA volunteers – Location Coordinators and Group Leaders**

Sharing your experiences and enthusiasm for honoring veterans helps raise awareness and support for Wreaths Across America in your region. Use this guide to easily submit a heartfelt and persuasive op-ed to your local media.

**What is an Op-Ed?**

An op-ed (opposite the editorial page) is a written piece expressing the opinion of an individual who is not part of the newspaper’s editorial staff.

Op-eds are typically published in newspapers or online media, allowing community members, experts, or advocates to share personal views, raise awareness, or call for action on a specific issue. They are usually persuasive, heartfelt, or informative and should be clearly and concisely written (about 500 - 700 words).

**Personalize the op-ed template with your details.**

In the template below, you can replace the yellow highlighted text with customized details such as your WAA location, sponsorship goals and contact information.

**Submitting an op-ed to local media**

**Follow these simple steps:**

1. **Choose local newspapers and TV news affiliates’ websites to send the op-ed to.**
	* Search for local media to reach out to. Most local newspapers and TV stations have a webpage that can be found online.
	* Once you’ve reached the webpage, look for a “Submit an Opinion” or “Contact Us” tab, generally found at the bottom of the page or in a drop-down menu.
	* Many local papers accept op-eds by email.
2. **Use a clear, eye-catching subject line.**

 Example: *Op-Ed Submission: Giving in July Honors Veterans and Gives Back to the Community*

1. **Include a short bio, telling the reader about yourself and your connection to Wreaths Across America.**
	* Include a 1–2 sentence bio and your contact info at the end. This should be from a third-party perspective (i.e., she is/he is)

Example:

* + [Your name] is a [volunteer/location coordinator/group leader] for Wreaths Across America in [City], where they’ve helped organize local wreath-laying ceremonies since [Date]. They are passionate about serving their community by honoring its local veterans and teaching youth the importance of remembrance and service.
1. **Step 3: Send the Op-Ed with a friendly email introducing yourself, Wreaths Across America and the Giving in July campaign.**

Example:

Good morning/afternoon [Editor’s Name],

My name is [your name], and I’m a [title: volunteer/location coordinator/group leader, etc.] with Wreaths Across America here in [town]. I’m submitting the attached op-ed for your consideration. It shares a local perspective on the impact of this national effort to honor our veterans. I believe it would interest your readers and encourage community involvement ahead of National Wreaths Across America Day on December 13, 2025.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

1. **Follow up**
	* If you haven’t received a response from local media, don’t panic. Circumstances such as local, breaking national news, and holidays can all slow response times or take priority at the time.
	* Don’t be shy. Checking in after a week or sending a brief, polite email to confirm receipt can go a long way in establishing a relationship with local media.
	* Save the contact information for each media professional you connect with. These contacts will prove useful in the future.

 **Personalization Tips**

* Include details like wreath sponsorship goals and ceremony locations in your email.
* Include a link directing readers to your group’s sponsorship page.
* Use a heartfelt, enthusiastic and respectful tone.
* If the media responds to your email, confirm that you have the right contact information to submit news. Ask if they’re open to receiving future news leads and event announcements.
* Remember to include your short bio at the bottom. Feel free to include any titles, ties to WAA, and other pertinent details, such as military or veteran status.

### **Op-Ed Template**

**Title (Headline):** A Simple Gesture with a Lasting Impact: Help Wreaths Across America “Do Good Twice” this July

**By [Your Full Name]**Wreaths Across America Volunteer / Location Coordinator
[Your city and state]

**Body:**

Every December, volunteers and community supporters like you and I gather nationwide to honor veterans on National Wreaths Across America Day. Last year, over four million volunteers placed more than three million sponsored veterans’ wreaths on the final resting places of our nation’s heroes at nearly 5,000 participating locations to remember their service and sacrifice.

Behind every gathering for National Wreaths Across America Day is a dedicated community working year-round to honor our veterans and keep their legacy alive. I’m writing today, in July, because remembering and thanking our heroes is a mission that extends beyond a single day or season. Gratitude and respect are values we carry with us every day of the year.

Wreaths Across America’s Giving in July campaign unites our community in a meaningful way to honor and remember our local veterans. Each $17 wreath sponsorship ensures that on National Wreaths Across America Day, Saturday, December 13, a veteran’s grave will be honored with a fresh balsam wreath, placed by a volunteer who says their name out loud and thanks them for their service. It’s a moment of reverence, a teaching opportunity, and a promise we will not forget.

Since volunteering with Wreaths Across America, I’ve witnessed firsthand the impact this program has on veterans’ families and the volunteers who support our mission. I’ve seen servicemembers and veterans moved to tears, generations connecting as young people ask about their military service, and Gold Star families touched by the simple act of remembrance. These moments inspire all of us to carry the mission forward with gratitude and compassion.

This July, I warmly invite you to join our community in Giving in July. More than just a fundraising campaign, it’s an opportunity to be part of something bigger—a movement that carries gratitude and generosity throughout the entire year. Every action, big or small, helps build a lasting legacy of honor and remembrance for our veterans. Your support helps fund the placement of wreaths on <<veteran grave count>> veterans’ graves at <<location>> this December. It fuels a year-round, community-led effort to ensure each one is honored and remembered.

When you sponsor a wreath through Wreaths Across America, you’re honoring a veteran and supporting your local community. Here’s how it works: many local organizations participate in the $5 Back Plan. That means for every $17 wreath sponsorship through their group, $5 goes back to their organization to help fund the important work they do throughout the year—everything from supporting veterans and their families to youth programs and civic engagement.

Other groups choose the $5 Forward Plan. In this case, $5 of your $17 sponsorship helps fund an additional wreath, allowing even more veterans to be remembered during National Wreaths Across America Day on December 13, 2025.

Both plans support Wreaths Across America’s mission to Remember, Honor, and Teach, and since 2007, they’ve given back over $28 million to communities across the country. It’s a simple but powerful way to make an impact—honoring a veteran and strengthening your hometown with one meaningful gift.

Whether you sponsor a single wreath, start a company challenge, or simply spread the word about Wreaths Across America’s year-round programs, you become a vital part of a growing mission dedicated to remembering, honoring, and teaching.

Join us this July and help build a lasting legacy that ensures no veteran is ever forgotten. To sponsor a live balsam wreath to be placed in remembrance on the headstone of a fallen servicemember, visit [insert local sponsorship group URL and any contact information you wish to provide]. [This group is on the $5 Back Plan, which means $5 of every $17 wreath sponsorship will go back to support their work in the community.] **OR** [This group is on the $5 Forward Plan, which means $5 of every $17 wreath sponsorship will help fund an additional wreath to honor another veteran.]

Let’s make sure no hero is forgotten this December!

### **Need Help?**

Contact Wreaths Across America Public Relations Coordinator Rachael Wilson at **rwilson@wreathsacrossamerica.org**. Please include (CC) your regional liaison team.