



# LOCATIONS & SPONSORSHIP GROUPS HANDBOOK

REMEMBER ★ HONOR ★ TEACH



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# WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

## To all the devoted volunteers of Wreaths Across America:

First, let me thank you for your continued support and commitment in helping Wreaths Across America expand its mission to Remember, Honor and Teach. Because of each of your efforts in 2022, we placed 2.7 million wreaths at more than 3,700 participating locations.

Each day, in cemeteries throughout this country, family members of our veterans and active duty military members listen to the sorrowful sound of Taps played as their loved ones' caskets are lowered into the ground and American flags are folded and presented in remembrance of their service and sacrifices.

It is our commitment to not only honor those currently being buried, but also to remember those who have gone long before and who might not have family members to visit their gravesites and thank them for their service.

I have personally been the location coordinator for Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, since 2005. I have had the privilege to meet thousands of some of the incredible and inspiring volunteers who willingly give their time and effort to ensure that all those buried at Arlington are not forgotten. It is these volunteers, and those from all of your local communities, including school and church groups; scout groups; trucking companies; veterans, associations; law enforcement agencies; corporate sponsors; devoted individuals, et al., that serve as the backbone of Wreaths Across America's mission.

Relying on the participation of volunteers is key to the success of Wreaths Across America—today and in the future. While we encourage individual creativity and initiative, we must have established standards and guidelines to ensure that the mission to Remember, Honor and Teach is paramount. Therefore, I ask that you please review the following materials and use the information provided as a basis for your future work in promoting the mission of Wreaths Across America.

Thank you for all you do. We will never forget!

Sincerely,

*Wayne G. Hanson*

Wayne G. Hanson  
Chairman, Board of Directors  
WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

# WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA STORY

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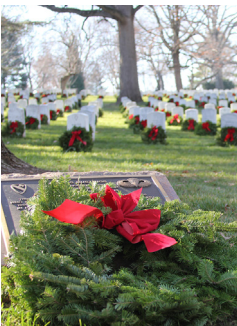
*“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction.*

*We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream.*

*It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.”*

**–Ronald Reagan, 40<sup>th</sup> United States President (1911–2004)**

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Morrill Worcester, owner of Worcester Wreath Company of Harrington, Maine, was a 12-year-old paperboy for the Bangor Daily News when he won a trip to Washington, D.C. His first trip to our nation’s capital was one he would never forget, and Arlington National Cemetery made an especially indelible impression on him. This experience followed him throughout his life and successful career in business, reminding him that his good fortune was due, in large part, to the values of this nation and the veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

In 1992, Morrill found himself with a surplus of wreaths nearing the end of the holiday season. Remembering his boyhood experience at Arlington, Worcester realized he had an opportunity to honor our county’s veterans. With the help of former Maine senator Olympia Snowe, arrangements were made for the wreaths to be placed at Arlington in one of the older sections of the cemetery – a section which had been receiving fewer visitors with each passing year.

As plans were underway, a number of other individuals and organizations stepped up to help. James Prout, owner of local trucking company Blue Bird Ranch, Inc., generously provided transportation all the way to Virginia. Volunteers from the local American Legion and VFW posts gathered with members of the community to decorate each wreath with traditional red, hand-tied bows. Members of the Maine State Society of Washington, D.C., helped to organize the wreath-laying, which included a special ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

This act of generosity became an annual tribute that went on quietly for several years each December, led by Morrill and his family until 2005, when a photo of the stones at Arlington, adorned with wreaths and covered in snow, circulated around the internet. Suddenly, the project received national attention. Thousands of requests poured in from all over the country from people wanting to participate – to emulate the Arlington wreath project at their national and state cemeteries, or to simply share their stories and thank Morrill Worcester for honoring our nation’s heroes.

Unable to donate thousands of wreaths to each state, Worcester began sending seven wreaths to every state, one for each branch of the military, and for POWs/MIAs.

In 2006, with the help of the Civil Air Patrol and other civic organizations, simultaneous wreath-laying ceremonies were held at over 150 locations around the country. The Patriot Guard Riders volunteered as escort for the wreaths going to Arlington. This began the annual “Veterans Honor Parade” that travels the East Coast in early December.

The annual trip to Arlington and the groups of volunteers eager to participate in Worcester’s simple wreath-laying event grew each year until it became clear the desire to remember and honor our country’s fallen heroes was bigger than Arlington, and bigger than this one company.

In 2007, the Worcester family, along with veterans and other groups and individuals who had helped with the annual veterans wreath ceremony in Arlington, formed Wreaths Across America (WAA), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, to continue and expand this effort, and support other groups around the country who wanted to do the same. The mission of the group is simple: Remember. Honor. Teach.

In 2008, over 300 locations held wreath-laying ceremonies in every state, Puerto Rico and 24 overseas cemeteries. More than 100,000 wreaths were placed on veterans’ graves. Over 60,000 volunteers participated, including members of national veterans’ organizations and the American Gold Star Mothers.

December 13, 2008, was unanimously voted by the United States Congress as National Wreaths Across America Day.

In 2011, WAA and its national network of volunteers laid 325,000 veterans' wreaths at 750 locations in the United States and beyond. WAA was able to include ceremonies at the Pearl Harbor Memorial, as well as Bunker Hill, Valley Forge and the sites of the September 11, 2001 tragedies. WAA accomplished this with help from 902 fundraising groups, corporate contributions, and donations of trucking, shipping, and thousands of helping hands.

The wreath laying is still held annually on a Saturday, each December, and has expanded to include more than 3,700 locations and 2.7 million wreaths. And for the first time in 2018, our mission expanded overseas with the placement of 9,387 veterans’ wreaths at Normandy-American Cemetery in France. Each wreath is placed by a volunteer and the names of our fallen said out loud to keep their memory alive.



# BACKGROUND & FAQ

## Who We Are

Wreaths Across America (WAA) is a national nonprofit organization founded in 2007 to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery begun by Maine businessman Morrill Worcester in 1992.

- ★ 1992: First wreaths (5,000) donated by Morrill Worcester and Worcester Wreath.
- ★ 2005: Iconic photo of wreaths in snow became a viral sensation.
- ★ 2007: Wreaths Across America formed as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.
  - *Organization governed by board of directors. Day-to-day operations managed by volunteer Executive Director Karen Worcester.*
- ★ 2012: Millionth wreath placed at Arlington National Cemetery.
- ★ 2014: For the first time, every headstone at Arlington National Cemetery received a wreath.
- ★ 2016: 25th year that veterans' wreaths were placed at Arlington National Cemetery.
- ★ 2018: Mission advances overseas with the first placement of 9,387 veterans' wreaths at Normandy-American Cemetery in France.
- ★ 2021: Marked the 30th year that veterans' wreaths have been placed at Arlington National Cemetery, a tradition started by Maine wreathmaker Morrill Worcester as a gift of thanks.

WAA's mission - **Remember, Honor, Teach** - is carried out in part by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington, as well as at veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states.

Every year since 2008, Congress proclaims a Saturday in December as National Wreaths Across America Day. This year, it will be held on **Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023.**

## 2022 Recap

- ★ 2.7 million veterans' wreaths were placed in total across the country.
- ★ More than two million volunteers participated at 3,700 locations nationwide. More than a third of the volunteers were children.
- ★ At Arlington National Cemetery specifically, the Wreaths Across America program saw 68 tractor trailers deliver over 257,000 veterans' wreaths that were placed by nearly 28,000 volunteers.
- ★ Over 644 truckloads of wreaths were delivered across the country by hundreds of volunteer professional truck drivers driving donated equipment and fuel from approximately 927 carriers.

## 2023 Theme: **Serve & Succeed**

The inspiration for this year's theme came while discussing the significance of 2022's theme, which was "Find a Way to Serve," and the need to continue to stress the importance of service and the positive ways it can impact lives. Wreaths Across America plans to focus on the storylines of veterans and military families who have found success through their own service, while also highlighting local volunteers across the country and the success that comes from serving their communities. The organization will continue its commitment to supporting and bringing attention to the needs of our veteran community while also showcasing the continued contributions of those who serve.

## What We Do

### REMEMBER

- ★ WAA's annual pilgrimage from Columbia Falls, Maine, to Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia has become known as the world's largest veterans' parade, stopping at schools, monuments, veterans' homes, and communities all along the way to remind people how important it is to Remember, Honor and Teach.
- ★ The Remembrance Tree Program provides a living memorial to loved ones lost. A replica dog tag is made in honor of your loved one and it is attached to the trunk of an evergreen tree on the tip land in Maine where the brush is harvested every third year to make veterans' wreaths.
- ★ The HART Ceremony (Honoring Allies and Remembering Together) is conducted each year to honor veterans of our nation's allies in ceremonies on international border-crossing bridges between Calais, Maine and St. Stephen, New Brunswick, Canada; Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario, Canada; and Sweetwater, Montana and the Alaskan/Canadian border.
- ★ WAA hosts statehouse ceremonies in nearly 50 states.

### HONOR

- ★ Through WAA's national group sponsorship program, it has helped other nonprofits and civic groups such as Civil Air Patrol, Scouts, 4- H Clubs, local VFWs and American Legions raise funds for their own community needs. Since 2007, Wreaths Across America has given back more than \$20 million to local groups.
- ★ WAA conducts several programs to honor our veterans, including our popular Thanks-A-Million campaign, which distributes free "I Owe You" cards to people all over the country to share with veterans as a simple thank-you for their service and a promise to give back.
- ★ The organization participates in veterans' events throughout the year as well as public outreach through Veterans Day and Memorial Day programs, Wreaths Across America Radio, in our monthly newsletters, in press coverage and on the website.
- ★ The Wreaths Across America Museum located at the National Headquarters in Columbia Falls, Maine, showcases thousands of items that have been donated to Wreaths Across America over the decades. All donations help to provide insight and tell the greater story of the experiences of U.S. military personnel.
- ★ Wreaths Across America has a veteran liaison on staff to work with local veterans' organizations in Maine.

### TEACH

- ★ WAA is committed to teaching younger generations about the value of their freedoms and the importance of honoring those who sacrificed so much to protect those freedoms. In 2022, WAA relaunched its TEACH curriculum in partnership with several like-minded organizations. The new lesson plans being shared monthly are focused on character-based, service learning. You can view and download materials at [www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/TEACH](http://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/TEACH)
- ★ The Mobile Education Exhibit is a traveling classroom on wheels designed to inspire and educate all about the mission and those whose lives have been impacted by it. The goal of the Wreaths Across America Education Exhibit is to bring local communities and our military together with education, stories, and interactive connections.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why do you use live wreaths?

Wreaths Across America does not “decorate” headstones. We are honoring all veterans and active military members by placing live, balsam veterans’ wreaths on the headstones of our nation’s servicemembers. The fresh evergreens have been used for centuries as a symbol recognizing honor and as a living tribute renewed annually. We want people to see the tradition as a living memorial to veterans and their families.

### Does WAA have a religious or political affiliation?

Wreaths Across America is not affiliated with any religion or political party. It is our mission to remember and honor every fallen military service member during the holiday season, no matter what is happening in the nation or overseas. These are not Christmas wreaths, they are veterans’ wreaths or remembrance wreaths. Our goal as an organization is to Teach younger generations about the diversity of our American heritage, and the freedoms for which so much was sacrificed.

### What are the sources of funding for WAA?

WAA receives no government funding. National Wreaths Across America Day and other events are made possible by thousands of volunteers who organize local ceremonies, raise funds to sponsor wreaths and participate in the events. Individual wreath sponsors and corporate donors, pay for most of the cost for the program and volunteer truck drivers and trucking companies make it possible for WAA to transport wreaths all over the country.

### How can I get involved?

There are several ways for volunteers to get involved. Please keep in mind that there is NO COST to attend or participate in a Wreaths Across America event.

- ★ Help place wreaths on National Wreaths Across America Day in your local community.
- ★ Sponsor a \$17 wreath for a local veteran.
- ★ Statehouse ceremony – in nearly all 50 states and at our nation’s capital.
- ★ Sign up as a sponsorship group and help place wreaths at a local or national cemetery of your choice while raising funds for your own group or program.
- ★ You can also volunteer to coordinate a new location in your state to participate in the national remembrance ceremony.



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WAYNE HANSON, CHAIRMAN

*Army veteran  
Maine State Society*

KAREN WORCESTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Wreaths Across America  
(non-voting)*

RENEE WORCESTER, SECRETARY

DAVID “MEL” RUSSEN, JR., TREASURER

MICHAEL EDGECOMB, VICE CHAIRMAN  
*Maine State Road Captain, Patriot Guard Riders*

SARAH WORCESTER

DR. PAMELA W. SLAVEN-LEE, DNP, FNP-C

COL. DAN LECLAIR

*Veteran*

PATRICK SIMMONS

*Veteran  
Tyson Foods, Inc.*

NATE LEWIS

*Walmart*

BARRY POTTLE

*Owner, Pottle’s Transportation*

LORNA HARRIS

*American Gold Star Mother*

ANN HANSON

KEVIN HALEY

*Portland (Maine) Police Department*

DAN MEAD

*Veteran  
Consigli*

RANDY LEWER

*Veteran, Location Coordinator*

DEBBIE RUANE SPARKS

*National Motor Freight Traffic Association*

KAREN DIEFENDORF

*Army Chaplain, Retired*

## ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

MICHAEL CALEDA

*Ponaganset Middle School history teacher*

SCOTT DEMASI

*Former location coordinator TXHNCH*

DUANE BELANGER

## HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

RETIRED ARMY GEN. CLAUDE KICKLIGHTER

# WAA LOCATION RESOURCES

## What Is a Wreaths Across America Location?

In 2007, Wreaths Across America expanded its program to enable cemeteries all over the country to place wreaths on individual graves to emulate the Arlington Wreath Program by establishing registered Wreaths Across America Locations. These locations are registered groups of volunteers who partner with cemeteries all over the world and coordinate veteran wreath-laying events on National Wreaths Across America Day. Today, WAA has more than 3,700 throughout the country and internationally.

Registered locations are supported by WAA headquarters and are covered by WAA event insurance.

A full list of locations is available on our website at [www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org).

## Location Coordinators

WAA volunteer Location Coordinators are the backbone of our organization. As a volunteer Location Coordinator, you are responsible for organizing and conducting all aspects of your community's event in December. This includes recruiting and organizing volunteers, reaching out to the community, including, veterans' organizations and others with WAA experience, working with sponsorship groups, communicating with local press, receiving the delivery of wreaths, facilitating the event, removing wreaths after an appropriate amount of time, and staying in close contact with WAA support staff. The following pages contain helpful information to plan and execute a successful ceremony on National Wreaths Across America Day in December. Additional information and resources are available on our resource page [learn.wreathscrossamerica.org/location-group-resources](http://learn.wreathscrossamerica.org/location-group-resources).

## Planning Checklist

- ★ Register your location with us by completing the Location Sign Up Form on our website at [learn.wreathscrossamerica.org/add-location](http://learn.wreathscrossamerica.org/add-location). As a Location Coordinator, your contact information will be listed as the primary contact for your cemetery location on the WAA website. You will have access to your customized location page and can manage donations through there.
- ★ Meet with the cemetery staff and have them sign the Contact at Location Approval Form. Discuss any requirements they have for the wreath laying ceremony and ensure those are followed. Make sure parking is easy to find, close to the location and free (or at least validated).
- ★ Start planning the details of your ceremony, line up speakers, and decide how you want to handle the logistics of unloading the truck, parking on wreath day, distributing wreaths, placing grave specifics, and wreath clean-up.
- ★ Begin compiling a list of individuals and groups to invite. Involve as many people in your community as possible. Not sure where to start? Reach out to local veterans' groups for suggestions. Some organizations may want to plan flyovers, processions with Patriot Guard Riders, color guards, etc. Reach out to schools and other organizations in your community. Don't be afraid to think big: you can make the event as large as you wish. All we ask is that your event be open to public and remain non-political.

- ★ Reach out to your local rabbi to discuss the best way to honor and include the Jewish Veterans while respecting their culture. Let them know that individual members of the Jewish community may request a wreath even if veteran wreaths are not being placed as a whole. Consult with the cemetery staff to create a list of those wishing not to receive a wreath as well as those in the Jewish community who may want one.

Wreaths Across America policy regarding the placement of live balsam, veterans' wreaths on headstones marked with the Star of David: Wreaths Across America (WAA) is not affiliated with any religion or political view. The organization's mission is to Remember all the fallen, Honor their families and Teach our children about the value of freedom. Because WAA is a guest at the more than 3,700 participating locations we visit each year, we abide by each location's rules when it comes to the placement of wreaths on veterans' headstones.

At those cemeteries without a formal policy, we advise volunteers not to place a wreath on the headstones of those graves marked with the Star of David, out of respect for Jewish custom which is not to place living flowers, wreaths or laurels on grave sites. We do ask volunteers to pause and pay their respects, including saying these names out loud to ensure they are remembered. The exception is when families of the deceased request a wreath, and then their wishes are honored. We also ask volunteers not to remove wreaths placed on headstones marked with the Star of David, as it may have been placed there by a family member or loved one.

Our goal as an organization is to use this dialogue as an opportunity to share and Teach younger generations about the diversity of our American heritage, and the freedoms for which so much was sacrificed.

## Community Outreach Checklist:

Send messages through your account dashboard to Sponsorship Groups, Sponsors, and Event Participants. Step-by-step directions for this can be found on the Volunteer Resource Page [learn.wreathscrossamerica.org/location-group-resources](https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/location-group-resources). Make sure your messages include all the details:

- Location address and directions for parking.
- Ceremony and wreath laying start times.
- Featured speakers at the ceremony, how wreaths will be distributed, and if refreshments will be provided.
- Mail, email or hand-deliver formal letters of invitation to elected officials.

## Media Contact Checklist:

- ★ Develop a list of media contacts and find out how they like to receive information (most prefer email these days, but some use online forms and others prefer fax or mail).
- ★ Prepare a media advisory to invite press to the event and customize a pre-event press release, using the Wreaths Across America templates on the Volunteer Resource Page [learn.wreathscrossamerica.org/location-group-resources](https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/location-group-resources).
- ★ Collect bios of public figures who plan to attend to include in your press kits.
- ★ Follow up via phone or email with journalists to whom you sent the media advisory to remind them of the event.

- ★ If you expect TV coverage, arrange for special parking for satellite trucks.

## Two Weeks Before Wreath Day Checklist:

- ★ If your location accepts Grave Specific Requests, finalize your help for placing those wreaths, download the Grave Specific Report from your location account dashboard, and provide each volunteer with their list of Grave Specific Wreaths to place and instructions for doing so.
- ★ Watch for emails from your Regional Liaison Team with important information about the delivery of your wreaths, including the total number of wreaths that you will be receiving and how those wreaths will be delivered (UPS/FedEx or 18-Wheeler). If you are expecting more wreaths than you see indicated in these emails, contact your Regional Liaison Team right away!
- ★ If you don't already have your ceremonial flags, now is the time to contact your Regional Liaison Team so they can be re-shipped to you in time for wreath day.
- ★ Wreaths may be delivered anytime in the two weeks leading up to wreath day. We rely on donated trucking to deliver the wreaths and must work around their schedule. To prevent delays, it is important to be ready to receive your delivery.
  - Prepare a calling tree of volunteers to be ready to help offload the truck upon arrival.
  - Count each box as it is offloaded, only take what is indicated on the Bill of Lading, and alert your Regional Liaison Team immediately of any discrepancies.
  - Upon final count of your boxes complete your Delivery Confirmation Form so that we know you received your wreaths.
- ★ Reach out to the cemetery staff to share your plans for wreath day and ask if there is anything else you should include.
- ★ Watch your email for incoming questions from the general public and respond in a timely manner. You may consider adding a Page Alert to your location page with specific information about your wreath laying ceremony to help minimize location questions.

## Wreaths Across America Day:

- ★ Arrive at least an hour before the event begins.
- ★ Start the event on time. This shows respect for your guests' time and their other commitments that day. It also promotes solidarity among the hundreds of groups nationwide holding simultaneous ceremonies. The wreath placement ceremony at The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier begins at 12 pm EST at Arlington National Cemetery. While not every location is able to start at the same time, all registered locations hold their wreath laying ceremony on the same day, National Wreaths Across America Day.
- ★ Have a dedicated person look for and direct journalists to the area in which the ceremony will be held and provide each of them with a press kit.
  - Names and bios of important people in attendance, such as political or military figures.

- A Wreaths Across America fact sheet.
- National press release (will be distributed to locations in early December).
- Contact information for follow ups and interview requests.

### **After the Event:**

- ★ Did someone in your community go above and beyond to make your event special? Contact the WAA office - we'd love to hear your story and help you recognize their efforts.
- ★ Did something newsworthy happen? Issue a press release, using one of the templates on our Volunteer Resource Page and contact our PR Team with questions by emailing [pr@wreathscrossamerica.org](mailto:pr@wreathscrossamerica.org).
- ★ Send photos and other stories from your event to the WAA office at [pr@wreathscrossamerica.org](mailto:pr@wreathscrossamerica.org).
- ★ If you have any questions or concerns that need to be addressed, contact your Regional Liaison Team. They are always happy to help!
- ★ Your Regional Liaison will contact you to reinstate your location at the beginning of the year. Reinstatement is required to stay active each year.

## 2023 Volunteer Location Coordinator Policies and Procedures

As a Wreaths Across America volunteer Location Coordinator, I agree to abide by the following policies and procedures:

### Code of Conduct

- ★ Protect the integrity of the Wreaths Across America Mission and positively represent the organization by ensuring that myself and all volunteers assisting me act honestly and ethically while in the performance of their volunteer duties, conducting themselves in a professional, kind, courteous, and respectful manner with all other volunteers, sponsorship groups, cemetery representatives and WAA employees while ensuring no discrimination and that utmost respect is given to all ethnic, national, and cultural differences.
- ★ Each location that holds a Wreaths Across America ceremony must be registered under their own name as a participating location. Should I place wreaths at other nearby cemeteries that are not registered to participate, a list of the cemetery name(s) accompanied by signed approval forms for each cemetery, must be provided to my Regional Liaison Team by November 1st. Additionally, I understand that if I allow volunteers to take wreaths to other cemeteries for placement on veteran graves, I will communicate that the rules of the cemetery where wreaths are being placed must be respected.
- ★ Collaborate with the contact at location to ensure their approval of my event plans and make requested changes in a timely manner. I will respect all of the rules and/or any other specific requests of the contact at location, knowing that Wreaths Across America is a guest and the location is the host.
- ★ Conduct community outreach to share the mission of Wreaths Across America and invite others to get involved as a volunteer, wreath sponsor, or by registering a new location or sponsorship group, consistent with WAA policies and procedures.
- ★ Ensure the event is all-inclusive, non-political, and open to the general public allowing all to participate regardless of their support with wreath sponsorships. All sponsored veteran wreaths will be fairly dispersed to all who attend and wish to help place wreaths and will not be labeled or set aside for individual groups.
- ★ Understand that any sponsorship group can choose to support any location, with no limit to the number of locations they support, regardless of their level of activity throughout the year with wreath sponsorships and/or how close they are in proximity to the location.
- ★ All wreaths utilized and placed as part of a registered Wreaths Across America event must be provided by Wreaths Across America.
- ★ All flags displayed at events in which Wreaths Across America is represented must be done respectfully and following proper flag etiquette, in accordance with U.S. Flag Code.

### Communication with Wreaths Across America

- ★ Contact my Regional Liaison Team directly for support and allow 24-48 hours for a response, updating my Regional Liaison Team immediately with any changes to my contact information and/or preferences.
- ★ Respond to my Regional Liaison Team within a reasonable timeframe when they contact me, knowing that my non-response may result in them replacing me in my volunteer role.

- ★ Notify my Regional Liaison Team by September 1st if I cannot serve as the Location Coordinator for that year. If possible, I will provide my Regional Liaison Team with suggestions for a replacement and/or share any planning materials to assist in the transition.
- ★ Should my location choose not to participate in the future, WAA will contact current wreath sponsors to redirect their order(s) to another participating location of their choice. If WAA does not receive a response, the sponsorship group for the order(s) may determine where those wreaths are redirected, otherwise, the wreath sponsorships will be moved to the WAA unallocated fund, for disbursement to other locations in need.
- ★ Keep my Regional Liaison Team informed of any changes to my Delivery Addresses, Veteran Grave Count (Max to Ship or Special Arrangements), Excess Wreath Arrangements, and Event Details knowing the deadline to make these changes is November 1st.
- ★ The service branch and American flags will be shipped prior to December 1st. If I do not receive my flag shipment in its entirety, I must contact my Regional Liaison Team by that date in order for them to have time to reship them to me for National Wreaths Across America Day.
- ★ My Regional Liaison Team will be in consistent communication with me during the weeks leading up to National Wreaths Across America Day regarding important information about the delivery of my wreaths, including the total number of wreaths that I will be receiving and how those wreaths will be delivered (UPS/FedEx or 18-Wheeler). If I am expecting more or less wreaths than what is indicated in the emails, I must contact my Regional Liaison Team immediately.
- ★ Be responsible for counting and accepting only the number of boxes that are indicated on the Bill of Lading (BOL) for my location, and complete the Wreath Delivery Confirmation Form prior to the required deadline of January 31st. Should I feel the number is not accurate, I will be responsible for notifying my Regional Liaison Team immediately.

## Planning and Event Logistics

- ★ Be responsible for coordinating the wreath laying ceremony at my location on the date designated as National Wreaths Across America Day, unless I receive permission otherwise by contacting my Regional Liaison Team.
- ★ Designate a required second point of contact, to act as my Co-Location Coordinator, and ensure that they sign this policy within 14-days of being added to that role. Either myself or my Co-Location Coordinator must be at least 18 years of age or older.
- ★ Communicate event plans with all supporting sponsorship groups, sponsors, and volunteers, responding quickly to emails received, and keeping my Regional Liaison Team and WAA location page updated via the Dashboard with accurate event information.
- ★ Contact the location to determine an accurate Veteran Grave Count, understanding that Wreaths Across America determines the maximum number of sponsored wreaths to ship based on the Veteran Grave Count that I provide my Regional Liaison Team. If I need to receive more or less sponsored wreaths than the Veteran Grave Count, I must contact my Regional Liaison Team to make Special Arrangements.
- ★ Determine if I would like excess wreath sponsorships for my location, above and beyond the Veteran Grave Count (Max to Ship), to be held and carried over to the following year for my location or gifted to another location in need and provide those details to my Regional



Liaison Team. Additionally, I understand that if my location is not fully covered I cannot hold wreaths as a carryover or gift wreaths.

- ★ Provide an 18-Wheeler wreath delivery address that is accessible for a large tractor-trailer truck to enter, turn around easily, and exit; and a UPS/FedEx wreath delivery address that is a physical location, knowing that a signature is not required and boxes will be left at the address provided.
- ★ Arrange for traffic control, to include off-site parking accommodations and transportation to the location grounds should on-site parking be limited and exceed capacity for the event.
- ★ Wreaths Across America relies on donated trucking to deliver the wreaths and must work around the trucking partner schedules. To continue providing free shipping of the wreaths and to prevent delivery delays, it is important that I am ready to receive my delivery at any time in the 2-weeks leading up to wreath day, arrange for volunteers to unload the truck, and store wreaths until placement. WAA requests that trucking partners give at least 24 hours notice for delivery, however, that timeframe may be shorter due to unforeseen circumstances. It is strongly encouraged that I prepare a calling tree or a list of volunteers that can be ready to help offload my delivery upon arrival. There are 9 wreaths included in each 2-foot square recyclable box, which weighs approximately 40lbs.
- ★ Wreaths Across America will provide 8 ceremonial wreaths along with 8 service branches and American flags. The ceremonial wreaths are identical to and shipped with the sponsored veteran wreaths. Upon delivery, I will select 8 wreaths to become the ceremonial wreaths, then attach the service branch and American flags to them following the instructions enclosed with the flags.
- ★ Hold a remembrance ceremony using the provided ceremonial wreaths and service branch flags, while including any individual(s) who may wish to participate.
- ★ Ensure that all sponsored veteran wreaths are placed on veteran graves in accordance with the WAA Proper Wreath Placement Instructions provided in the Locations and Sponsorship Groups Handbook.
- ★ The Wreaths Across America policy regarding the placement of live balsam veterans' wreaths on headstones marked with the Star of David is as follows:
  - Wreaths Across America (WAA) is not affiliated with any religion or political view. The organization's mission is to Remember all the fallen, Honor their families and Teach our children about the value of freedom. Because WAA is a guest at all of the participating locations nationwide that we visit each year, we abide by each location's rules when it comes to the placement of wreaths on veterans' headstones.
  - At those cemeteries without a formal policy, we advise volunteers not to place a wreath on the headstones of those graves marked with the Star of David, out of respect for Jewish custom which is not to place living flowers, wreaths or laurels on grave sites. We do ask volunteers to pause and pay their respects, including saying these names out loud to ensure they are remembered. The exception is when families of the deceased request a wreath, and then their wishes are honored. We also ask volunteers not to remove wreaths placed on headstones marked with the Star of David, as it may have been placed there by a family member or loved one.

- Our goal as an organization is to use this dialogue as an opportunity to share and Teach younger generations about the diversity of our American heritage, and the freedoms for which so much was sacrificed.
- ★ If I choose to accept grave specific requests at my location, I will ensure that all Grave Specific Requests received up to the Cutoff Date are honored and placed following the procedures outlined in the Wreaths Across America Locations and Sponsorship Groups Handbook. Additionally, I understand that as the Location Coordinator if I compile my own list of Grave Specific Requests and do not enter them manually to the Grave Specific Report on the Dashboard, I must provide a copy of that list to my Regional Liaison Team by December 1st.
- ★ Remove wreaths on the date designated by the contact at location and prior to the wreaths browning. Arrange adequate resources for disposal of the boxes and wreaths to include gathering volunteers to assist with the wreath retirement effort.

## Marketing Procedures

- ★ I agree to use the [Volunteer Resource Page](#) which contains the WAA Regional Map with my Regional Liaison Team contact information, the Locations and Sponsorship Groups Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Registration Forms, as well as all approved (and updated) files and forms, volunteer tutorials, and media/marketing materials.
- ★ All customized/altered order forms, tally sheets, and marketing materials must be approved prior to printing and/or distribution by emailing a proof to my Regional Liaison Team. Acceptable customizations that do not require approval are the addition of the Group ID, Location ID, and QR Code linking to my Wreaths Across America group or location page for online payment in the pre-templated areas.
- ★ I agree to abide by the Wreaths Across America Branding Guidelines and Media Resources, located in the Locations and Sponsorship Groups Handbook under the Planning section of the [Volunteer Resource Page](#).
- ★ The Wreaths Across America Media Policy, which relates to all board members, volunteer Sponsorship Group Leaders and Location Coordinators, is the following:
  - The executive director of Wreaths Across America is the official spokesperson of the organization.
  - The use of the Wreaths Across America™ name or likeness on any printed or electronic form of communication by anyone other than a registered group or location coordinator is prohibited.
  - Wreaths should be referenced as veteran wreaths and not holiday or Christmas wreaths.
  - Group Leaders and Location Coordinators will use press release templates provided in the Locations and Sponsorship Groups Handbook. If WAA is mentioned in any other press releases, press kits, special articles, guest columns, etc., prepared in advance, they must be approved by WAA headquarters before they are distributed and/or published.
  - When working directly with the media (such as in interviews), groups and location leaders may speak of Wreaths Across America, but not speak for it. Comments, quotes, and other official information will be provided for you or the media by WAA, if requested.

## Social Media Procedures

- ★ Carefully read the full Wreaths Across America Social Media Policy in the Locations and Sponsorship Groups Handbook and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies and are always truthful, respectful, and transparent.
  - Do not publish inappropriate postings, which may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or other inappropriate or unlawful conduct.
  - Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about Wreaths Across America, the organization's employees, volunteers or sponsors.
  - Any postings you make from Wreaths Across America-branded social media accounts should reflect the official Wreaths Across America Mission.
  - WAA-branded social media platforms are not to be used for soliciting outside of wreath sponsorship fundraising or any other activities not related to Wreaths Across America's mission, e.g., selling personal products or promoting non-mission focused events.
  - Your WAA-branded profile on social media sites should clearly be named Wreaths Across America - LOCATION or GROUP NAME, and the "About Us" should describe your position (volunteer Sponsorship Group Leader and/or volunteer Location Coordinator) with the organization.
  - Do not represent yourself as an official spokesperson for Wreaths Across America and add a disclaimer that you are speaking for yourself, not for the organization, and that any views expressed are your own.
  - You are welcome to provide informational details to local media to the best of your abilities, however please keep in mind that the executive director of Wreaths Across America is the only official spokesperson of the organization nationally.
  - Be nonpartisan. As a nonprofit organization tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3), Wreaths Across America may not engage in any electoral activity, such as endorsing or opposing political candidates.
  - Only post photos that are publicly available or that you have received permission from the photographer to post. Similarly, be careful about the use of others' written work, songs, videos, art, logos and other trademarks. Please link to the original work instead of copying it.
  - Do not post any confidential information, such as planned programs, financial data, or details of operations that are not already in the public domain.

## Finance Procedures

- ★ While any donation amount is accepted, the individual wreath sponsorship price is \$17.
- ★ I may collect wreath sponsorships for my location, however, if I wish to take advantage of group plans and promotions, orders must be placed through a sponsorship group instead of through my location alone. It is encouraged to have multiple groups supporting each location, to broaden the community reach and honor more veterans.
- ★ While it is acceptable to have a separate website for my location, any collection of wreath sponsorship funds must be linked to my Wreaths Across America group or location page for payment.

- ★ Each sponsor will be responsible for selecting the registered Group and Location they would like to support with their wreath sponsorship(s) by indicating the Group ID and Location ID intended for their order. As such, only a sponsor may request changes to their order once it is placed.
- ★ Order corrections must be requested by the sponsor within 60 days of placing the order and can be requested by clicking on the link at the bottom of their emailed receipt or by contacting WAA Customer Service.
- ★ When placing an order, the sponsor will select the number of wreaths they wish to pay for. Any promotional and/or 3-for-2 wreaths will be added to qualifying orders after processing is completed and the order details are displayed on the Dashboard reports.
- ★ When collecting wreath sponsorship funds, I must submit them with the approved order forms within 30-days of the check date. Mailed funds should be in check format (mailing cash is not recommended) Made Payable to Wreaths Across America, and accompanied by an approved Wreath Sponsorship Order Form or Tally Sheet with the Group ID and Location IDs clearly printed on the form.
- ★ Should a check be returned at deposit, the wreath count for the group and/or location will be adjusted accordingly.
- ★ It is not permissible to create a 501(c)3 or open a checking or savings account under the Wreaths Across America name or Tax ID Number.
- ★ When using the Wreaths Across America Tax ID Number to solicit grants, the Grant or Employee Giving Notification Form must be completed prior to applying for the grant to alert the WAA finance team and provide my Group ID and/or Location ID, should I wish for them to receive credit for the incoming grant funds.
- ★ When gathering wreath sponsorships through another platform, such as Meta (Facebook, Instagram) Fundraisers, a screenshot must be taken of the funds received through the fundraiser, then the Facebook Fundraiser Form must be completed to alert the WAA finance team and provide my Group ID and/or Location ID, should I wish for them to receive credit for the incoming fundraiser funds.
- ★ The Cutoff Date for wreath sponsorships that are guaranteed for that wreath year delivery is the Tuesday after Thanksgiving at 11:59pm EST. This date is for internal volunteer use only and should not be advertised as a “deadline” as wreaths may be sponsored all year round. Wreaths Across America will do its very best to include orders received after the Cutoff Date in that same wreath year delivery for the location. Any wreath sponsorships not included in the delivery will be added as a carryover/credit for the location in the following wreath year.
- ★ Carryovers and/or credits for my location will be applied to the wreath count for my location and are not credited to sponsorship groups, as the groups received credit for the orders in the wreath year during which they were sponsored.

I confirm that I have thoroughly read, understand, and agree to the above policies and procedures, as described in the Wreaths Across America™ [Locations and Sponsorship Groups Handbook](#).

Further, I understand that Wreaths Across America may remove me as a Location Coordinator at any time and for any reason.



**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
**PHOTO/VIDEO OPPORTUNITY**

**Local Wreaths Across America Sponsorship Group to Host [EVENT]**

**WHAT:** [Group name] is fundraising to support Wreaths Across America, specifically to earn sponsorships for veterans' wreaths to be placed at [Location] on National Wreaths Across America Day – Sat., December 16, 2023.

[Add a line or two about the specific event – such as what's involved and if the public can attend – and try to note any interesting visuals for broadcast media.]

**WHEN:** [Date +Time]

**WHERE:** [Address]

**WHO:** [List anyone attending who the media could interview or who might draw the media's interest.]

**About Wreaths Across America**

Wreaths Across America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery begun by Maine businessman Morrill Worcester in 1992. The organization's mission – Remember, Honor, Teach – is carried out in part each year by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in December at Arlington, as well as at more than 3,700 veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and overseas

**Volunteer Location Contact:**

[Coordinator name]

[Cell phone]

[Email address]

###



## **[CEMETERY] Announces it will (Become OR Continue as) an Official Location for the 2023 National Wreaths Across America Day**

The cemetery will join the more than 3,700 participating locations across the country to Remember, Honor and Teach on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023

Columbia Falls, MAINE, and [City, STATE] – [Date], 2023 – National nonprofit Wreaths Across America (WAA) announced today that [LOCATION] in [City, State] has once again joined OR will be joining in the mission to Remember, Honor, Teach, as an official location for 2023. This is the [FIRST, SECOND, THIRD, etc.,] year that the cemetery will participate in this national program.

Wreaths Across America started as a simple gesture of thanks that has grown into a national movement of dedicated volunteers and communities coming together to not only remember the nation’s fallen and honor their service, but to teach the next generation about the sacrifices made for us to live freely. This year, there will be more than 3,700 participating locations placing veterans’ wreaths on National Wreaths Across America Day – Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023 – with more than two million volunteers coming together.

The goal for [LOCATION] is to raise enough funds to place [insert total number] sponsored veterans’ wreaths on the headstones of all the local heroes laid to rest there, to ensure that the individuals who served to protect the freedoms of our country never be forgotten and to bring the community together in patriotic commemoration.

“We are forever grateful for the thousands of supporters who dedicate their time and effort to fulfilling our mission all year long,” said Karen Worcester, executive director, Wreaths Across America. “These individuals and their communities know the value of remembering the fallen, honoring those who currently serve and teaching the next generation about the sacrifices made for our freedom every day, and without their continued support, Wreaths Across America would not exist.”

Those interested in volunteering for Wreaths Across America or sponsoring a wreath for [insert cemetery name], are invited to visit [insert direct link to your page] to learn more. National Wreaths Across America Day is a free community event open to all people.

# # #

### **About Wreaths Across America**

Wreaths Across America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery begun by Maine businessman Morrill Worcester in 1992. The organization’s mission – Remember, Honor, Teach – is carried out in part each year by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in December at Arlington, as well as at thousands of veterans’ cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and beyond.

All Wreaths Across America Day events are, non-political/religious events, open to all people. For more information, to donate or to sign up to volunteer, please visit [www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org/YOURID](http://www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org/YOURID)

## Sample Wreaths Across America™ Ceremony

### National Wreaths Across America Day Ceremony *Optional Script*

Welcome! Thank you for joining us here to today as we celebrate the mission to Remember the fallen, Honor those that serve and their families, and Teach the next generation the value of freedom.

We ask that to start the event, you all please join with me in a moment of silence to remember the fallen, prisoners of war, those missing in action and honor those who have served and are serving this great nation's armed services.

**:30 seconds of silence recommended**

#### **OPTIONAL Color Guard:**

Please stand while we post the colors.

*“Color Guard, post/present the Colors.” (Where Honor Guards are present and participating, they too will come forward and place themselves on both sides of the memorial).*

#### **Location Coordinator to set this up in advance.**

*Note of clarity, posting vs. presenting the flags: If flags are put into stands, the command should be “post the colors,” if the color guard is to remain standing with the flags, they should be directed to “present the colors.” The emcee should direct the audience to stand while the flag is moving. When outside, you should either salute or place your hand over your heart when the American flag passes.*

#### **Opening Remarks:**

Thank you all for joining us here today. This year, across the country at more than <<INSERT #>> participating locations like this one, there are millions of Americans gathering safely as one nation to Remember, Honor and Teach. We are all proud to be Americans that live in a free society made up of many people, from many walks of life. The freedoms we enjoy today have not come without a price. Lying here before us and in cemeteries throughout this nation are men and women who gave their lives so that we can live in freedom and without fear. We can worship as we see fit. We can raise our children to believe as we do. We are free to vote for the leaders of our choosing. And, we have the right to succeed, and we have the right to fail at whatever endeavor we wish to pursue.

The United States of America was founded on the ideals of Freedom, Justice, and Equality. Our Nation stands as a shining beacon of liberty and freedom to the world. We thank those who gave their lives to keep us free, and we shall not forget you. We shall remember. (Short Pause)

Today, more than ever, we reflect on our nation's veterans and active duty service members who have had and continue to fight to protect the innocent and oppressed. This nation has always been the first to stand up for the freedom of people from around the world. Many of you here today have answered that call and served your country well. For this, we say, “Thank you,” and we are honored to know you.

There are many men and women serving today in all branches of the military, here at home and in places far away, that most of us have never heard of. These men and women are part of the best-trained, best-equipped force in the world. We honor them and their families for the sacrifices they make each day to keep our country safe from terrorism, hatred, and injustice.

Quoting our 40th United States President Ronald Reagan (short pause), “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it was once like in the United States, where men were free.”

Today, we show a united front of gratitude and respect across the United States of America as we REMEMBER the Fallen, HONOR those who serve and their families, and TEACH the next generation the value of freedom.

**Wreath Laying: Color Guard and, if present, Honor Guard will present arms at the laying of each ceremonial wreath.**

Now [Person’s Name] will lay a veteran’s wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States Army.

Now [Person’s Name] will lay a veteran’s wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States Marine Corps.

Now [Person’s Name] will lay a veteran’s wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States Navy.

Now [Person’s Name] will lay a veteran’s wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States Air Force.

Now [Person’s Name] will lay a veteran’s wreath in honor of those serving in the United States Space Force. Note, if the Space Force is unable to provide a service member, a Veteran of Air Force Space Command or U.S. Space Command is also appropriate.

Now [Person’s Name] will lay a veteran’s wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States Coast Guard.

Now [Person’s Name] will lay a veteran’s wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States Merchant Marines.

Now [Person’s Name] will lay a veteran’s wreath in honor of the 93,129 United States Servicemen from all branches of the service whose last known status was either Prisoners of War or Missing in Action. These individuals have never returned to their families and homes. We shall not forget you.

[OPTIONAL] At this time, we would also like to honor all the uniformed service members who serve in The United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps (USPHS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Commissioned Officer Corps.

***NOTE: If you would like to include another group in this part of the ceremony, such as Gold Star or Blue Star Families, First Responders, etc., now is the time to recognize these groups. You may use wreaths that have been sponsored to add to this piece of the ceremony, as you deem appropriate.***

***If possible, an active-duty service person should lay the wreath of the armed services they represent. After the last wreath is laid, the Color Guard and Honor Guard will Order Arms.***

### **Closing Remarks:**

We We encourage every volunteer here today, who places a wreath on a veteran's grave, to say that veteran’s name aloud and take a moment to thank them for their service to our country. It's a small act that goes a long way toward keeping the memory of our veterans alive.



Remember, we are not here today to “decorate graves.” We are here to remember not their deaths, but their lives. Each wreath is a gift of appreciation from a grateful America.

These live balsam fir wreaths symbolize our honor to those who have served and are serving in the armed forces of our great nation and to their families who endure sacrifices every day on our behalf. To our children, we want you to understand that the freedoms you enjoy today have not been free but have come with a cost that someday, you may have to pay yourself.

As a nation standing together, we can defeat terrorism, hatred and injustice. Thanks to our Veterans, we have the freedom to do just that.

**This is where the scripted ceremony ends, and the Leader or other Designated person turns it over to the Veterans Groups.**

**Tips:** Where there are high-ranking officials present (Governor, State Elected Officials, etc.) and who wish to make a statement (short) this is a good time to let them speak.

**Veterans’ Groups:** Coordinators, please make sure you accommodate all groups that want to participate in the ceremony after the scripted ceremony. Try to lead them to keep it short and to the point.

**Ending:** At the conclusion, where possible, have TAPS played. Retire the Colors and thank everyone for coming.

**Location Coordinators:** As Coordinators, you are in charge of everything else that takes place at this ceremonial event. How your Color Guard is placed (and/or Honor Guard is placed) is entirely up to you. Ceremonies throughout the country are all different and we cannot script, nor do we want to script, the entire ceremony. You are capable and a better judge of your command than we are. We will support you with ideas, if asked, to provide them to you or your other leaders in your group. Have fun with this project!

**Additional Ideas:** If you have families there that want to place wreaths on their loved one’s grave, you can either flag the grave ahead of time or have some of the local groups get involved by standing near the headstone to make sure no one else, other than the family member, places the grave specific wreath. **All of this would need to be coordinated prior to the service and they would need to pre-register with whomever is organizing.**

You should also encourage groups and volunteers to only take one wreath, or two, depending on the number sponsored for your location, so that everyone has a chance to lay a wreath.

If for any reason you need to skip a grave, please encourage people to take a moment and stop at the grave to pay respects and honor that veteran, thanking them for their service.

Please make sure that if you have multiple groups, that you recognize all of them to not discourage anyone from participation.

**Suggested words to read at the ceremony, from Morrill Worcester, founder of Wreaths Across America:**

To all WAA Volunteers:

Thank you for being here today...

Before you get started, there are some items to be brought to your attention, to make your experience even better.

1. Each wreath you'll be placing is handmade and unique. They are made of balsam fir grown in the Downeast region of Maine, USA, with pride.
2. Some of the needles do become detached during the making, packing, and transportation of the wreaths. Please keep in mind that every wreath has tens of thousands of needles and it is normal for this to happen.
3. Because the wreaths are packed tightly in boxes, it will take 2-3 hours for them to fully relax to their natural circular shape.
4. Before placing a wreath on a headstone, take a minute to re-fluff the greens and rearrange the bow. When the wreath is finally laid at the headstone, please make sure the bow is at the 12:00 position.

It is important to have that intimate moment with the hero you are honoring, but please remember to take a step back and look at the complete picture of what all of us have accomplished through the mission to REMEMBER, HONOR, and TEACH.

# WAA STATE HOUSE CEREMONY RESOURCES

Wreaths Across America State House Ceremonies take place on the Monday prior to National Wreaths Across America Day in most of the 50 states and Washington, D.C. These ceremonies are conducted by volunteer State House Coordinators and serve as the start to a week-long series of patriotic events that are designed to inspire and unite the nation by raising awareness and appreciation for the service and sacrifice of our veterans and their families.

Each State House Ceremony is non-political and all members of the community are invited to attend. Dignitaries and special guests are invited to speak in honor of our veterans and active military. For more information or to volunteer to help with the planning of your State House Ceremony, please contact your Regional Liaison Team.

# Sample Wreaths Across America™ Ceremony

## Wreaths Across America Statehouse Ceremony

### Optional Script

Updated: January 18, 2023

### Opening at 12 noon Eastern Standard Time

Welcome! Thank you for joining us today as we celebrate the mission to Remember the fallen, Honor those that serve and their families, and Teach the next generation the value of freedom.

We ask that to start the event, you all please join me in a moment of silence to remember the fallen, prisoners of war, and those missing in action and honor those who have served and are serving this great nation's armed services.

**:30 seconds of silence recommended**

### OPTIONAL Color Guard:

Please stand while we post the colors.

“Color Guard, post/present the Colors.” (Where Honor Guards are present and participating, they too will come forward and place themselves on both sides of the memorial).

### State House Coordinator to set this up in advance.

Note of clarity, posting vs. presenting the flags: If flags are put into stands, the command should be “post the colors,” if the color guard is to remain standing with the flags, they should be directed to “present the colors.” The emcee should direct the audience to stand while the flag is moving. When outside, you should either salute or place your hand over your heart when the American flag passes.

### Opening Remarks:

Thank you all for joining us here today. This year, across the country at State Houses nationwide, there are thousands of Americans gathering safely as one nation to Remember, Honor and Teach. We are all proud to be Americans that live in a free society made up of many people, from many walks of life. The freedoms we enjoy today have not come without a price. Lying here before us and in cemeteries throughout this nation are men and women who gave their lives so that we can live in freedom and without fear. We can worship as we see fit. We can raise our children to believe as we do. We are free to vote for the leaders of our choosing. And, we have the right to succeed, and we have the right to fail at whatever endeavor we wish to pursue.

The United States of America was founded on the ideals of Freedom, Justice, and Equality. Our Nation stands as a shining beacon of liberty and freedom to the world. We thank those who gave their lives to keep us free, and we shall not forget you. We shall remember. (Short Pause)

Today, more than ever, we reflect on our nation's veterans and active duty service members who have had and continue to fight to protect the innocent and oppressed. This nation has always been the first to stand up for the freedom of people from around the world. Many of you here today have answered that call and served your country well. For this, we say, “Thank you,” and we are honored to know you.

There are many men and women serving today in all branches of the military, here at home and

in places far away, that most of us have never heard of. These men and women are part of the best-trained, best-equipped force in the world. We honor them and their families for the sacrifices they make each day to keep our country safe from terrorism, hatred, and injustice.

Quoting our 40th United States President Ronald Reagan (short pause), “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it was once like in the United States, where men were free.”

Today, we show a united front of gratitude and respect across the United States of America as we REMEMBER the Fallen, HONOR those who serve and their families, and TEACH the next generation the value of freedom.

***Wreath Laying: Color Guard and, if present, Honor Guard will present arms at the laying of the wreath.***

Now [Person’s Name] will lay a veteran’s wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States armed forces.

#### **Closing Remarks:**

The wreath before you represents our commitment as a United America to remember the fallen. We also want this wreath to symbolize our honor to those who have served and are serving in the armed forces of our great nation and to their families who endure sacrifices everyday on our behalf. To our children, we want you to understand the freedoms you enjoy today have not been free but have come with a cost that someday, you may have to pay yourself. As a nation standing together, we can defeat terrorism, hatred and injustice. Thanks to our Veterans, we have the freedom to do just that.

***This is where the scripted ceremony ends, and the Leader or other Designated person turns it over to the Veterans Groups.***

**Tips:** Where there are high-ranking officials present (Governor, State Elected Officials, etc.) and who wish to make a statement (short) this is a good time to let them speak.

**Veterans’ Groups:** Coordinators, please make sure you accommodate all groups that want to participate in the ceremony after the scripted ceremony. Try to lead them to keep it short and to the point.

**Ending:** At the conclusion, where possible, have TAPS played. Retire the Colors and thank everyone for coming.

**Additional Ideas:** Before the beginning of the ceremony, some groups have the participants recite the Pledge of Allegiance and play the National Anthem. This is your choice to do, if desired.

# WAA SPONSORSHIP GROUP RESOURCES

## What is a Wreaths Across America Sponsorship Group?

Our sponsorship groups help us remember and honor veterans laid to rest all over the country by raising funds to sponsor wreaths at specified locations. Groups can be volunteers who fundraise solely for Wreaths Across America or groups from other nonprofit organizations working to raise funds for their causes.

Working with sponsorship groups, WAA returns \$5 of every \$17 wreath sponsorship raised to support a group's nonprofit organization and its ongoing work. If your group wishes to only sponsor wreaths and not receive any money back, WAA has a three-for-two program that is a perfect fit (for every two wreaths sponsored a third wreath will be placed at the cemetery). More information on our sponsorship groups can be found on our website at [learn.wreathscrossamerica.org/fundraising](https://www.learn.wreathscrossamerica.org/fundraising).

## Sponsorship Group Getting Started Checklist

- ★ Register as a sponsorship group online.
- ★ Thoroughly read the welcome email that you will receive after your registration is complete. Follow the links in that email to find helpful tips and tricks!
- ★ Schedule a meeting with your group/club/organization to explain the program and set a goal for your group. For example:
  - Instruct each of your members to make a list of family and friends to contact and invite to sponsor veteran wreaths to be placed on the graves of our nation's heroes.
  - Research a list of local businesses (banks, stores, contractors, restaurants, funeral homes, insurance and real estate agencies, etc.).
  - Divide the list and assign group members several businesses each. List larger businesses and major corporations for 25+ wreath sponsorships. Identify select members and group leadership to approach the top prospects.
- ★ Set a start date and schedule a progress meeting to check in with everyone. Giving a group deadline for completion also creates a sense of urgency and action. We recommend 30-day fundraising periods at a time, however, fundraising is encouraged all year long.
- ★ Submit collected funds and tally sheet within 30 days of receiving the check. Wreaths can also be sponsored online directly from the Wreaths Across America page that will be created for your group.
  - If you selected the 3-for-2 plan for your group, donors will pay for as many \$17 wreath sponsorships as they wish, then after the order processes, we will add the extra wreaths to your Wreath Count Report, which is available on your Account Dashboard.
  - If you selected the \$5 Back plan for your group, you will receive \$5 back for every paid wreath sponsorship. Payback checks will be issued on the 15th of each month, between February and November, making this a wonderful way to

fundraise for your organization all year round.

- ◇ 20 group members x 20 sponsorships each = 400 sponsorships
- ◇ 400 sponsorships x \$5 per sponsorship = \$2,000. Think of all your group could do with an extra \$2,000!

- ★ Invite all your members (and sponsors) to participate in the annual wreath-laying event in your area.
- ★ Your Regional Liaison Team will contact you to reinstate your Sponsorship Group at the beginning of each year. This is required if your Sponsorship Group wishes to stay active.

## Fundraising Ideas and Services to Help Reach Your Goals

Here are some great fundraising ideas that some of our groups have used in recent seasons. You may find a complete list of ideas in the Wreaths Across America Fundraising Idea Guide, which is found on the Volunteer Resource Page at [learn.wreathscrossamerica.org/location-group-resources](http://learn.wreathscrossamerica.org/location-group-resources) under Marketing Materials for Events. As people see the rows of wreaths upon headstones, most of the fundraising work is about sharing what a profound experience it is for volunteers to be involved.

1. Every wreath counts: We have had a number of groups find great success with setting up a sponsorship table at local Wal-Mart, Kroger's, or other high-traffic stores. Local festivals and events also provide an opportunity to inform the public about our mission and share wreath sponsorship information. Our Wreaths Across America online shop has a wide variety of attractive display items for this purpose.
2. Every dollar counts: Not everyone will be in a position to do a full wreath sponsorship. But you can use a bucket or even a combat boot to collect dollars and change as people come and go in high-traffic areas.
3. Every penny counts: We have seen many classrooms successfully conduct penny drives to place wreaths for veterans in their own community. One classroom in Ohio raised funds for over 300 wreaths alone. The more people involved – even in the smallest ways – helps achieve our mission.
4. Virtual Fundraisings:
  - Create a Wreaths Across America Facebook page for your group. If you need help with this, contact Samantha Clark at [sclark@wreathscrossamerica.org](mailto:sclark@wreathscrossamerica.org). Share the direct link to the WAA page for your group and ask for supporters to sponsor wreaths.
  - Host a LIVE event on Facebook featuring local veterans and families from your community that support the mission. Share their stories and their WHY for participating in WAA and encourage sponsorships to support this year's efforts.

### Helping is easy:

1. Contact your Wreaths Across America Regional Liaison Team for more information about purchasing a fundraising kit, or ideas to help generate awareness and sponsorships in your community.
2. Hand out the free I OWE YOU cards to veterans and active duty personnel all year long,

seize the moment to show your appreciation by simply saying thank you!

3. Collect sponsorships at your scheduled event and turn them in to Wreaths Across America to help sponsor wreaths for the participating location you are supporting.
4. Create a custom QR code that links to the WAA page for your group. This will make it easy for donors to sponsor wreaths online and pay with a credit/debit card, Google Pay or Paypal.
  - We have business size cards that you can custom order with your QR code and sponsorship group info, available at the Wreaths Across America online store, which are great for handing out.

The Volunteer Resource Page ([learn.wreathscrossamerica.org/location-group-resources](https://learn.wreathscrossamerica.org/location-group-resources)) contains all approved (and updated) files and forms, volunteer tutorials, and media/marketing materials.

All customized/altered order forms, tally sheets, and marketing materials must be approved prior to printing and/or distribution by emailing a proof to your Regional Liaison Team. Acceptable customizations/alterations include the addition of the Group ID, Location ID, and QR Code in the pre-templated areas.

## Sponsorship Group Program

In 2007, Wreaths Across America expanded its annual wreath placement event to enable groups and organizations to support Arlington National Cemetery and other local, participating cemeteries across the country. We established the Sponsorship Group Program to benefit other like-minded charities, community programs and civic groups through the sale of wreath sponsorships for participating locations.



**We invite your group or organization** to help us remember and honor our American heroes and teach the next generation, through raising funds to sponsor veterans' wreaths. There are three different ways your organization can help raise funds for Wreaths Across America.

- \$5 back Group Plan - This option allows your group to earn funds to support other programs. For every \$17 wreath sponsored, \$5 comes back to your group for your own programs.
- 3 for 2 Group Plan - This option maximizes the number of wreaths sponsored for your location. For every 2 wreaths sponsored at \$17 each we will add a 3rd one for the cemetery at no cost.
- No Plan Group Plan - This option helps support the many different programs that Wreaths Across America offers.

## 2023 Volunteer Group Leader Policies and Procedures

As a Wreaths Across America Group Leader, I agree to abide by the following policies and procedures:

### Code of Conduct

- ★ Protect the integrity of the Wreaths Across America Mission and positively represent



the organization by ensuring that myself and all volunteers assisting me act honestly and ethically while in the performance of their volunteer duties, conducting themselves in a professional, kind, courteous, and respectful manner with all other volunteers, sponsorship groups, cemetery representatives and WAA employees while ensuring no discrimination and that utmost respect is given to all ethnic, national, and cultural differences.

- ★ Conduct community outreach to share the mission of Wreaths Across America and invite others to get involved as a volunteer, wreath sponsor, or by registering a new location or sponsorship group, consistent with WAA policies and procedures.
- ★ All flags displayed at events in which Wreaths Across America is represented must be done respectfully and following proper flag etiquette, in accordance with U.S. Flag Code.
- ★ Contact the Location Coordinator to make arrangements for the volunteer efforts of my Sponsorship Group at the WAA wreath-laying event(s).
- ★ Follow WAA Proper Wreath Placement Instructions, provided in the Locations and Sponsorship Groups Handbook, as well as local procedures and guidance from the volunteer Location Coordinators at the location(s) I am attending.
- ★ Understand that any Sponsorship Group can choose to support any location, with no limit to the number of locations they support regardless of their level of activity throughout the year with wreath sponsorships and/or how close they are in proximity to the location.

## **Privacy and Liability**

- ★ Wreaths Across America abides by all privacy regulations, which protect sponsor contact information. As such, all sponsor information is protected and cannot be used to solicit sponsors for order corrections to support a different group and/or location than previously selected, to recruit sponsors for other groups and/or locations for which I do not coordinate, or to solicit funds for organizations other than Wreaths Across America.
- ★ Communication with a sponsor must be initiated on the Wreaths Across America messaging system only via the Dashboard, unless contact information is freely given directly from the sponsor to the Group Leader, then consent is assumed.
- ★ Wreaths Across America may share my contact information with those interested in volunteering to support my group(s). If I prefer to keep my contact information private, I must request that by contacting my Regional Liaison Team.

## **Communication with Wreaths Across America**

- ★ Contact my Regional Liaison Team directly for support and allow 24-48 hours for a response, updating my Regional Liaison Team immediately with any changes to my contact information and/or preferences.
- ★ Respond to my Regional Liaison Team within a reasonable timeframe when they contact me, knowing that my non-response may result in them replacing me in my volunteer role.
- ★ Groups registered on the \$5 Back Plan, must keep their account current with correct remit name and address for the payback checks. Payback checks may be delayed or canceled, if undeliverable.

- ★ Groups may change their group plan selection when registering to participate for the year. Mid-year group plan changes are not permitted. Volunteers may register multiple groups under different group names, should they wish to utilize multiple group plans for their fundraising efforts.
- ★ Notify my Regional Liaison Team by October 1st if I cannot serve as the Group Leader for that year. If possible, I will provide my Regional Liaison Team with my suggestions for a replacement and/or share any planning materials to assist in the transition.
- ★ Should my group's supporting location choose not to participate in the future, WAA will contact current wreath sponsors to redirect their order(s) to another participating location of their choice. If WAA does not receive a response, my group may determine where those wreaths are redirected; otherwise, the wreath sponsorships will be moved to the WAA unallocated fund, for disbursement to other locations in need.

## Marketing Procedures

- ★ I agree to use the Volunteer Resource Page which contains the WAA Regional Map with my Regional Liaison Team contact information, the Locations and Sponsorship Groups Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Registration Forms, as well as all approved (and updated) files and forms, volunteer tutorials, and media/marketing materials.
- ★ All customized/altered order forms, tally sheets, and marketing materials must be approved prior to printing and/or distribution by emailing a proof to my Regional Liaison Team. Acceptable customizations that do not require approval are the addition of the Group ID, Location ID, and QR Code linking to my Wreaths Across America group or location page for online payment in the pre-templated areas.
- ★ I agree to abide by the Branding Guidelines and Media Resources, located in the Locations and Sponsorship Groups Handbook, which can be found under the Planning section of the Volunteer Resource Page.
- ★ Our Media Policy, which relates to all board members, groups and location coordinators, is the following:
  - The executive director of Wreaths Across America is the official spokesperson of the organization.
  - The use of the Wreaths Across America™ name or likeness on any printed or electronic form of communication by anyone other than a registered group or location coordinator is prohibited.
  - Wreaths should be referenced as veteran wreaths and not holiday or Christmas wreaths.
  - Group Leaders and Location Coordinators will use press release templates provided in the Locations and Sponsorship Groups Handbook. If WAA is mentioned in any other press releases, press kits, special articles, guest columns, etc., prepared in advance, they must be approved by WAA headquarters before they are distributed and/or published.
  - When working directly with the media (such as in interviews), groups and location leaders may speak of Wreaths Across America, but not speak for it.

Comments, quotes, and other official information will be provided for you or the media by WAA, if requested.

## Social Media

- ★ Carefully read the full Wreaths Across America Social Media Policy in the Locations and Sponsorship Groups Handbook and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies and are always truthful, respectful, and transparent.
  - Do not publish inappropriate postings, which may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or other inappropriate or unlawful conduct.
  - Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about Wreaths Across America, the organization’s employees, volunteers or sponsors.
  - Any postings you make from Wreaths Across America-branded social media accounts should reflect the official Wreaths Across America Mission.
  - WAA-branded social media platforms are not to be used for soliciting outside of wreath sponsorship fundraising or any other activities not related to Wreaths Across America’s mission, e.g., selling personal products or promoting non-mission focused events.
  - Your WAA-branded profile on social media sites should clearly be named Wreaths Across America – LOCATION or GROUP NAME, and the “About Us” should describe your position (volunteer Sponsorship Group Leader and/or volunteer Location Coordinator) with the organization.
  - Do not represent yourself as an official spokesperson for Wreaths Across America and add a disclaimer that you are speaking for yourself, not for the organization, and that any views expressed are your own.
  - You are welcome to provide informational details to local media, to the best of your abilities, however please keep in mind that the executive director of Wreaths Across America is the only official spokesperson of the organization nationally.
  - Be nonpartisan. As a nonprofit organization tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3), Wreaths Across America may not engage in any electoral activity, such as endorsing or opposing political candidates.
  - Only post photos that are publicly available or that you have received permission from the photographer to post. Similarly, be careful about the use of others’ written work, songs, videos, art, logos and other trademarks. Please link to the original work instead of copying it.
  - Do not post any confidential information, such as planned programs, financial data, or details of operations that are not already in the public domain.

## Finance Procedures

- ★ While any donation amount is accepted, the individual wreath sponsorship price is \$17.
- ★ While it is acceptable to have a separate website for my group, any collection of wreath

- sponsorship funds must be linked to my Wreaths Across America group page for payment.
- ★ Each sponsor will be responsible for selecting the registered Group and Location that they would like to support with their wreath sponsorship(s) by indicating the Group ID and Location ID intended for their order. As such, only a sponsor may request changes to their order once it is placed.
  - ★ Order corrections must be requested by the sponsor within 60 days of placing the order, by clicking the link at the bottom of their emailed receipt or by calling WAA Customer Service.
  - ★ When placing an order, the sponsor will select the number of wreaths they wish to pay for. Any promotional and/or 3-for-2 wreaths will not be displayed in the shopping cart prior to checkout and will instead be added to qualifying orders after processing is completed. The breakdown of each order will be displayed on the Dashboard reports.
  - ★ Should a sponsor request a Grave Specific wreath, I must first verify on the location page that they are able to accept Grave Specific Requests. Then, the sponsor may place their order in one of three ways: (1) place an online order and select the Grave Specific option, (2) mail a check accompanied by the approved Grave Specific Order Form, or (3) I can gather a list of Grave Specific Requests and send in the wreath sponsorships accompanied by an approved Wreath Sponsorship Order Form, then manually enter them onto the Grave Specific Report on my Dashboard prior to the Cutoff Date.
  - ★ When collecting wreath sponsorship funds, I must submit them with the approved order forms within 30-days of the check date. Mailed funds should be in check format (mailing cash is not recommended) Made Payable to Wreaths Across America, and accompanied by an approved Wreath Sponsorship Order Form or Tally Sheet with the Group ID and Location IDs clearly printed on the form.
  - ★ Should a check be returned at deposit, the wreath count for the group and/or location will be adjusted accordingly.
  - ★ Groups registered on the \$5 Back Plan can expect their payback checks to be issued on the 15th of each month, between February and November, for all funds submitted. Payback checks for funds received between the months of November and January will be issued in February. Payback checks must be cashed within 120 days. After 12 months, if the check is not cashed, it will be voided and submitted to the state of Maine as abandoned/unclaimed property.
  - ★ It is not permissible to open a checking or savings account under the Wreaths Across America name.
  - ★ When using the Wreaths Across America Tax ID Number to solicit grants, the Grant or Employee Giving Notification Form must be completed prior to applying for the grant to alert the WAA finance team and provide my Group ID and/or Location ID, should I wish for them to receive credit for the incoming grant funds.
  - ★ When gathering wreath sponsorships through another platform, such as Meta (Facebook, Instagram) Fundraisers, a screenshot must be taken of the funds received through the fundraiser, then the Facebook Fundraiser Form must be completed to alert the WAA finance team and provide my Group ID and/or Location ID should I wish for them to receive credit for the incoming fundraiser funds.

- ★ The Cutoff Date for wreath sponsorships that are guaranteed for that wreath year delivery, is the Tuesday after Thanksgiving at 11:59pm EST. This date is for internal volunteer use only and should not be advertised as a “deadline” as wreaths may be sponsored all year round. Wreaths Across America will do its very best to include orders received after the Cutoff Date in that same wreath year delivery for the location. Any wreath sponsorships not included in the delivery will be added as a carryover/credit for the location in the following wreath year.
- ★ Carryovers and/or credits will be applied to the wreath count for the location and will not be credited to my sponsorship group as my group received credit for the orders in the wreath year during which they were sponsored.

I confirm that I have thoroughly read, understand, and agree to the above policies and procedures, as described in the Wreaths Across America™ [Locations and Sponsorship Groups Handbook](#).

Further, I understand that Wreaths Across America may remove me as a Group Leader at any time and for any reason.

### **FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO START FUNDRAISING TODAY!**

1. **Select a participating location you will raise funds for.** It could be Arlington National Cemetery, or a location in your state or local community. You can find if a location is participating by visiting [www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org) and clicking “Search Locations/Groups” from the Menu. If the location you are looking to support is not yet participating, you can choose to register it and become a Location Coordinator.
2. **Register your group online.** Follow the steps found at [learn.www.wreathscrossamerica.org/fundraising](http://learn.www.wreathscrossamerica.org/fundraising). After completing the sign-up form, please allow 24-48 hours for your group to be set up. You will then receive a confirmation email with your assigned Group ID. It will be important to include this on all order forms to ensure your group is credited for your efforts.
3. **Create your custom Sponsorship Group Page.** Once registered, a sponsorship group page will be created for you which you can then sign in to customize and manage for your group through [manage.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://manage.wreathscrossamerica.org). There you will be instructed to create a login and password and can then begin following instructions to customize your page.
4. **Promote your web page.** Once complete, you will share the direct link to your Sponsorship Group page with family, friends, and contacts to start getting wreath sponsorships. All sponsorships made through this site will be credited to your group.
6. **Fundraising can be done year round!**

**Have more questions? Contact  
Wreaths Across America Headquarters to speak  
to a member of our team (877) 385-9504.**

### **WAA CONTACTS**

#### **Public Relations or Media Questions**

Amber Caron  
(207) 513-6457 (cell)

[acaron@wreathscrossamerica.org](mailto:acaron@wreathscrossamerica.org)

Sean Sullivan  
(207) 230-4599

[ssullivan@wreathscrossamerica.org](mailto:ssullivan@wreathscrossamerica.org)

## LOCATION AND SPONSORSHIP GROUP INFORMATION

Director of Locations and Groups

Julie Bright  
(207) 618-5078

[jbright@wreathsacrossamerica.org](mailto:jbright@wreathsacrossamerica.org)

Richelle Bergeson - Finance Liaison  
(207) 618-5348

[rbergeson@wreathsacrossamerica.org](mailto:rbergeson@wreathsacrossamerica.org)

Meagan Erickson - Assistant Director of  
Locations and Groups

(207) 470-0970

[merickson@wreathsacrossamerica.org](mailto:merickson@wreathsacrossamerica.org)

**WREATHS across AMERICA**  
Regional Map

**Region 1 Liaison Team**  
Terra Delong & Emily Carney  
207-578-6277  
[region1@wreathsacrossamerica.org](mailto:region1@wreathsacrossamerica.org)

**Region 2 Liaison Team**  
Miesa Bland  
207-578-6283  
[region2@wreathsacrossamerica.org](mailto:region2@wreathsacrossamerica.org)

**Region 3 Liaison Team**  
Stephanie Molina  
207-578-6287  
[region3@wreathsacrossamerica.org](mailto:region3@wreathsacrossamerica.org)

**Region 4 Liaison Team**  
Amber Rocha  
207-578-6284  
[region4@wreathsacrossamerica.org](mailto:region4@wreathsacrossamerica.org)

**Region 5 Liaison Team**  
Tiffany Lynch & Emily Carney  
207-578-6289  
[region5@wreathsacrossamerica.org](mailto:region5@wreathsacrossamerica.org)

**Region 1 (Orange):** Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico.

**Region 2 (Dark Blue):** North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida.

**Region 3 (Light Blue):** Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, Virginia.

**Region 4 (Light Green):** New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts.

**Region 5 (Dark Green):** Alaska, Hawaii.

**Notes:**  
\*\* Region 4 Includes Guam  
\*\* Region 5 Includes DC  
\*\* Region 2 includes Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, & Cuba



**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
**PHOTO/VIDEO OPPORTUNITY**

**National Wreaths Across America Day to be Held at [Cemetery Location]**

**WHAT:** [Cemetery name], an official Wreaths Across America (WAA) location, will host a wreath-laying ceremony, joining more than 3,700 other locations across the country for National Wreaths Across America Day. Coordinated and led by local volunteers, fundraising groups have raised funds throughout the year to sponsor the placement of [#] veterans' wreaths on the headstones of our fallen service members laid to rest there. This annual event seeks to further the WAA mission of Remember, Honor, Teach, ensuring that the memory of those who served our country endures.]

**WHEN:** Saturday, December 16, 2023  
Please specify times for wreath placement and ceremony if hosting both events.

**WHERE:** [Cemetery name and specific location of ceremony]  
[Address]

**WHO:** [Military dignitaries/officers]  
[Local dignitaries (e.g., state representative, governor, city councilors)]  
Veterans, active service members and families

**About Wreaths Across America**

Wreaths Across America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery begun by Maine businessman Morrill Worcester in 1992. The organization's mission – Remember, Honor, Teach – is carried out in part each year by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in December at Arlington, as well as at more than 3,700 veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and overseas.

**Volunteer Location Contact:**

[Coordinator name]  
[Cell phone]  
[Email address]

###



## Local Effort Underway to Support Wreaths Across America

Volunteers to host fundraising events to ensure that all veterans at [PARTICIPATING LOCATION] are honored this December

Columbia Falls, MAINE, and [City, STATE] – [DATE], 2023 – Local volunteers are working hard to ensure that all veterans laid to rest at [local cemetery] are honored this December on National Wreaths Across America Day. This year, the ceremony, held simultaneously across the country at more than 3,700 participating locations, will be on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023.

**The goal:** to place a live, balsam fir veteran’s wreath at the headstone of every servicemember buried there and ensure no one is forgotten.

Locally, volunteers will host various fundraisers to sponsor the [# of headstones] wreaths needed to honor every veteran at [cemetery]. [Each wreath sponsorship costs \$17, with \$5 going to the local sponsorship group for (nonprofit organization)] OR [For every two-wreath sponsorships sold, a third wreath will be provided to [cemetery] as part of a special sponsorship group program option available through the national program.]

[Bullet list of upcoming fundraising events: event, date and time.]

“Every donation and wreath sponsorship is a meaningful gift from a grateful American who knows what it means to serve and sacrifice for the freedoms we all enjoy,” said Karen Worcester, executive director of Wreaths Across America. “We are so grateful to the community of [town/city] for participating in our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach.”

[OPTIONAL: INSERT LOCAL FUNDRAISING STORY e.g., a local veterans’ group will be coordinating the fundraising event to raise money for both WAA and a new roof for its own facility.]

###

### About Wreaths Across America

Wreaths Across America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery begun by Maine businessman Morrill Worcester in 1992. The organization’s mission – Remember, Honor, Teach – is carried out in part each year by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in December at Arlington, as well as at thousands of veterans’ cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and beyond.

All Wreaths Across America Day events are, non-political/religious events, open to all people. For more information, to donate or to sign up to volunteer, please visit [www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org/YOURID](http://www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org/YOURID)



# BRANDING GUIDELINES AND MEDIA RESOURCES

The Wreaths Across America brand elements help strengthen our organization’s recognition across many channels of outreach and communication.

Our organization brand guidelines have been designed to be easy to access and follow, and allow for a high degree of creative freedom and flexibility – all while maintaining a basic brand consistency. Wreaths Across America deeply understands and exists to support the strong emotional connection, love for America and appreciation for our military personnel and veterans that drive the efforts of many of our volunteers. Our volunteers are the core of our organization, and we strive to be as supportive, accessible and helpful to them as we can.

## Logo

The Wreaths Across America master logo is our most iconic image and is very important to the WAA brand. The three wreathed gravestones above the logotype are inscribed with our mission to Remember, Honor, Teach. In one iconic image, our logo shows a quick visual of what our organization is all about.

The full-color master logo should be used whenever possible on WAA branded material. (Where color, space or proportional constraints make the use of the master logo impossible, other variations are discussed and available below.)

## Do’s and Don’ts

- DO:**
- Use the full-color master logo whenever possible
  - Sparingly use the logo variations – only use if required by design or production constraints
  - Use the centered horizontal version only when it can be centered in a layout, otherwise, use the horizontal version
- DO NOT:**
- Use the logo on top of a busy, multi-colored background that would make it difficult to read

## Media Policy

Wreaths Across America’s mission to Remember, Honor and Teach has been taken up by eager groups and individuals all through the country and beyond. We are humbled and grateful for the response we have received, and at the rate of growth we have experienced as we help accommodate people’s willingness to help.

At the same time, we have a responsibility to protect the principles and core values this organization was founded on, and we must ensure that our message is not distorted, corrupted or used in any way that could unintentionally hurt our ability to achieve our mission. Failing to do this could put all our work at risk. We must remember that above all, our work is about veterans, men and women in the armed forces, and military families. Our work is not about religion, a political party or agenda, or any group or affiliation.

Our goal is a consistent and positive message that helps educate the public about the importance of honoring the memories of all who sacrificed their time, their family, their health, and often their lives, to protect the freedoms we enjoy.

Our media policy, which relates to all board members, groups and location coordinators, is the following:

1. The executive director of Wreaths Across America is the official spokesperson of the organization.
2. The use of the Wreaths Across America™ name or likeness on any printed or electronic form of communication by anyone other than a registered group or location coordinator is prohibited.
3. Groups and location coordinators will use press release templates provided in this handbook. If WAA is mentioned in any other press releases, press kits, special articles, guest columns, etc., prepared in advance, they must be approved by WAA headquarters before they are distributed and/or published.
4. When working directly with the media (such as in interviews), groups and location leaders may speak OF Wreaths Across America, but not speak FOR it. Comments, quotes and other official information will be provided for you or the media by WAA if requested.

No board member, group or location coordinator may use the letterhead, logo or name of Wreaths Across America to give an implicit or explicit impression that they are employed by or officially represent Wreaths Across America. Board members may represent Wreaths Across America with permission from the executive director.

# STAY CONNECTED

## Social Media

Wreaths Across America is active on the following social channels and we encourage all of our volunteers to connect with us online to share photos, stories, fundraising ideas and more!

- Facebook: Our primary Facebook page can be found at [www.facebook.com/WAAHQ](http://www.facebook.com/WAAHQ). We share stories and information relevant to the organization and spreading our mission daily and regularly host contests for our audience members. Registered fundraising groups and locations also have closed Facebook groups managed by WAA staff members to provide a forum for sharing ideas and information.
- Instagram: Follow us at [@wreathscross](https://www.instagram.com/wreathscross) for and stories pictures from across the country and links to the newest merchandise!
- Twitter: Follow us [@WreathsAcross](https://twitter.com/WreathsAcross) for the latest WAA news and information in support of our mission.
- YouTube: Subscribe to our [WreathsAcrossAmerica](https://www.youtube.com/WreathsAcrossAmerica) channel for videos from past events, interviews and more.
- LinkedIn: Connect professionally with WAA by following our company page for organizational updates and information.

## Newsletters

Our monthly e-newsletter titled *Mission Matters* features stories about the people and groups across the country helping to share the mission to Remember, Honor and Teach in their own communities. To receive, sign up on our website. As a Location Coordinator or Sponsorship Group Leader you are also automatically added to the monthly *Location Connection* e-newsletter with great information to help you stay informed and have access to resources and ideas!

## Wreaths Across America Radio

Wreaths Across America Radio is a 24/7 Internet stream. Its unique format of informational and inspiring content about members of the U.S. armed forces, their families, military veterans, and volunteers throughout the country and overseas who support the mission to Remember, Honor, and Teach. Along with the informational and inspiring content Wreaths Across America Radio plays a variety of music with the roots firmly planted in patriotism with a country music thread running through the core of the stream. Wreaths Across America Radio has a live morning show every weekday morning from 6 am to 10 am eastern, along with a variety of special programs that support the mission.

You can listen anywhere at [www.wreathscrossamerica.org/radio](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/radio), or by using the iHeart Radio app, TuneIn or Audacy App, or download it at the App Store or Google!

All other inquiries should be directed to [info@wreathscrossamerica.org](mailto:info@wreathscrossamerica.org)

“WE ARE NOT HERE TO  
‘DECORATE GRAVES.’ WE ARE HERE  
TO REMEMBER NOT THEIR DEATHS,  
BUT THEIR LIVES.”

—KAREN WORCESTER,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA