

LOCATIONS & GROUPS

SPECIAL LOCATIONS PLANNING GUIDE

(Less than 5,000 Veterans)



WREATHS *across* AMERICA

2026

Planning Your Wreath-Laying Ceremony

"...THE MILITARY
PLEDGES TO LEAVE
NO SOLDIER
BEHIND. AS A
NATION, LET IT BE
OUR PLEDGE
THAT...WE LEAVE NO
VETERAN BEHIND."



WREATHS *across* AMERICA



At any location, a little planning ahead makes Wreath Day easier for everyone.

- ★ **Build Your Planning Team:** Identify a few dependable volunteers who can help with ceremony details, wreaths, volunteers, and day-of needs.
- ★ **Map Out Your Timeline:** Work backward from National Wreaths Across America Day and set simple deadlines for cemetery coordination, volunteers, ceremony details, and outreach.
- ★ **Stay Connected With Sponsorship Groups:** Keep supporting groups informed about wreath needs, volunteer opportunities, ceremony plans, and important deadlines.
- ★ **Engage Your Community:** Reach out to local veterans organizations, schools, businesses, civic groups, and others who may want to volunteer or support your event.
- ★ **Use Your WAA Page & Communication Tools:** Keep event information current and use Page Alerts and Dashboard Messaging to share updates with volunteers and supporters.



Section Planning & Wreath Staging



What Works for Locations with Less than 5,000 Veterans

- ★ **Choose one staging area:** Set up a central location where wreaths can be easily accessed without blocking traffic or the ceremony area.
- ★ **Coordinate with cemetery staff:** Confirm where wreaths can be staged and review any graves or areas on their Exceptions List.
- ★ **Keep Grave-Specific wreaths separate:** Clearly identify and protect them from general placement. Consider setting aside some extra general wreaths for shortages, missed graves, or last-minute needs.
- ★ **Plan how wreaths will be handed out:** Decide where volunteers will pick up wreaths and consider limiting how many each person takes at a time.
- ★ **Give families first access:** Allow those with loved ones interred at the location an opportunity to place their wreaths before general placement begins.
- ★ **Post placement instructions:** Make sure volunteers know how to properly place a wreath and any cemetery-specific rules.

One Question to Ask

Can a volunteer arrive, know where to get a wreath, and understand where and how it should be placed?

Wreath Delivery & Storage



What Works for Locations with Less than 5,000 Veterans

- ★ **Plan for a flexible delivery window:** Wreaths can arrive anytime in the 2 weeks before Wreath Day. Because WAA provides delivery at no cost, we work around our trucking partners' routes and schedules, which can shift due to weather, traffic, road closures, or emergencies.
- ★ **Have unloading help ready:** Identify a few volunteers who can be available when your wreaths arrive. Delivery drivers are not responsible for unloading.
- ★ **Count and verify everything:** Count boxes as they come off the truck, compare totals with the Bill of Lading, and report any discrepancy to your Regional Liaison Team.
- ★ **Know where you'll store them:** Arrange a dry, secure location ahead of time — your cemetery, a local business, fire station, VFW Post, or another community partner may be able to help.

One Question to Ask

Do you know who will unload your wreaths and where you'll safely store them until Wreath Day?

Wreath, Box & Pallet Information

Wreath Box Information

- **Box Size:** 16"W × 26"L × 32"H
- **Box Weight:** ~40 lbs.
- **Wreaths per Box:** 12
- **Boxes per Pallet:** 18
- **Wreaths per Pallet:** 216
- **Typical Full Truck:**
~5,400–6,400 wreaths



About the Wreaths

- **Size:** 22" diameter
- **Greens:** Fresh balsam fir from Maine
- **Frame:** 10.5" steel frame
- **Ribbon:** 7" wide × 14" long
- Each wreath is hand-crafted, making every one unique.
- *Some needle loss is normal due to the perishable nature of the wreaths.*

Volunteer Arrival, Traffic & Safety



What Works for Locations with Less than 5,000 Veterans

- ★ **Plan where everyone will go:** Identify where volunteers should enter, park, gather, and leave before Wreath Day.
- ★ **Check parking capacity:** Talk with cemetery staff about available parking and have a backup option if attendance is larger than expected.
- ★ **Keep people and vehicles separated:** Make sure volunteers can safely walk from parking to the ceremony and wreath placement areas.
- ★ **Plan for accessibility:** Identify convenient parking or drop-off options for elderly guests and those with mobility needs.
- ★ **Have someone help direct arrivals:** A few clearly identified volunteers at key areas can answer questions and keep things moving.
- ★ **Tell volunteers what to expect:** Share parking, arrival, ceremony, and placement instructions ahead of time through your WAA page and Dashboard messaging.

One Question to Ask

If more people show up than expected, will everyone know where to park, where to go, and how to move through the location safely?

Grave-Specific Requests



What Works for Locations with Less than 5,000 Veterans

- ★ **Organize requests after cutoff:** Download and sort your Grave-Specific list by family placements and volunteer placements.
- ★ **Clearly identify the graves:** Coordinate with cemetery staff on how you'll mark or identify graves so general volunteers know which ones to leave for families or assigned volunteers.
- ★ **Keep the wreaths separate:** Set Grave-Specific wreaths aside from general distribution and organize them so they're easy to pass out.
- ★ **Give families clear instructions:** Let families know when and where to pick up their wreath, where to park, and who to ask for help.
- ★ **Assign volunteer placements:** Identify trusted volunteers or Sponsorship Groups to place requests for families who cannot attend and check that none are missed.
- ★ **Close the loop:** When possible, take photos of volunteer-placed wreaths and provide them through the Grave Specific Report for families and sponsors.

One Question to Ask

Can you account for every Grave-Specific Request from the time the wreath arrives until you know it was placed on the correct grave?

Communication Plan



What Works for Locations with Less than 5,000 Veterans

- ★ **Share key details early:** Let volunteers know the date, time, address, parking, ceremony and placement timing, and what to expect.
- ★ **Use your WAA tools:** Keep your WAA page updated and use Page Alerts and Dashboard Messaging to reach sponsors, volunteers, and Sponsorship Groups.
- ★ **Keep your core team connected:** Make sure the people helping with wreaths, parking, the ceremony, and volunteers know the plan and who to contact with questions.
- ★ **Reach out personally when needed:** Connect directly with Grave-Specific families, Sponsorship Groups, cemetery staff, speakers, and community partners when they need specific information.
- ★ **Send a reminder closer to Wreath Day:** Reshare the most important details so volunteers don't have to hunt for an old message.
- ★ **Follow up afterward:** Thank volunteers and supporters, share photos, and communicate wreath retirement details.

One Question to Ask

If someone only read your messages, would they know when to arrive, where to go, and what to expect?

Ceremony Timing & Flow



What Works for Locations with Less than 5,000 Veterans

- ★ **Keep the ceremony focused:** Use the current WAA Ceremony Script from the [Volunteer Resource Page](#) as your foundation and keep the program moving.
- ★ **Plan the transition to placement:** Decide when wreath placement begins and clearly let volunteers know when and where to start.
- ★ **Make sure everyone can hear:** Choose a ceremony location where attendees can gather comfortably and use a sound system if needed.
- ★ **Think through seating & accessibility:** Have seating or convenient viewing available for veterans, Gold Star families, elderly guests, and others who may need it.
- ★ **Coordinate speakers early:** Confirm speakers, color guard, ceremonial wreath presenters, bugler, and special guests ahead of time.
- ★ **Have a weather plan:** Know how you'll shorten, move, or adjust the ceremony if conditions require it.

One Question to Ask

When the ceremony ends, will everyone know what happens next and where to go?



Cleanup & Wreath Retirement



What Works for Locations with Less than 5,000 Veterans

- ★ **Plan early with cemetery staff:** Confirm the wreath retirement date, access, cleanup expectations, and any cemetery-specific requirements.
- ★ **Recruit a cleanup crew:** Identify volunteers or Sponsorship Groups who can come back to help remove wreaths.
- ★ **Know where wreaths will go:** Arrange dumpsters, trailers, recycling, or other approved disposal options ahead of time. Ask for in-kind donations, and ensure they will assist with disposal once filled.
- ★ **Make removal efficient:** Set a meeting point and simple plan for working through the cemetery so wreaths aren't missed.
- ★ **Consider reuse or recycling:** Separate metal frames, greens, and bows when practical, and identify local recycling, composting, or repurposing options.
- ★ **Communicate the plan:** Share the date, time, supplies needed, and where volunteers should meet.

One Question to Ask

Do you know who will help remove the wreaths, when they'll do it, and where the wreaths will go afterward?

Final Planning Reminders



Tie It All Together

- ★ **Know who's helping with what:** A small team can wear multiple hats — just make sure wreaths, volunteers, ceremony, parking, communication, and cleanup are covered.
- ★ **Use the Wreath Day Logistics Template:** Customize it to fit your location and keep important tasks, deadlines, and responsibilities in one place.
- ★ **Ask your community for help:** Local businesses and organizations may be able to provide chairs, water, printing, signage, supplies, dumpsters, or other needs.
- ★ **Plan for photos & local media:** Identify someone who can capture the day, greet media if they attend, and help share your story afterward.
- ★ **Use WAA-approved resources:** Find templates, tutorials, press releases, order forms, and planning materials on the [Volunteer Resource Page](#).
- ★ **Thank your supporters:** Recognize the volunteers, Sponsorship Groups, businesses, cemetery staff, and community partners who helped make the day possible.

One Question to Ask

Are important parts of Wreath Day covered — and does everyone know the plan?

Veteran Grave Count vs. Sponsorship Goal



RESULTS

2026 SO FAR

2,727 Wreaths Sponsored

85.2% to Goal

473 To Go!

Veteran Grave Count = Your Shipping Maximum

- ★ WAA ships wreaths based on the **Veteran Grave Count** you provide.
- ★ This prevents more wreaths from being sent than your location can place.
- ★ Your Veteran Grave Count should reflect the number of veterans laid to rest at your location. If you need to receive more or less wreaths, contact your Regional Liaison Team to make special arrangements.

Sponsorship Goal = Your Fundraising Goal

- ★ Your Sponsorship Goal can be higher than your Veteran Grave Count. Once your location is fully covered, additional sponsored wreaths can still support the mission.
- ★ You can choose to credit extra wreaths to another participating location in need or carry them forward to the next year.

One Question to Ask

Are your Veteran Grave Count and Sponsorship Goal set intentionally — and does your team understand what each one controls?

Make the Most of Your WAA Location Page

Customize Your Location Page

- ★ **Banner Image:** Add a recognizable image of the cemetery or memorial.
- ★ **Logo:** Feature the cemetery's logo.
- ★ **Page Text:** Share ceremony details, volunteer instructions, parking information, or other location-specific notes.
- ★ **Sponsorship Goal:** Set the goal that feeds your public **Wreath-O-Meter** and shows supporters your progress.

Use Your Dashboard

- ★ **Run Reports:** Track sponsorship activity and progress throughout the year. Access the reports you need for planning and follow-up.
- ★ **Keep Supporters in the Loop:** Send re-order requests, thank-you messages, reminders, and volunteer information. Update registration ceremony details with specifics.
- ★ **Set Page Alerts:** Post important or time-sensitive notices on your location page.

One Question to Ask

Does your public page tell people what they need to know — and are you using your Dashboard tools to stay ahead of what's happening?

AZVOSC - VALLEY OF THE SUN MORTUARY & CEMETERY

Please help us Remember, Honor, and Teach on December 12, 2026 at 10:00 am (MST) (Wreath Placement Immediately Following Ceremony) by sponsoring a wreath, volunteering, or inviting friends to help.

RESULTS
2026 SO FAR
2,727 Wreaths Sponsored
85.2% to Goal
473 To Go!

REMEMBER the Fallen... HONOR those who Serve... TEACH our children the value of Freedom.

Welcome to the Valley of the Sun Mortuary & Cemetery's Wreaths Across America Page.

On December 12, 2026 at 10:00 am (MST) (Wreath Placement Immediately Following Ceremony), Wreaths Across America will be at Valley of the Sun Mortuary & Cemetery to Remember and Honor our veterans through the laying of Remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country's fallen heroes and the act of saying the name of each and every veteran aloud. Volunteers should arrive at 8am in preparation for the laying of veteran wreaths at 9am. The ceremony will start at 10am.

Please help our location lay wreaths at as many graves as possible by clicking the red "Sponsor" button. Or, if you would like to volunteer to participate in the wreath laying ceremony, please click the "Volunteer" button next to the cemetery name below, and don't forget to click the "Invite" button to invite your friends and family to join you.

Thank you so much for supporting Valley of the Sun Mortuary & Cemetery and Wreaths Across America!

Location Information

AZVOSC - Valley of the Sun Mortuary & Cemetery
10940 E Chandler Heights Rd
Chandler, AZ 85249, United States

Veteran Graves: 3,200
Coverage Goal: 3,200
Wreaths So Far: 2,726

Ceremony On: December 12, 2026 at 10:00 am (MST)
Wreath Placement: Immediately Following Ceremony
Location Coordinator: Mark Whitaker, Jessica Burke
Contact Location: [Phone Icon]

Directions to Cemetery

Parking Instructions

Final Preparations: Two Weeks Before Wreath Day



Final Checks

- ★ **Finalize Grave-Specific Requests:** Confirm the list, family instructions, and volunteer placements.
- ★ **Confirm your helpers:** Touch base with everyone helping with unloading, wreath distribution, parking, the ceremony, and cleanup so they know the plan.
- ★ **Recheck location logistics:** Confirm sound, seating, restrooms, parking, first aid, signage, equipment, and supplies. Print Proper Wreath Placement Instructions for volunteers.
- ★ **Watch for delivery updates:** Wreaths may arrive anytime during this 2-week window, so monitor email and keep your phone close.
- ★ **Confirm unloading & storage:** Make sure your volunteers and secure storage location are ready when the wreaths arrive.
- ★ **Update your public information:** Add a Page Alert or send messages if parking, timing, volunteer instructions, or other details have changed.

One Question to Ask

If Wreath Day were tomorrow, is there anything you would be scrambling to confirm?

Wreath Day & After



On National Wreaths Across America Day – December 19, 2026

- ★ **Arrive early:** Give yourself and your helpers enough time to confirm setup and handle any last-minute issues.
- ★ **Start on time:** Keep the ceremony and wreath placement schedule on track.
- ★ **Keep your helpers connected:** Make sure everyone helping knows the plan and who to go to if a question or issue comes up.
- ★ **Be ready for media:** Have someone available to greet reporters, provide press kits, answer basic questions, and help them find what they need.
- ★ **Document the day:** Capture photos, volunteer stories, community partnerships, and special moments you can share afterward.

After Wreath Day

- ★ **Thank your people & share next steps:** Follow up with volunteers, Sponsorship Groups, businesses, cemetery staff, and community partners—and include wreath retirement details.
- ★ **Share the impact:** Email event photos and stories to pr@wreathsacrossamerica.org or for radio features, email WAAradio@wreathsacrossamerica.org.
- ★ **Debrief while it's fresh:** Note what worked, what didn't, and what to change next year.

And then we do it all again! After the new year, your Regional Liaison Team will reach out to reinstate your location and start planning for another year.

Social Media Tips



Use social media to keep your community informed, build excitement, and invite more people into the mission.

- ★ **Share the need:** Use your Wreath-O-Meter to share sponsorship progress, volunteer needs, and how your community can help.
- ★ **Make Wreath Day easy to attend:** Share the date, time, parking, arrival, placement details, and last-minute updates.
- ★ **Show the mission in action:** Share photos and stories of local veterans, families, volunteers, Sponsorship Groups, and community partners.
- ★ **Tag and thank your community:** Recognize the businesses, schools, veterans organizations, and volunteers supporting your location.
- ★ **Keep posts simple and visual:** Focus each post on one clear message and give people an easy next step. The Monthly Messaging Guide is a great tool for this!
- ★ **Use approved WAA resources:** Start with WAA-provided graphics and templates, and follow approval guidelines for custom materials.

One Question to Ask

If someone saw just one of your posts, would they know how they could get involved?

Media Coordination & WAA PR Support



Local media can help introduce your location to the community, bring in new supporters, and share the stories behind the mission.

- ★ **Invite local media early:** Reach out to TV, radio, newspapers, and community outlets with your ceremony details and a local angle.
- ★ **Use WAA media resources:** Start with approved press release templates and talking points from the [Volunteer Resource Page](#).
- ★ **Have someone ready for media:** Identify a person who can greet reporters, answer questions, and connect them with people to interview.
- ★ **Share your local stories:** Veterans, Gold Star families, youth volunteers, Sponsorship Groups, and community partners can help bring the mission to life.
- ★ **Make it easy to cover:** Help media know when to arrive, where to go, and where they can safely capture photos or video.

Need Help?

Email pr@wreathsasscrossamerica.org for media questions, interview support, or local PR guidance.

One Question to Ask

What local story could help your community connect with the mission and want to get involved?



WREATHS *across* AMERICA

Regional Map

Region 1 Liaison Team

Emily Carney & Terra Delong

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Region 2 Liaison Team

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Region 4 Liaison Team

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Region 5 Liaison Team

Annie Brooks & Claire Gadomski

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Meet the WAA Locations & Groups Team!



Julie Bright
Director of Locations &
Groups



**Meagan
Erickson**
Assistant Director of



Terra Delong
Region 1 Liaison



Emily Carney
Region 1 Liaison



Miesa Bland
Region 2 Liaison



Janelle Eveld
Region 2 Liaison



Richelle Bergeson
Finance Liaison



Molly Nunley
Regional Liaison
Assistant



Ana Diaz
Region 3 Liaison



Macie Parker
Region 3 Liaison



Rikki Long
Region 4 Liaison



Ashley Gatewood
Region 4 Liaison



Annie Brooks
Region 5 Liaison



Claire Gadowski
Region 5 Liaison



THANK YOU!



WREATHS *across* AMERICA