

SWAT Social Media Training

Content: Best Practices, Creation & Sourcing

*Wreaths Across America location social media presences are vital to sharing the Wreaths Across America mission with as many followers and supporters as possible. It is important that these pages (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) have a consistent flow of accurate, engaging content. **Thank you for sharing the mission on social media!***

Content: Locations can use social media to communicate Wreaths Across America messaging and also share content that shows what makes your location, your mission and your local community special and unique. Messaging should consistently loop back to the Wreaths Across America mission to Remember, Honor and Teach.

Post ideas:

- Wreaths Across America dates, theme, events, countdown to Wreath Day.
 - “Save The Date!” “This year’s theme is Everyone Plays A Part!”
- Stories of veterans buried at your location.
- Stories of local fundraising groups, local partners and local volunteers.
- Photos from community events.
- Fundraising links: At least one post per week should link back to wreathscrossamerica.org or your respective fundraising page.
 - Utilize a call to action: “Join the mission!” “Support the mission today!” “It’s never too early to join the mission – sponsor a wreath today!”
- Holidays/observances: In addition to Memorial Day and Veterans Day, share wishes and stories around any military or national holiday/anniversary.
 - A good resource for military holidays is, <https://militarybenefits.info/military-calendar-holidays-events-observances/>
- News stories and articles: Google News is a great resource for finding relevant articles. Search “Veteran,” “military cemetery,” “gold star mother” etc.
 - Utilize quotes when searching for terms for a more accurate list of news.
 - Set up a Google Alert for your cemetery name.
- Quotes: About patriotism/service/military/volunteerism, etc. Best if posted as a graphic or along with photos.
- Check the monthly Mission Matters newsletter for relevant topics and ideas!

Writing Style

When composing social media content and posts, it is important that writing style is consistent with the Wreaths Across America brand identity: patriotic, positive, non-political, informative, supportive of our nation’s veterans, military and military families.

- Hashtags: Hashtags are primarily used on Instagram and Twitter, but can be a nice touch to a Facebook post as well. The purpose of hashtags is to link a post to others that cover similar topics or drive to a similar goal.
 - 2019 theme hashtag: #PlayAPart2019
 - General brand hashtags: #BeTheirWitness #JoinTheMission #RememberHonorTeach

Frequency

As a general rule of thumb, post as often as you have something valuable to say! That said, Facebook and other platforms will stop showing your page if you haven’t posted recently. At the same time, if you post too often and aren’t getting engagement on your posts you might lose ability to reach your community over time as well.

So, how often is best? We recommend posting between 3 and 10 times per week. Try and reshare a post or curate content from another source about every other day.

Content Calendars & Monthly Messaging Guide

Having a content calendar is a great way to stay accountable for sharing a consistent, relevant message with followers. A Microsoft Excel document, or, if sharing with multiple people, a Google Sheet, is a great tool for setting up a content calendar. A monthly messaging guide will be distributed to locations with general themes, holidays and ideas for the month from Sam Gatcomb. A content calendar is a suggestion but not a requirement. The messaging guide may suffice as a reminder for your location!

- **Planning content** – Try to plan content themes 1-2 weeks in advance. Check what holidays and observances are coming up and what themes Wreaths Across America will be covering (utilizing location communications contacts and newsletter as resources).
- **Staying relevant** – Check in with your content calendar a few times per week. Utilize the calendar for posting guidance, but don't be afraid to switch topics out if something more relevant arises (an announcement from Wreaths Across America, relevant news story, an event at your location, a sponsor shout out, etc.)

Graphics

Graphics are a nice tool to compliment social media posts and better catch follower attention. Graphics can be created using free tools, or repurposed from the Wreaths Across America Official page.


- **Style**
 - Font: Trajan Pro, Goudey Old Style and Allura are consistently used in graphics. Raleway is used as a secondary font.
 - Colors: Preferred color schemes are patriotic: red, white, blue, and utilize Wreaths Across America colors: green, red, black.
 - **Graphics are a nice place to have some fun and use your creativity. Please feel free to incorporate different fonts and colors, but use your best judgement in staying within the brand voice and personality. I.e. – lime green and hot pink are probably off limits!**
 - When in doubt, please view the Wreaths Across America brand standards
 - <https://company-24609.frontify.com/d/8X67kVj1gxiv/wreaths-across-america-style-guide>
- **Logos:** The Wreaths Across America logo should appear on most social media graphics. If the logo isn't working with a certain design, "Wreaths Across America" typed out may work, or wreathscrossamerica.org.
- **Size:** Square (800px x 800px) is the preferred size and shape for Instagram. Facebook posts can be more horizontal or vertical, but should remain close to square (not too elongated)


Tools:

- Canva: Graphic creation
- Adobe Spark: Photo collages, stories/photo combos
- Snapseed: Photo editing app for IOS and Android devices
 - Flickr: For general photos from WAA events that we have permission to use on social media. <https://www.flickr.com/gp/166234878@N03/Qif595>

Graphic Examples:

From the STEM of a
balsam tree in Maine
to the STONE of an
American hero laid to rest
we SAY THEIR
NAMES.



 WREATHS *across* AMERICA

ON THIS DATE IN HISTORY
The Battle of Iwo Jima begins.

February 19, 1945



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#PLAYAPART2019

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When you meet a
Vietnam veteran,
always say "thank
you and welcome
home," for they may
have never heard
those words before.



 WREATHS
across
AMERICA

**DEDICATE A LIVING
MEMORIAL FOR A VETERAN
WHO HAS PASSED.**

THE REMEMBRANCE TREE PROGRAM



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AN ACTUAL AERIAL SHOT OF THE WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA TIP LAND