

LOCATIONS & GROUPS

SPECIAL LOCATIONS PLANNING GUIDE

(Less than 5,000 Veterans)



WREATHS *across* AMERICA

2025

Planning Your Wreath-Laying Ceremony

For locations with fewer than 5,000 veterans, early planning is key to a successful event. Starting early ensures that the focus remains on creating a memorable event.

Plan it Out

- ❖ **Create a Task List:** Outline all the tasks and set check-in dates to track progress.
- ❖ **Build Your Volunteer Team:** Recruit a team and delegate tasks to ensure everything is handled.
- ❖ **Engage with Sponsorship Groups:** Keep in touch with your sponsors throughout the year. Encourage their participation on National Wreaths Across America Day and express your gratitude for their support.
- ❖ **Reach Out to Local Businesses:** Seek Corporate Sponsors for wreath sponsorships, grants, and in-kind donations like supplies and equipment.
- ❖ **Customize Your WAA Page:** Update your page with event details so your community knows exactly what to expect. Use Page Alerts to keep everyone informed.

Use Volunteer Resources

Access **Planning** materials & templates on our [Volunteer Resource Page](#)!



Key Tasks for the Wreath-Laying Ceremony

Grave Specific Requests: Organize requests, assign volunteers, and communicate with families to ensure proper wreath placement.

Ceremony Planning & Supplies: Plan ceremony details, including speakers, sound, music, and ceremonial wreath placement. Gather necessary donations such as chairs, sound system, refreshments, and waste receptacles.

Wreath Delivery & Distribution: Coordinate the delivery, unloading, and counting of boxes, collaborate with cemetery staff for section coverage, and manage wreath staging and distribution.

Event Logistics & Clean-Up: Handle seating, parking, traffic control, and volunteer coordination for smooth operations. Plan for post-event clean-up and wreath disposal/recycling.

HOW DO YOU PLAY A PART IN THE MISSION TO
REMEMBER, HONOR, TEACH?

 WREATHS *across* AMERICA

Ceremony Planning & Logistics

Coordinate the Logistics

Personalize the ceremony based on your location and community needs.

- **Location & Sound:** Ensure everyone can see and hear clearly. Use a sound system and provide seating for attendees unable to stand for long periods.
- **Speakers & Script:** Choose a non-controversial speaker early. Use the updated Ceremony Script from the [Volunteer Resource Page](#).

Other Considerations

1. **Event Support:** Contact USO/Red Cross for water and first aid trailers. Ask local businesses to donate port-o-potties, chairs, gloves, and safety vests.
2. **Printing & Supplies:** Reach out to local print companies for program/map donations. Ask floral shops or funeral homes for wreath stands or ask local woodworkers to create them.
3. **Media & Photography:** Invite local media and assign a volunteer to greet them with press kits. Arrange a photographer/videographer, and seek approval for drone use (at National Cemeteries, must get approval 45 days prior).
4. **Taps Bugler:** Submit requests for a Bugler via [Bugles Across America](#).
5. **Show Gratitude:** Publicly thank businesses or individuals who made significant contributions, and list them in the program.



Grave Specific Request Placement



Coordinate the Logistics

Remember this is very personal for families with loved ones laid to rest & it's important to accommodate their needs.

- **Marking Graves:** Request donations of surveyor or American flags from local hardware stores to mark graves and notify others to leave those for families.
- **Organize the List:** After your Regional Cutoff Date, download and sort the Grave Specific list by those placed by loved ones and by volunteers.
- **Family Instructions:** Plan when and where families should pick up their wreaths and communicate instructions via Dashboard Messaging and social media.

Other Considerations

1. **Volunteer Assistance:** Ask Sponsorship Groups to help with wreaths placed by volunteers, assign sections, and ensure clear instructions are provided.
2. **Extra Wreaths:** Keep extra wreaths in secure storage to handle any issues or missed placements and check the graves after the event to place any that were missed.
3. **Photos for Families:** If possible, take photos of wreaths placed by volunteers and send them to sponsors through the Grave Specific Report to show appreciation and encourage future sponsorships.

Wreath Delivery Logistics

Coordinate the Logistics

- **Delivery Schedule:** Your *free* wreath deliveries depend on donated trucking, and delivery can happen anytime in the 2 weeks before Wreath Day. Be ready to receive your delivery with potentially short notice—keep your phone nearby!
- **Volunteer Coordination:** Assign volunteers to handle unloading and securing the wreaths. Prepare a call list for quick assistance when the truck arrives.
- **Wreath Storage:** Arrange for secure storage of the wreaths. Consider National Guard Units, Fire Stations, VFW Posts, or off-site warehouses.
- **Counting & Confirmation:** Count all boxes at delivery, compare with your Bill of Lading, and contact your Regional Liaison Team if numbers don't match. Use a clicker counter for accuracy. Submit the Delivery Confirmation Form immediately after receiving and counting your wreaths.

Other Considerations

1. **Box Details:** Each box contains 12 wreaths (40 lbs per box, 16"W x 26"L x 32"H). There are 18 boxes per pallet, totaling 216 wreaths per pallet.
2. **Pallets & Unloading:** Some trucks may deliver palletized boxes, while others may not. Delivery drivers are not responsible for unloading, so be prepared to offload your own boxes.



Wreath Boxes

Wreath Box & Pallet Information

- ❖ **Box Size:** 16"W x 26"L x 32"H
- ❖ **Box Weight:** ~40 lbs
- ❖ **Wreaths per Box:** 12 wreaths
- ❖ **Boxes per Pallet:** 18 boxes
- ❖ **Wreaths per Pallet:** 216 wreaths (~865 lbs)

Pallet & Truck Details

- ❖ **Pallet Size:** 40"W x 48"L x 98"H
- ❖ **Pallets per 53' Truck:** 30 pallets
- ❖ **Boxes per Truck:** 540 boxes
- ❖ **Wreaths per Truck:** 6,480 wreaths (~38,060 lbs)
- ❖ **Note:** The number of wreaths per truck may vary based on truck type (refrigerated or dry) and size, typically averaging 5,400 to 6,400 wreaths.



Hand-Crafted Wreaths

Each wreath is hand-crafted, making every one unique. Some needle loss is normal due to the perishable nature of the wreaths.

Wreath Details

- ❖ **Frames:** Steel, coated to prevent residue; 10.5" diameter.
- ❖ **Greens:** Fresh balsam fir from Maine; attached with 7 gauge wire (.138").
- ❖ **Diameter:** Full 22" diameter.
- ❖ **Ribbon:** 7 inches wide by 14 inches long.

Traffic Control & Parking

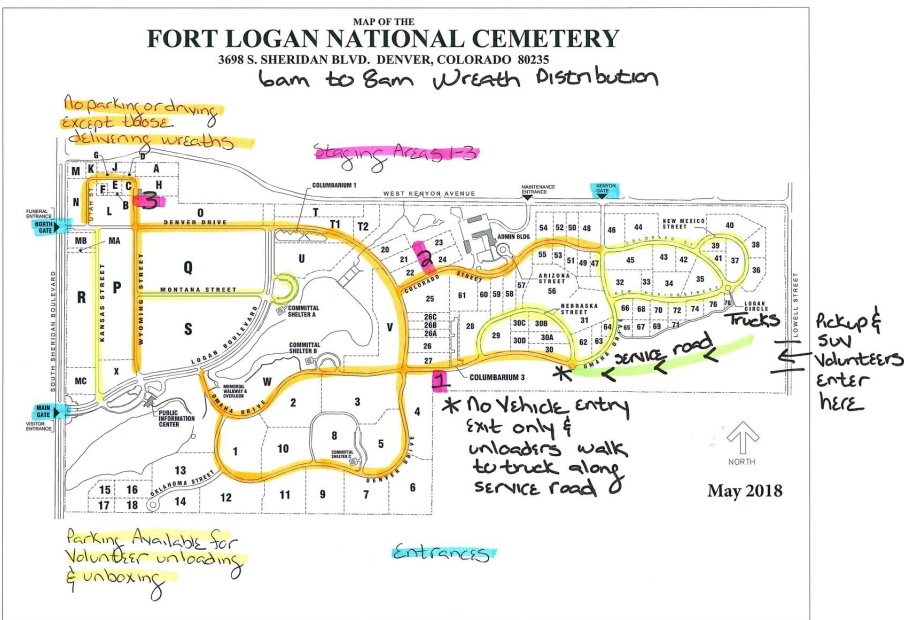


Coordinate the Logistics

- **Volunteer Team:** Assign a dedicated team to manage traffic control and parking logistics if needed.
- **Local Police:** Contact the local police department for traffic management advice. Consider having off-duty officers if needed and available.
- **Volunteer Traffic Directors:** Use volunteers to direct traffic in and around parking areas with reflective vests for safety.

Other Considerations

1. **Parking Availability:** Evaluate available parking and plan for additional space if needed. Use nearby locations like schools or businesses if necessary.
2. **Transportation:** Arrange for transportation options like shuttles if parking is off-site.
3. **Accessibility:** Ensure parking close to the ceremony location and consider shuttles or golf carts for visitors with disabilities or the elderly.
4. **Communication:** Inform visitors about parking and event details through your WAA location page, Dashboard Messages, Social Media, and Local Media.



Wreath Staging & Distribution

Staging the Wreaths

- **Volunteer Team:** Assign a dedicated team to manage wreath staging and distribution logistics.
- **Cemetery Staff Coordination:** Schedule a meeting with cemetery staff to plan wreath placement, rotating sections yearly and adhering to the cemetery's exceptions list.
- **Wreath Count & Placement:** Walk through sections to determine wreath needs and stage them with clearly posted Proper Wreath Placement Instructions.
- **Grave Specific Wreaths:** Set aside and communicate with sponsors about pickup details. For volunteer placements, organize by group and provide maps.
- **Buffer Stock:** Keep extra wreaths in a secure area for last-minute needs and to address any issues.

Passing out Wreaths

1. **Initial Access:** Allow those with loved ones interred to place wreaths first.
2. **General Distribution:** Limit distribution to 1-2 wreaths per person to minimize wait times. Ensure enough volunteers are available to manage the process.
3. **Youth Organizations:** If possible, involve local youth organizations to help with locating graves and provide them with cemetery maps.



Wreath Clean Up & Disposal

Coordination & Supplies

- ❖ **Volunteer Team:** Assign volunteers to manage box and wreath disposal logistics.
- ❖ **Secure Donations:** Contact local waste companies early in the year to request in-kind donations of dump trucks, dumpsters, and recycling bins. Ensure they provide assistance with disposal once filled.

Alternative Uses

- ❖ **Local Fisheries & Farmers:** Inquire if wreaths can be used for fish habitats or animal feed (goats particularly like wreaths).
- ❖ **American Legion:** Check if they can perform a Flag Retirement Ceremony with the wreaths. Post-burn, the metal rings can be recycled.



Disassembly & Recycling

- ❖ **Assembly Line:** Create a process for disassembling wreaths.
 - Recycle metal rings.
 - Use a chipper for greens to create mulch.
 - Donate bows to local retirement homes or schools for crafts.

Clean Up

- ❖ **Schedule:** Set a Wreath Clean Up Date with cemetery staff. Share details on Wreath Day and on Social Media to recruit volunteers.
- ❖ **Logistics:** Place dumpsters, trailers, or trucks throughout the cemetery. Use equipment like a backhoe to compress wreaths, allowing for more efficient disposal. Encourage volunteers to wear gloves and use broom sticks or ropes to transport wreaths easily.

Key Tips for Successful Event Planning

A living tradition for our fallen heroes.



WREATHS *across* AMERICA

#1 Tip for Success: Build a Strong Team

- ❖ **Delegate Sub-Committees:** Assign a “lead” volunteer for each who reports back to you with planning progress.
- ❖ **Define Tasks & Roles:** Use the Wreath Day Logistics Template from the Planning Section of the Volunteer Resource Page to define who does what.
 - **The template is fully customizable.**

Use Volunteer Resources

Access **WAA-approved** planning & marketing materials, press release templates, order forms, volunteer tutorials, and more on our [Volunteer Resource Page](#)!

- ❖ **Customizing Documents?** Email drafts to your Regional Liaison Team for approval before printing or sharing.
- ❖ **Using a QR Code?** Link it to your WAA group page for group plan credit or your WAA location page for event details.



Messages to Supporters & Community Outreach

Clear Communication is Key!

Use the Dashboard Tutorial on the [Volunteer Resource Page](#) to learn how to send messages and ensure strong community support.

Key Details to Communicate

- **Sponsor Call to Action:** Share your current wreath count and how many are still needed.
- **Volunteer Assignments:** Include duty instructions, timeline, map, and gratitude.
- **Grave Specific Placements:** Communicate when and where to pick up wreaths for loved ones.
- **Wreath Retirement:** Provide date, time, and details. Send thanks for support.



Community Outreach

- ❖ Send messages through the Dashboard to Sponsorship Groups, sponsors, & volunteers.
- ❖ Mail or email invitations to elected officials.

Important to Include

- ❖ **Address & Parking:** Clearly communicate parking and arrival details.
- ❖ **Time:** Specify ceremony start time, wreath placement start time, and Grave Specific details.
- ❖ **Additional Info:** Highlight featured speakers, wreath distribution, and refreshments.

Veteran Grave Count vs. Sponsorship Goal



RESULTS

2024 SO FAR

162 Wreaths Sponsored

8.1% to Goal

1,838 To Go!

Veteran Grave Count

- ❖ **Determines Wreath Shipment:** We ship wreaths based on the *Veteran Grave Count (Max to Ship)* that you provide.
- ❖ **Extra Wreaths:** We encourage you to consider donating extra sponsorships to another location in need. Contact your Regional Liaison Team to determine where wreaths are needed, or search for a location to support here: [Location and Group Search](#).
 - Alternatively, you can choose to have any extra wreaths credited to your location for next year.

Sponsorship Goal

- ❖ **Wreath-O-Meter:** Shows on your location page and turns green as wreaths are sponsored, motivating your community to help meet your goal.
- ❖ **Note:** The Sponsorship Goal does NOT determine the number of wreaths shipped to your location.



Make the Most of Your WAA Location Page

Optimize Your Dashboard

Use the WAA Dashboard to efficiently manage your location(s).

- ❖ Personalize your page with photos, alerts, and news updates.
- ❖ Communicate with supporters about sponsoring wreaths, upcoming events, and wreath day logistics.
- ❖ Access the Wreath Count Report to track total sponsorships.
- ❖ Manage Grave Specific Requests and volunteer registrations for wreath day.
- ❖ Send thank-you messages to your generous sponsors!
- ❖ **Learn How:** Use Volunteer Tutorials on the [Volunteer Resource Page](#) for Step-by-Step instructions.

Ways to Customize Your Page

- ❖ **Banner Image:** Add cemetery photo for a personalized touch.
- ❖ **Logo:** Feature the cemetery's logo.
- ❖ **Text:** Share wreath-laying ceremony plans and special details.
- ❖ **Live Wreath-O-Meter:** Track up-to-date wreath counts and encourage supporters to help reach your sponsorship goal.

ND0001P - BISMARCK COMPOSITE SQUADRON
CIVIL AIR PATROL

Please help us Remember, Honor, and Teach on Saturday, December 14, 2024 at 11:00 am at the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery.

SPONSOR WREATHS VOLUNTEER

RESULTS
2024 SO FAR
2,431 Wreaths Sponsored
29.1% to Goal
5,912 To Go!

REMEMBER the Fallen. . . HONOR those who Serve. . . TEACH our children the value of Freedom.
Welcome to the ND0001P - Bismarck Composite Squadron Civil Air Patrol's Wreaths Across America Page.
On December 14, 2024 at 11:00 am, ND0001P - Bismarck Composite Squadron Civil Air Patrol will be helping North Dakota Veterans Cemetery to Remember and Honor our veterans by laying Remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country's fallen heroes.
Please help us honor and remember as many fallen heroes as possible by sponsoring remembrance wreaths, volunteering on Wreaths Day, or inviting your family and friends to attend with you. There is no need to register to help. The ceremony and wreath placement are organized by the Bismarck Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol. Please visit our website at [nd020.cap.gov](#) for more location specific details.
Thank you so much for supporting the ND0001P - Bismarck Composite Squadron Civil Air Patrol and Wreaths Across America!

Final Preparations: Two Weeks Before Wreath Day

Two Weeks Before Wreath Day

- ❖ **Finalize Grave Specific List:** Ensure all wreath placement details are lined up and organized.
- ❖ **Check Your Inbox:** Watch for emails from your Regional Liaison Team with key updates and shipping information.
- ❖ **Respond Promptly:** Reply quickly to emails from your community to maintain clear communication.
- ❖ **Ceremonial Flags:** Confirm you have all your flags for the ceremony.
- ❖ **Location Logistics:** Confirm logistics (porta potties, sound system, trash/recycling, traffic control - if needed, etc.).
- ❖ **Volunteer Check-In:** Meet or touch base with “working” volunteers. Consider holding a “dress rehearsal.”
- ❖ **Wreath Delivery:** Be prepared to receive, unload, and store wreaths that will arrive within the two weeks leading up to Wreath Day.
- ❖ **Keep your phone close!** Your driver will call to coordinate delivery.
- ❖ **Ensure volunteers are ready to help unload boxes from the truck.**
- ❖ **Add a Page Alert:** Consider adding an alert to your WAA page for important updates!



Wreath Day (and After) Considerations

It's Wreath Day!

- ❖ **Arrive Early to Set Up**
 - Get to the location at least an hour ahead to ensure everything is ready for volunteers.
- ❖ **Start on Time**
 - Begin promptly to honor your guests' time and align with ceremonies nationwide. National start time is 12 PM EST.
- ❖ **Have Press Kits Ready**
 - Assign someone to direct journalists to the ceremony area and provide press kits.
- ❖ **Ceremony Timing**
 - The ceremony must be held on National Wreaths Across America Day unless prior permission is obtained from your Regional Liaison Team.



After Wreath Day

- ❖ **Recognize Outstanding Contributions**
 - Share stories of exceptional community efforts. Contact us to highlight their achievements.
- ❖ **Share Newsworthy Events**
 - Issue a press release using templates from the [Volunteer Resource Page](#).
- ❖ **Send Photos & Stories**
 - Email event photos and stories to pr@wreathsacrossamerica.org or for radio features, email WAAradio@wreathsacrossamerica.org.
- ❖ **Clean-Up Communication**
 - Coordinate with your location on clean-up times and rally community volunteers.
- ❖ **Stay Connected**
 - Your Regional Liaison Team will reach out after the new year to prepare for the next wreath year.

Social Media Tips

Maximizing Social Media for Engagement

- ❖ **Create a Facebook Page** for your WAA Location to encourage community involvement!
 - **DON'T** post about deaths, sickness, politics, or religion to avoid controversy.
 - **DO** share stories about heroes and community celebrations.
 - **DO** share “Thank You” messages to veterans.

Boost Fundraising with Social Media

- ❖ **Wreath-o-Meter:** Track your fundraising progress and share a direct link to your WAA page for sponsorships.
- ❖ **Facebook Fundraiser:** Hold fundraisers for birthdays or events. Use the Facebook Notification Form to ensure credit for your group and location.
- ❖ **Share WAA Graphics:** Use the Monthly Messaging Guide with WAA-branded graphics from the [Volunteer Resource Page](#) under “Marketing Materials for Social Media.”



A MISSION THAT BRINGS AMERICANS FROM ALL
WALKS OF LIFE TOGETHER FOR ONE PURPOSE:
TO REMEMBER, HONOR AND TEACH.



WREATHS *across* AMERICA

Media Coordination & WAA PR Contacts

Engaging with Local Media

- ❖ **Year-Round Engagement:** Build relationships with media outlets throughout the year. Mark significant dates relevant to your audience, media, and WAA.
- ❖ **Spotlight Opportunities:** Track national news about veterans and military families to find relevant media opportunities (avoid political stories). Share information on achievements, announcements, and special events.

Media Materials & Resources

- ❖ **Use WAA Templates:** Create and send media advisories, press releases, and Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for TV and radio using WAA-provided templates.
- ❖ **Media Channels:** Inform local media and the public about fundraising events. Regularly share engaging content on WAA's social media platforms, Wreaths Across America Radio, website, and Newsroom blog.
- ❖ **WAA Volunteer Resource Page:** Use [this page](#) for social media assets, event planning materials, and templates for engaging with local news media.
- ❖ **WAA Newsroom:** Stay updated with WAA's latest stories and announcements [here](#).



WAA PR Team Contacts

- ❖ **Director of Communications:**
Amber Caron
pr@wreathsacrossamerica.org
- ❖ **Director of Broadcast and Media Partnerships:**
Jeff Pierce
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- ❖ **Public Relations Coordinator:**
Rachael Wilson
pr@wreathsacrossamerica.org
- ❖ **Social Media Coordinator - Locations & Groups:**
Samantha Clark
social@wreathsacrossamerica.org

Stay Connected

Connect with us online to share photos, stories, fundraising ideas, and more!

❖ **Wreaths Across America Address**

Headquarters: 4 Point Street Columbia Falls, ME 04623

Mailing: PO BOX 249 Columbia Falls, ME 04623

❖ **Private Facebook Groups**

Location Coordinators: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/waalocations>

Sponsorship Groups: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/waafundraising>

❖ **Social Media**

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WAAHQ>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/wreathsasscross/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/WreathsAcross>

TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@wreathsasscross>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/wreaths-across-america/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/WreathsAcrossAmerica>

❖ **Videos to Learn More**

Volunteer Tutorials YouTube Channel:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmtqFciFVoxyWTH87EQNH-LJrbf_ewdzd

WAA History & Meaning:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Dy6PE37g2k&t=81s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-EW6aVAs>





WREATHS *across* AMERICA

Regional Map

Region 1 Liaison Team

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Region 2 Liaison Team

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Region 5 Liaison Team

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Meet the WAA Locations & Groups Team!



Julie Bright
Director of Locations & Groups



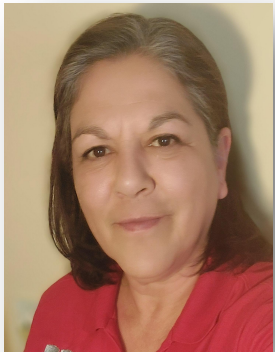
Meagan Erickson
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THANK YOU!



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