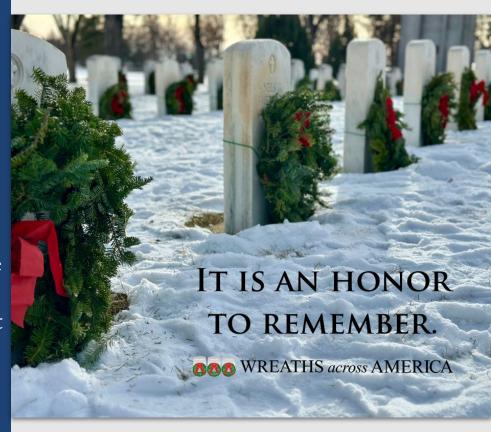


Let's Get Ready for Wreath Day

Exciting new updates are live in your Dashboard!

We've designed these updates with you in mind — to make your volunteer role smoother, save you time, and give you simple tools to connect with sponsors, engage volunteers, and grow the WAA mission right in your community.

Log in today: manage.wreathsacrossamerica.org



Boost Local Support with NEW Dashboard Messaging Tools



Highlighted Messages

Activate pre-scheduled emails in just a click! Select a message marked "Paused" to schedule or edit before sending — easy and time-saving.

Send Thank You Messages

Quickly thank sponsors for their support to strengthen relationships and show appreciation.

Send Reorder Requests

Reconnect with last year's sponsors! Encourage them to renew their support for this year's wreath sponsorships.

Send General Messages

Share mission updates, local stories, and event reminders with sponsors and volunteers to keep your community engaged year-round.

Draw More Support by Customizing Your WAA Page





RESULTS 2024 SO FAR 1,785 Wreaths Sponsored 89.2% to Goal 215 To Go! REMEMBER the Fallen... HONOR those who Serve... TEACH our children the value of Freedom

Welcome to the CT0079P - John Maciolek Auxiliary, Unit 154, Enfield, CT's Wreaths Across America Page.

December 14, 2024 at 12:00 pm (Wreath Placement Immediately Following Ceremony), CT0079P

- John Maciotek, Stylliary, Unit 154, Enfield, CT will be helping St. Patrick's Cemetery - 1558 King St
to Remember and Honor out

Please help us honor and remember as many fallen heroes as possible suponsoring remembrance wreaths, volunteering on Wreaths Day, or inviting the ramily and friends to attend with you.

Important information

Chairs will not be provided. You are welcome to bring your own seat.

A pre-arranged reserved wreath table will be set-up. Follow the signs to the table. Reserved wreaths are made available for you to place on a loved ones final resting place within St Patrick's Cemetery. Reserved wreaths are available for pick-up between 10:00am-11:00am. This is prior to the ceremony. If

Every registered Sponsorship Group and Location receives a dedicated Wreaths Across America page, which can be customized to highlight your efforts while easily accepting online donations.

Here are some customization options:

- **Banner Image**: Include a photo of your local cemetery or group placing wreaths.
- **Logo**: Upload a logo to showcase your organization.
- **Text**: Edit all text to share upcoming wreath-laying ceremony details, fundraising events, and to highlight how you're sharing the WAA mission locally.

Additionally, the live wreath-o-meter displays up-to-date wreath counts, encouraging supporters to help you reach your goal!

Your Customized WAA Resources



Every registered Sponsorship Group or Location receives customized resources to assist with their local fundraising. These resources include:

- **Custom QR Code**: Links directly to your WAA page for easy online sponsorships.
- Order Form: Tailored for your Sponsorship Group and/or Location.
- Tally Sheet: Designed for submitting multiple sponsorships at a time.
- **WAA Day Poster**: Customized for your Sponsorship Group and/or Location.

Print the WAA Day Poster as a flyer to distribute at fundraising events. You can add the Order Form to the back of the flyer, making it convenient for supporters to sponsor wreaths either online or by mail.

Boost Your Fundraising with New Ideas!



Fundraising Idea Guide

Supporting the Year-long Mission to Remember, Honor and Teach

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The **Fundraising Idea Guide** is packed with resources to make your fundraising efforts more effective and successful.

Here's what you'll find:

- **Getting Started** − Learn the basics of fundraising and how to set achievable goals for your community.
- **Key Dates & Timeline** Plan ahead with a step-by-step timeline tailored to each season—Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter.
- **▽ Community Outreach** Discover the best ways to connect with local businesses, schools, and organizations, whose support is key to your success!
- Effective Communication Tips Best practices to engage and inspire your supporters.
- **? FAQs** Answers to common fundraising questions.
- Creative Fundraising Ideas Dozens of unique ways to increase wreath sponsorships, including how it works, how to cover the cost, plus examples and templates.

Unlock the full potential of your fundraising efforts—download the NEW Fundraising Idea Guide today!

Use Social Media for Quick Fundraising

Maximizing Social Media for Engagement

- Create a Facebook Page for your WAA Location or Sponsorship Group 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 <u>Volunteer Resource Page</u> 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.

ODD WREATHS aeross AMERICA

Countdown to National Wreaths Across America Day!

WREATHS across AMERICA 2025 NEW CUTOFF DATES

REGION 1
DECEMBER 1ST
AT 11:59PM EST



REGION 2
DECEMBER 1ST
AT 11:59PM EST



REGION 3 November 28th at 11:59pm EST



REGION 4 November 28th at 11:59pm EST



REGION 5
DECEMBER 1ST
AT 11:59PM EST







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 <u>Volunteer Resource Page!</u>



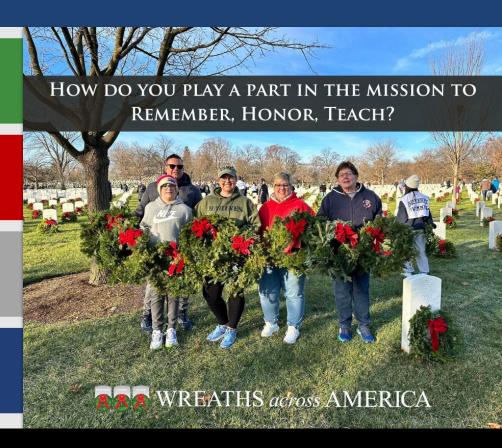
Key Tasks for the Wreath-Laying Ceremony

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.



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.

- I. **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 <u>Bugles Across America</u>.
- 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.

- I. 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.
- 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.

- I. **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

Sox Weight: ~40 lbs

Wreaths per Box: 12 wreaths

Boxes per Pallet: 18 boxes

♦ Wreaths per Pallet: 216 wreaths (~865 lbs)

Pallet & Truck Details

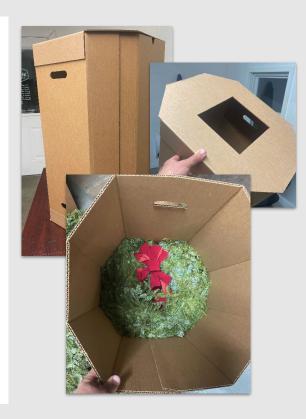
• **Pallet Size:** 40"W x 48"L x 98"H

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

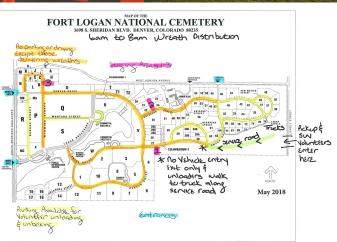
Each wreath is hand-crafted, making every one unique. Some needle loss is normal due to the perishable nature of the wreaths.

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.

- . **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.
- 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

- I. 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



#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 <u>Volunteer Resource Page</u>!

- 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!

The updated messaging features make it easier than ever to stay in touch!

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: <u>Location and Group Search</u>.
 - 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.

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.



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.or g.

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.

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 <u>this page</u> 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
 waaradio@wreathsacrossamerica.or
 g
- Public Relations Coordinator: Rachael Wilson
 pr@wreathsacrossamerica.org
- Social Media Coordinator Locations & Groups:
 Samantha Clark
 social@wreathsacrossamerica.org

Meet your WAA Locations & Groups Team!



Julie Bright Director of Locations & Groups



Meagan Erickson **Asst. Director of Locations & Groups**





Region 1 Liaison Team Terra Delong & Emily Carney 207-578-6277 region1@wreathsacrossamerica.org



Region 4 Liaison Team 207-578-6284



Region 2 Liaison Team Miesa Bland & Janelle Eveld 207-578-6283 region2@wreathsacrossamerica.org



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Richelle Bergeson Finance Liaison



Region 3 Liaison Team Ana Diaz & Macie Parker 207-578-6287 region3@wreathsacrossamerica.org



Amber Rocha & Patricia Huerta region4@wreathsacrossamerica.org



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