



CIVIL AIR PATROL

Quick Start Pamphlet

For

Unit Participation in

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA™

Fundraising and Wreath Laying Programs

2015 Version



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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in participating in the Wreaths Across America™ (WAA) program. Whether you are interested in fundraising for your squadron or simply attending a wreath laying ceremony, we sincerely appreciate your support in honoring the sacrifice of those military members who served or are currently serving and the memory of those who paid the ultimate price for our freedom.

The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) partnership with Wreaths Across America™ is expanding in strength and scope each year. Like WAA, we take pride in honoring those who have served our country. CAP members help lead the way by selling wreath sponsorships and coordinating wreath laying ceremonies at locations throughout the United States and across the world. We provide honor and color guards for the ceremonies as well as thousands of volunteers to help lay wreaths. CAP is WAA's largest sponsor, and with your help, the program and partnership will continue to grow and thrive.

In this guide, you will find the resources you need to participate fully in and take advantage of the Wreaths Across America™ program. Many of the pages here come directly from the *Wreaths Across America™ Reference Guide for Location Coordinators and Fundraising Groups*, but other parts are specifically directed to Civil Air Patrol members and our administration of the program. Please take a moment to read through this guide and consider joining with the many other squadrons throughout the nation who are dedicated to furthering this amazing endeavor.

If you have any questions about this pamphlet or CAP-related questions about implementing the Wreaths Across America™ program in your unit, feel free to contact Colonel William S. “Ziggy” Bernfeld, National Wreaths Across America Coordinator, at colonelzig@gmail.com

Wreaths Across America™ History

The Wreaths Across America™ Mission Statement

Remember the fallen.

Honor those who serve.

Teach our children the value of freedom.

Wreaths Across America™ was born in 1992 out of a desire to remember and honor American service members for their contributions in preserving our freedom. Morrill Worcester and the Worcester Wreath Company of Harrington, ME had the vision for this project and placed the first wreaths. It has since become an annual tradition to lay wreaths at the grave markers of our fallen veterans during December as a way to express our appreciation and to pay tribute for the sacrifices made for our country by our service men and women.

Wreaths Across America™ maintains no political or religious agenda, but rather a mission to remember and honor our veterans during the month of December. At time of traditional family get-togethers, this event provides a great learning opportunity to teach our children of the many sacrifices made by our military men and women.

Wreaths Across America™ is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization founded in 2007 as a continuation of the Arlington Wreath Project. WAA ceremonies are held at over 900 locations in the United States and many locations overseas. There is no charge to hold or attend WAA ceremonies.

WAA could not carry out its mission without the help of volunteers, location coordinators, sponsors, fundraisers and the generous donations of trucking companies. We extend a special thanks to all involved.

What Is This All About, and How Does It work?

Donated wreaths are placed at locations throughout the United States and selected overseas locations to honor our veterans. Wreaths Across America™ works with people and businesses in our communities to donate the wreaths for these locations. It is just that simple.

The area where the wreaths are placed is called a location and in this document on pages 8 and 9 we explain the types of locations, what location coordinators do, and how to register a location. Pages 10 and 11 will answer frequently asked questions about locations. There are over 900 current locations where wreaths are placed, and you may *choose one of these locations* to put your donated wreaths or *add a new location*.

After you have chosen either an existing location or decided to start a new one to place the donated wreaths, the next step is working with the people and businesses in your community to donate wreaths for this event. Wreaths Across America™ wreath sponsorships sell at \$15 each. The funds are collected by the participating groups and sent to the WAA home office located in Columbia Falls, ME. Of the \$15.00 donated for each wreath, \$5.00 is returned to the fundraising organization. If you are not interested in raising money for your unit and just want to have wreaths for your location, then you can choose the “3 for 2” option. For every two \$15.00 wreath sponsorships, 3 wreaths will be sent to the participating location of choice. With this option, no funds are returned to your group.

On page 12 we explain the fundraising and wreath donation program. Pages 13 and 14 contain ideas and a checklist that can be used by your unit to lay out a plan for getting donations for wreaths. Page 15 contains the information you need to report your sales and income to your wing so it can be recorded with the rest of the CAP WAA fundraising data.

After selecting locations and fundraising comes the actual ceremony, so pages 21-26 contain instructions on uniform of the day, cemetery etiquette, and some other basic wreath laying tips. There is also a sample script to assist location coordinators and other officials with a wreath laying ceremony.

Finally, if you have any questions about locations or fundraising, the WAA Corporate Office contact list is located on page 29.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why do we use live wreaths to decorate graves?

A. Wreaths Across America™ feels strongly that we do not "decorate" graves. We are honoring all veterans and active military by placing wreaths on the graves of veterans. The fresh evergreens are a symbol used for centuries to recognize honor, and a living tribute renewed annually. To use plastic wreaths that are put in storage each year is exactly the kind of tradition we want to avoid - it makes for great photos but misses the point. People who spend time participating each year, raising sponsorships and talking about how important this symbolic gesture is, keep our mission strong. We want people to see the tradition as a living memorial to veterans and their families - whom we remember amid the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. We believe that the sacrifices made are more than worth the effort.

Q. How do I get involved with WAA, and what activities can I do to help?

A. There are a number of ways for volunteers to get involved. Here is a short list of events coordinated each year. Please keep in mind there is NO COST to attend or participate in a Wreaths Across America™ event.

- Wreaths Across America™ Day – Saturday, December 12, 2015
- Escort of Wreaths to Arlington (or any of the other locations featuring wreath escorts)
- State House Ceremony - in all 50 states and at the Capitol in Washington, DC
- 'Thanks-A-Million' handout card program to thank our veterans and active military

More details on these events are included in this handbook.

Q. Why do we spend money on the fallen when living veterans have so many needs?

A. This is a good question and we know when we are asked that people's hearts are in the right place to reach out to our veterans in their time of need. We have found throughout experience over the years, that the wreath laying tradition is NOT only for the fallen and those who have passed on, but for living veterans, our active military, and for their families - all of whom have sacrificed to provide for our freedoms. If you ask a Gold Star Mother about the loss of her son or daughter, their biggest fear is their memory will be forgotten. That is why we believe it is so important to take the time amid the hustle and bustle of the holidays, to stop and remember our blessings that have come at such a great cost.

We recognize that there are a lot of needs out there, and one of those needs is that we stop and take the time in a symbolic way to show our appreciation to those families for our freedoms.

Novelist Mary Ann Evans, whose pen name was George Eliot, said: "Our dead are never dead to us, until we have forgotten them." We have made it our mission to Remember, Honor, and Teach those memories.

Q. What service does Wreaths Across America offer my location besides wreaths?

A. Wreaths Across America™ maintains a headquarters that facilitates and coordinates all wreath sponsorships and their delivery. We maintain a web site that handles on-line sponsorships that are credited to the appropriate fundraising group, and sent to the designated location.

- Wreaths Across America™ is trademarked, nationally recognized name. We offer local groups the ability to raise funds as part of a national effort, making it easier to generate funds for sponsorships, and offering the option of sharing in the funds raised.
- Ceremonial wreaths are donated by Worcester Wreath Company. Sponsored memorial wreaths are guaranteed for quality and delivery.
- All sanctioned Wreaths Across America™ events are insured for general liability through Wreaths Across America™.
- All educational materials and other downloads are made available at no cost.
- In event of a special ceremony or funeral Wreaths Across America™ accepts requests for donated wreaths.

Q. How can I get a wreath for my loved one who is not buried in a participating cemetery?

A. Wreaths Across America™ offers wreaths delivered to homes as third party gifts or ordered to be sent to your own home. We are also working on a program for wreaths to be delivered to living veterans in the community. Please watch the website merchandise pages and you will see that information when it comes up. From time to time WAA has special offers like the Memorial Wreath as well, so it is best to check the merchandise page often.

Q. Can our group raise funds and buy wreaths locally using the Wreaths Across America™ name?

A. Wreaths Across America™ is a trademarked name. In order to protect our mission, our tax exempt status, and our trademark, all activities planned and funds raised using our name must be processed through our headquarters. If you have questions please contact the WAA office.

What is a Location and Why Do I Need One?

Locations are places where the donated wreaths are placed. There are two types: ceremonial only and ceremonial also placing sponsorship wreaths.

Locations can be any of the following:

- National or State Veterans Cemetery
- Community Cemetery
- Monument
- Park or Memorial
- School
- Special Request Location (Church, Community Hall, etc.)
- Locations can be ceremonial only or ceremonial also placing sponsorship wreaths.

All ceremonies are scheduled to take place on Saturday, December 12, 2015 at 12 PM EST.

- “Ceremonial Only” locations receive seven (7) wreaths donated from the Worcester Wreath Company in Harrington, ME. Each wreath represents a branch of the service plus a wreath representing all prisoners of war/missing in action (POW/MIA). Each wreath is decorated with a red bow, American flag and a corresponding service flag to represent each branch.
- Ceremonial Only locations are generally monuments or parks that do not have interments or spaces large enough to also place sponsorship wreaths.

When you register your location, you must state whether you will only be placing the 7 ceremonial wreaths or whether you will also be placing sponsorship wreaths. Ceremonial locations also placing sponsorship wreaths also receive the 7 ceremonial wreaths.

If your location is registered as a ceremonial only and does have individual interments and you wish to have wreath sponsorships, please call the WAA office toll free at 877-385-9504 or 207-470-0967.

How Do I Register a Location?

You can look to see which locations are registered on WAA's [Support a Local Fundraising Group](#) page.

If your desired location is not registered, you can register a location online on WAA's [Add A Location](#) page. Your questions can be answered by calling toll free at 877-385-9504 or 207-470-0967. All locations that are registered with the WAA office receive the 7 ceremonial wreaths compliments of Worcester Wreath Company, Harrington, ME. Location coordinators are listed on the WAA website on the location page, with contact information so that fundraising groups can contact them to coordinate the wreath ceremony.

What is a Location Coordinator?

Here are the duties of the Wreaths Across America™ volunteer Location Coordinator:

- WAA Location coordinators are the organizers of the locations where the wreaths are placed. A location coordinator organizes and conducts the December ceremony at that location and possibly at locations elsewhere in the community.
- Location coordinators coordinates the wreath laying and reaches out to involve members of the community with the WAA experience. The inclusion of schools, veteran's organizations and other civic groups is encouraged.
- Location coordinators accept delivery of the wreaths. You must provide WAA with an address that is accessible by 18-wheeler as this is how most wreaths are delivered.
- Location coordinators must acknowledge that ceremonies are non-political and all inclusive. A ceremony outline is provided in this pamphlet.
- Location coordinators are responsible for working with the cemetery and volunteers to set up clean up and removal of the wreaths after an appropriate period of time.
- If a location coordinator is not able to coordinate the laying of the wreaths on individual graves then the location coordinator will need to coordinate with fundraising groups to ensure that grave-specific requested wreaths are placed appropriately.

Location FAQ'S

Q. Who should I invite to a ceremony?

A. As location coordinator it is important to involve as many people in your community as possible. You should get in touch with local veterans organizations and seek suggestions. There are some organizations that include fly overs, processions with Patriot Guard Riders, color guards, etc. Please reach out to schools and other organizations in your community. You can make the ceremony as large as you wish. All we ask is that your ceremony be open to everyone and remain non-political.

Q. Why are the ceremonies held at 12 PM EST?

A. The reason the ceremonies are held at this time is to coincide with the laying of the wreaths at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery. This tradition dates back to 1992. The placement of the sponsorship wreaths can either take place prior to or following the ceremony, but the laying of the ceremonial wreaths takes place at 12 PM EST to coincide with the ceremony at Arlington. One thing that makes the Wreaths Across America ceremony special is that we have roughly 900 ceremonies taking place nationally and overseas that hold a moment of silence all at the same time. Bringing everyone together during one of the busiest times of year to take that moment of silence to appreciate the freedoms we enjoy is one of the things that make this a very unique and powerful program.

Q. Are the ceremonies limited to national and state cemeteries or can I sign up my local cemetery for participation?

A. Wreaths Across America™ ceremonies can be held anywhere you would like to have a display of wreaths to honor veterans. We have participating monuments, parks, national and state cemeteries, community cemeteries and schools. Worcester Wreath Company provides the 7 ceremonial wreaths for those who are having ceremonies. We will work with any community to honor their community's veterans in whatever way they see fit and we are open to new ideas. 2009 was the first year we held a ceremony at sea.

Q. What are the ceremonial wreaths and how much do they cost?

A. Ceremonial wreaths are donated to anyone who registers to host a ceremony and are donated by the Worcester Wreath Company in Harrington ME. The ceremonial wreaths represent each branch of the military service including the POW/MIA. Each wreath is decorated

with a red bow, an American flag and a service flag to represent a branch of service (one wreath per branch).

Q. Is there a prewritten ceremony or guideline?

A. Wreaths Across America™ has included a sample ceremony in this handbook. This is simply a guideline and we ask that you make it fit your location for your ceremony. We only require that your ceremony remain open to all, and non-political and non-denominational.

Q. What if I want to give an award to someone in my community in recognition of their help with the WAA project?

A. If you contact the WAA office we will be happy to help you recognize those who have made a special effort with your local project. Please share your stories with us.

Wreaths Across America (WAA)[™] Fundraising Program

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.

We are seeking groups who would like to help us remember and honor veterans laid to rest all over the country by raising funds to sponsor wreaths. We will return \$5 of every \$15 wreath sponsorship you raise to support your organization and its ongoing work. If your group wishes to only sponsor wreaths and not receive any money back we have a “3 for 2 program” that is a perfect fit.

- Select a cemetery you will raise funds for. It could be Arlington National Cemetery, or a cemetery in your state or local community. A list of participating locations, along with ID numbers, can be found on our web site.
- You must register with WAA office, AND complete a Group Fundraising Agreement Form before you begin fundraising. You can register your squadron online with the WAA [2015 Fundraising Group Registration Form](#).
- You will be assigned a group ID number. It is important to include this information on all donations remitted to us along with the participating location ID number you are sponsoring.
- You will need a group leader. The group leader is responsible for passing along all information and communications from WAA to the rest of the fundraising group, for being the main point of contact for WAA, and for ensuring remittances are made at least every two weeks.
- Read the WAA Reference Guide to get ideas on how to raise funds.
- Wreaths Across America[™] wreath sponsorships are \$15 per wreath.
- Funds are collected by each participating group. \$5 of each \$15 will be returned to the registered fundraising group on our 2 week reimbursement cycle.

Fundraising Checklist

These are guidelines to help you reach your goals.

Please check as you complete

- Register as a fundraising group online.
- Download sponsorship forms from the welcome email you receive after registering. *Remember to fill in your group number and designated location to get credit for your sponsorships!*
- Schedule a meeting with your unit to explain the program and set a goal for the group and individuals. For example:
 - Instruct each of your members to make list of family & friends for single (1 wreath) and family sponsorships (4 wreaths).
 - Research a list of local businesses (banks, stores, contractors, restaurants, funeral homes, insurance and real estate agencies, etc).
 - Divide up 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 total funds and tally sheet (downloadable online). Within 10 business days, a check for the fundraising portion will be remitted. For example:
 - 20 group members x 20 sponsorships each = 400 sponsorships
 - 400 sponsorships x \$5 per sponsorship = \$2000.00
 - *Think of all your group could do with an extra \$2000.00!*
- Invite all your members (and sponsors!) to participate in the annual wreath laying event in your area on Saturday, December 12, 2015.
- Submit a report of your total wreath sponsorships and total income from WAA to your wing no later than December 31, 2015.

Fundraising Ideas

Every wreath counts – In the past, a number of groups have found great success with setting up a sponsorship table at local WalMart, grocery stores, or other high traffic box stores (Note: There is an example letter for WalMart contained on page 29.). Local festivals and events also provide an opportunity to inform the public about our mission, and share wreath sponsorship information.

Every dollar counts – Not everyone will be in a position to do a full wreath sponsorship. You can use a donation bucket or even a combat boot to collect dollars and change as people come and go in high traffic areas.

Every penny counts – There have been several classrooms that conducted 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 who are involved – even in the smallest ways helps achieve the mission.

What A Difference A Day Makes- We are seeking groups and individuals who would like to participate in our 2015 campaign to cover Arlington National Cemetery called “What A Difference A Day Makes” in combination with our “Thanks A Million” Campaign.

Helping is as easy as 1 – 2 – 3:

- 1) Contact Wreaths Across America™ for more information and or sign up as a “What A Difference A Day Makes” participant: visit our website and click on the “Act Now” section on our home page. You will be provided with a kit to get you started once you have registered.
- 2) Hand out the FREE Military Thank You Cards to veterans and active duty personnel during your “What A Difference A Day Makes” scheduled event (and all year long, seize the moment to show your appreciation by simply saying “Thank You”).
- 3) Collect donations at your scheduled event and turn them in to Wreaths Across America™ to help sponsor wreaths for Arlington National Cemetery or one of your state’s participating locations.

CAP Wreath Sales Reporting Form

If your squadron chooses to participate in the fundraising portion of the Wreaths Across America™ program, we ask that you report your sales and income through your wing. This will allow us to get a better idea of how we do as an organization as well as keep a proper accounting of our sales.

You can send this report to your wing administrator several times during the season or once at the end when all of your monies have been received. If you have already begun receiving money from sales, we ask that you report all sales and income since last year's sales cycle.

| Charter Number | # of Wreaths Sold | Anticipated Income | Actual Income |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | | | |

Suggested Goals for a Successful Sponsorship Campaign

| Targeted Group | Targeted # of Sponsorships per Business | Appropriate Time to Visit | Best Approach | Other Things to Show Businesses | Goal to Meet | Sub Total Goal of Sponsorships from this group |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| In your local area, Large Businesses with 100+ employees | 50+ | earlier the better (they have to figure it into their budgets) | show DVD, make presentation with whole Group/Squadron | WAA website, (point out to them that your Group/Squadron receives \$5 per sponsorship) | 4 businesses | 200 |
| In your local area, Small Businesses with 100 employees or less | 10 to 20 | anytime (all year) Memorial Day, July 4th, Veterans Day, etc. | groups of 3-4 members (in uniform where applicable) (2 youth & 2 adults for groups dealing with children fundraising), show DVD, photos and printed material | WAA website, (point out to them that your Group/Squadron receives \$5 per sponsorship) | 10 to 20 businesses | 200 |
| Individuals and Families in your area | 1 to 4 | anytime (all year) Memorial Day, July 4th, Veterans Day, etc. | groups of 2-3 members (in uniform where applicable) | WAA website, (point out to them that your Group/Squadron receives \$5 per sponsorship) | 100 individuals and families | 200 |
| Family Members of your Group/Squadron | 1 to 2 | anytime (all year) Memorial Day, July 4th, Veterans Day, etc. | each member goes to his/her own family | WAA website, (point out to them that your Group/Squadron receives \$5 per sponsorship) | 1 from each squadron members family | 25 |
| Note: Local area means the area your Group/Squadron draws from | | Packet includes: DVD, photos and literature | | Which earns your Group/Squadron \$3125.00 (\$5 per sponsorship) | Total Sponsorships: | 625 |

Fundraising FAQ'S

Q. Do you accept grave-specific requests?

A. We do not accept grave-specific requests through the Wreaths Across America™ office. If you are really interested in a grave-specific request, we can put you in touch with the location coordinator so that you can make your request.

Q. When should I send in my sponsorship money?

A. Sponsorship money should be sent in at least every two weeks throughout the year. It is important that you begin your fundraising early in the year. Some of our groups start their fundraising right on the heels of the ceremony and they do a really good job throughout the months of December and January gathering those funds while it is still fresh in everyone's minds.

Q. When will my group get our fundraising portion back?

A. Wreaths Across America™ tries to process all funds within a 2 week period. In order to do this and stay current, we need you to send your funds weekly. This makes it easier for us to process funds regularly through our office.

Q. When is the cutoff date for turning in sponsorships?

A. The cutoff date is the Monday following Thanksgiving, November 30, 2015. If your group has special circumstances we ask that you communicate regularly with the WAA office. If you are sending your money in every two weeks it will make it easier to keep track of your funds.

Q. Where can I get a sponsorship form?

A. Once you become a fundraising group you will receive a welcome email containing your new group ID number along with attachments of digital fundraising forms you can print for distribution. Forms can also be downloaded from the website.

Q. The Cemetery that I want to sponsor is listed as a "Ceremonial Only" but I want to see they get sponsored memorial wreaths as well. What do I do?

A. Please contact the office and we will help you work with the location coordinator to get wreaths placed at your chosen location.

Other Special WAA Ceremonies and Projects

THANKS A MILLION CAMPAIGN

In May 2010, in honor of National Military Appreciation Month, Wreaths Across America™ set a goal of personally thanking 500,000 veterans, active duty service members and their families. We called on the Civil Air Patrol along with our many other active civic groups and volunteers to help distribute “Veteran Appreciation Thank You Cards”. The idea was to encourage people to give a thank-you card to military personnel, veterans or their families. In a very short time over 400,000 cards were distributed.

The reaction was so great, we have established our “THANKS A MILLION” Campaign. The Card campaign has encouraged the simple yet powerful act of simply saying “thank you” to a veteran. These cards can be ordered from our web site and are FREE.

To show you an example of how powerful this can be, we received the following note, which we have reprinted courtesy of Michael Pellerin of the Maine Wing, Civil Air Patrol:

Regarding presenting a veteran with one of our Wreaths Across America™ cards, I would like to share a special moment I experienced today with you. I went to the Winslow McDonald's this morning for a bite to eat. There sat this older gentleman that I have seen there many times before. He sits at a particular table, clearly is all by himself, and always follows a particular regimen as to what he orders and how much he orders. He is very quiet but a very well spoken gentleman with a resemblance to the actor Walter Brimley. He very proudly wears a Vietnam Veteran cap presented to him years ago by the local VFW. It has an assortment of well earned ribbons on it including the National Service, Distinguished Service, Purple Heart, and a few other awards.

“I approached him and said, “Excuse me, sir, I am with the Civil Air Patrol, however I am not in uniform today but rather in my gardening clothes. He chuckled and said hi. I presented him with a card and thanked him for his service to our country. He beamed with pride and thanked me. As I left he read the card a tear running down his cheek, kissed the card, and carefully put it in his pocket. I truly believe I made his day. That's what it is all about, right. It brought a tear to my eyes as well.”

It is not the card or the wreath that matters as much as the symbolic gesture of letting our veterans (and their families) know that: We honor your service, we remember your sacrifice, and we will teach others to never forget.

STATE HOUSE CEREMONIES

Each year since 2007, location coordinators and volunteers have also participated in wreath laying ceremonies conducted on the Monday before Wreaths Across America™ day, December 7, 2015, at State Capitols in all 50 states and in Washington, DC. The State House ceremonies promote a week-long celebration of America's veterans and their service to our country, with a particular focus on family during the holidays.

At locations nationwide, Civil Air Patrol, veterans groups, funeral service practitioners and others who embrace the Wreaths Across America™ mission to, "Remember, Honor and Teach," will, in fact remember and honor our veterans during the holiday season, the traditional time of family get-togethers and gratitude.

Volunteers partner to conduct the WAA State House Ceremony each year where ceremonies begin at 11:30 A. M., with the actual Wreath Laying Ceremony taking place at 12 PM EST. Dignitaries and special guests are invited to speak in honor of our veterans and active military. The wreath laying ceremonies are non political and non-denominational and that all groups are invited to attend.

For more information about your State House Ceremony, call the WAA Office.

WORLD'S LARGEST VETERANS PARADE

In 2006 when the internet stories fueled attention for the WAA project, Morrill Worcester was contacted by the Patriot Guard Riders who generously offered their help with the project. It was decided that instead of a quick trip to Arlington, the PGR would escort the Wreath trucks down the East Coast and take several days to make the trip. This would allow stops at schools, monuments, veteran's homes and communities, and give the group an opportunity to promote their mission: Remember, Honor and Teach. This parade of truckers, supporters, and well-wishers has become an annual event and teaching opportunity for WAA, and a valued part of the Arlington Project.

The State of Maine assigns two state troopers and patrol cars to join the escort all the way to Arlington. Each community that we travel through turns out with emergency vehicles that join us as we go through their vicinity. The amount of support shown for the heroes we journey to honor is truly inspiring.

It has become an important and powerful annual experience, and many towns request to become “stops” along the parade each year. The caravan has grown to include veterans. Patriot Guard Riders, other motorcycle groups, Civil Air Patrol members and veterans all making the pilgrimage to Arlington.

In 2009 the “Parade” was honored to be joined by a group of American Gold Star Mothers and a Dad who raised awareness of our important work by sharing their stories. The convoy is now emulated all over the country as communities usher wreaths to their ceremonies.

We post our Arlington Project schedule on our web site, and you can track the parade’s status live on Facebook.

We are only able to include a few parade stops during the trip to Arlington. We require that events at the stops abide by our Public Relations Policy (See WAA Policy Handbook), have no political agenda, and conduct programs that are consistent with our mission and values. Any use of the WAA name without permission is prohibited.

HART CEREMONY (HONORING ALLIES AND REMEMBERING TOGETHER)

The HART (Honoring Allies and Remembering Together) Ceremony was organized to recognize the service of all veterans, including young men and women from Canada who are serving or served in the U.S. military. The Hart Ceremony is held on the first Saturday of December. The day begins at sunrise at West Quoddy Head Light in Lubec, ME, the first place in the United States the sun touches every day, with the Wreaths Across America™ escort group and guests placing a wreath and offering a prayer.

Members of several national organizations gather on the Ferry Point Bridge between Calais, ME and St. Stephen, NB, Canada, and the Ambassador Bridge between Detroit MI and Windsor ON, Canada to place wreaths in honor of the service and sacrifice of veterans of the allied nations. Wreaths Across America™ partners also provide wreaths to our Canadian allies for placement at the Centatoph Memorial Monument in St. Stephen.

Ceremony participants include the Civil Air Patrol and the Air Cadets Canada, The American Gold Star Mothers, the Canadian Mothers of the Memorial Cross and Silver Cross, and dignitaries on behalf of both nations.

For more information on the HART Program please contact the Wreaths Across America™ Office at toll free at 877-385-9504 or 207-470-0967.

Uniforms, Etiquette, and Ceremony Planning

Now that you have the strategies to join a location or start your own, get wreath sponsorships, and join in the other projects, it is time to go over how you plan for and execute the actual ceremony.

UNIFORMS

In order to pay the proper respect and maintain the dignity of the day, it is highly recommended that you wear CAP Air Force service dress uniform or the corporate equivalent. If lacking a full service dress uniform, appropriate civilian business attire (suit and tie) is encouraged.

CAP Air Force and corporate-style work and utility uniforms (such as BDUs) are an acceptable alternative, but please ensure that the uniform is pressed and that boots are well polished. Cadet Honor Guard units are encouraged to wear their full ceremonial uniforms. Ultimately, whether in service dress, ceremonials, work or utility uniforms, we ask that each of you take the time to ensure that your uniform is impeccable. Attending an event in a flight suit or knit shirt uniform is discouraged. If you have questions concerning proper uniforms, please refer to CAP Manual 39-1. And, since these events are in December, please insure that proper outer garments, gloves, scarves and head and ear covers are within the specifications of the uniform manual.

CEMETERY ETIQUETTE

The following are a fairly standard set of guidelines for personal conduct in a cemetery, but they can and should be extended to any location where you are holding a wreath laying ceremony.

1. Follow the directions of all posted signs and placards.
2. Conversations should be conducted in a low and respectful tone. Loud voices and inappropriate language are rude and disrespectful. *Note:* When marching, any cadences should be called in a low tone, and “jody calls” should not be used.
3. There is to be no running, jumping or rolling around. If you are accompanied by small children, please help them to understand the seriousness of what you are trying to accomplish and the proper atmosphere that should be maintained.
4. Stay on sidewalks and pathways. Do not cut across the grass and grave markers because it is more convenient. *Note:* If you are accompanied by a large group of cadets,

it is recommended that they march in a single file or column of twos to prevent mass gaggles and excessive talking.

5. Never remove flowers, stones, pictures, or other items placed at the grave marker by family or mourners.
6. Do not touch, climb on, or deface memorials.
7. If driving in the cemetery, drive slowly and carefully, being cautious of pedestrians. Do not leave your car idling in the cemetery, and make sure your car stereo is turned down.
8. Put your cell phone on vibrate and avoid taking cell phone calls while in the cemetery.
9. Stay out of the way of and allow a respectful distance for funeral services and mourners. It is disrespectful to take pictures of strangers at a funeral or mourners at a grave. Unless you are specifically invited to join them or take a photo, respect them and their privacy.
10. Do not leave trash or litter in the cemetery. If you see litter or trash, pick it up and deposit it in the proper receptacle.

OTHER NOTES ON DECORUM

1. Keep your photography discrete. Consider planning out your photo opportunities ahead of time so they can be quickly executed. Prolonged time spent around the gravemarkers or memorials arranging “the perfect photo op” is disrespectful to the people you are there to honor.
2. Similarly, identify the *exact location* of each special grave marker ahead of time. Trampling all over the cemetery trying to find where your ceremony will be held is also disrespectful.
3. If holding your ceremony at a military cemetery, check with the cemetery’s administrative office regarding their policy on playing taps. Some cemeteries reserve that right for military funerals and do not permit other groups to use it in their ceremonies.
4. Often, wreaths are not placed at Jewish gravestones, but rather a rock or pebble is placed on top of the gravestone as a sign of respect. The tradition of putting rocks or pebbles on gravestones has now extended beyond the Jewish culture and many people put rocks or stones on the top of each of the graves they visit. It is recommended that you consult the main office of the cemetery where you are participating to become aware of the traditions in that area.

5. If you go to place a wreath on a gravestone that already has one, do not remove the existing wreath, or pick the wreath up to place it again. Simply show appropriate respect by saluting the gravestone and move on to place your wreath somewhere else.
6. Set the example for everyone else. There will likely be many other people assisting with the WAA ceremonies besides Civil Air Patrol. Ensuring that you and your fellow members have sharp, crisp uniforms, follow the rules of cemetery etiquette, and show the proper respect at all times will encourage other people to do the same.

Sample Location Ceremony

Opening at 12 PM Eastern Standard Time (Sharp).

Ladies and gentlemen please join with me in a moment of silence to remember the fallen, the prisoners of war, the missing in action and honor those who have served and are serving this great nation's armed services. (**One full minute of silence is to be observed. Timed!**)

Color Guard:

Ladies and gentlemen, please stand while we post the colors.

"Color guard, post the colors." (*Where Honor Guards are present and participating, they too will come forward and place themselves on both sides of the memorial to be decorated. Location coordinators will set this up in advance.*)

Opening Remarks:

We are gathered here today at this memorial site and memorial sites all across America to remember that we are one nation with one flag. We are all proud to be Americans who live in a free society made up of many people, many races, 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 can travel from one end of this great nation to the other and not have to ask permission to go. We are free to vote for whomever we feel should be in government office and we answer to no one but our own feelings. 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, many of you here are veterans of wars and conflicts that America has had to fight to protect the innocent and oppressed. America has always been the first nation 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. We are here today to 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 that plague the world community. When you see a veteran or an active duty member of the armed services, take a moment to say "thank you." We owe them our way of life, and a moment of your time is well spent.

Quoting our 40th United States President Ronald Reagan, "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 national unity all across the United States of America as we remember the fallen, honor those who serve and teach our children the value of freedom.

Wreath Laying: Color guard and if present honor guard will present arms at the laying of each wreath.

Now (Person's Name) will lay a remembrance wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States Army.

Now (Person's Name) will lay a remembrance wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States Marine Corps.

Now (Person's Name) will lay a remembrance wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States Navy.

Now (Person's Name) will lay a remembrance wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States Air Force.

Now (Person's Name) will lay a remembrance wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States Coast Guard.

Now (Person's Name) will lay a remembrance wreath in memory of those who served and are serving in the United States Merchant Marines.

Now (Person's Name) will lay a remembrance wreath in honor of the 93,129 United States Servicemen from all branches of the service who last know 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.

Note: If at all 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:

The wreaths before you represent our commitment as a United America to remember the fallen. We also want these holiday wreaths 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.

(At all cemeteries or memorials where names are listed.)

We could quote for you the statistics of individuals buried around the country but all you would have is a bunch of numbers. We instead, ask you to take a moment and visit a gravesite. Write down the information on the person placed there and when you return home, research their name on the Internet and find out all you can about this person. You will find they were real Americans with families, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles. They were and are more than just a statistic. Thank you.

This is where the scripted ceremony ends and the coordinator or other designated person turns it over to the veterans groups. 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.

Notes and Tips:

- 1) **Veterans' Groups:** Location coordinators, 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.
- 2) **Ending:** At the conclusion, where possible, Have taps played. retire the colors and thank everyone for coming.
- 3) **Local Leaders:** Leaders, you are in charge of everything else that takes place at this memorial event. How your color guard is placed and/or honor guard is placed is entirely up to you. Memorials 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:

- 1) 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.
- 2) 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 by the headstone to make sure no one else places the wreath other than the family member. (All this would need to be coordinated prior to the service and they would need to pre-register with whoever is organizing.)
- 3) You should also encourage people 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.
- 4) 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.
- 5) Please make sure that if you have multiple groups that you recognize all of them so as to not discourage anyone from participation.

Sample Press Release

[insert location name] – Wreaths Across America™ event to honor veterans coming to [insert town and state] on December 12, 2015.

The [insert your group name] has volunteered to conduct the Wreaths Across America™ ceremony this year at the [insert name of cemetery] on Saturday, December 12, 2015, commencing at (12 PM EST insert local time). Seven ceremonial wreaths will be placed to remember those who served, honor their sacrifices, and teach our younger generations about the high cost of our freedoms.

Specially designated wreaths for the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine, and POW/MIA will be placed on memorials during a ceremony that will be coordinated simultaneously at over 400 participating locations all across the Country.

December 12 will mark the 24th anniversary of Maine wreaths being donated to be placed on headstones at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, VA. 2015 is also the eighth year of the national wreath sponsorship campaign under the guidance of the non-profit WreathsAcrossAmerica.org that will bring the same remembrance wreaths to national and state veterans cemeteries, monuments, and community centers all across the Nation.

In addition to these ceremonial wreaths, a number of civic groups around the country have joined with Wreaths Across America™ to promote sponsored wreaths to be placed on veterans' graves in designated sections of participating cemeteries. Each year the sections are rotated to eventually include all veterans.

In 2015 it is projected more than 100,000 volunteers nationwide will take part in the Wreaths Across America™ mission to Remember; Honor; and Teach. In 2008 and 2009 The United States Congress unanimously decreed the second Saturday of December as "National Wreaths Across America™ Day."

If you would like to sponsor a wreath, or would like more information about events planned for your community, please call [insert leader's name] at [insert leader's phone number].

For more information visit www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org.

(insert your contact information)



HEADQUARTERS [UNIT NAME]
CIVIL AIR PATROL
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY
[ADDRESS LINE 1]
[ADDRESS LINE 2]



[DATE]

[Recipient Name]
Walmart Stores, Inc.
[Street Address]
[City, ST ZIP Code]

Dear General Manager or Community Involvement Associate:

Walmart Stores, Inc. and the Civil Air Patrol are two of the nationwide sponsors of Wreaths Across America™ (WAA). The [UNIT NAME] of Civil Air Patrol would like to conduct a fundraiser at your store on [DATE] in support of WAA's goal of placing a wreath on each of Arlington National Cemetery's 230,000+ graves on December 12, 2015. A single wreath sponsorship is \$15.00 and smaller donations will be accepted and consolidated to sponsor wreaths. All funds received will be used in support of Wreaths Across America™.

The Arlington Wreath program was started in 1992 by Morrill Worcester of the Worcester Wreath Company with the donation 5,000 evergreen wreaths that he and several volunteers took to be placed on graves at Arlington National Cemetery. This became an annual journey for Mr. Worcester. By 2007 the requests for wreaths had grown to such an extent that the Worcester family established the non-profit, 501(c)(3), organization Wreaths Across America™ to further promote the remembrance of veterans.

As the official United States Air Force Auxiliary, the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) is well known for its community service endeavors. Also a 501(c)(3) organization, CAP and its members have enjoyed alliances with other patriotic-minded groups and businesses that share this common goal of service to our citizens, our communities and our country. This year, our organization has once again aligned itself with WAA to further this important endeavor and pay tribute to our country's veterans.

In addition to holding our fundraiser at your store, I would like to offer you the opportunity to honor our country's heroes by sponsoring a wreath, either as an individual yourself or with a corporate sponsorship as a store. If you are interested, there is a sponsorship form accompanying this letter for your convenience.

Thank you for your support of our fundraising efforts on behalf of Wreaths Across America. If you have any questions about this effort, please feel free to give me a call at [phone number].

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Title]

Wreaths Across America™ Contact List

Wreaths Across America™
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Columbia Falls, ME 04623-0249

Phone: 207-470-0967
Toll Free: 877-385-9504
Fax: 866-956-1625

| NAME | Extension | Email | Information Provided |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wayne Merritt | 302 | wayne@wreathscrossamerica.org | General questions, Arlington questions, wreath escort Convoy questions |
| Charemon Willy | 303 | charemon@wreathscrossamerica.org | Bookkeeping questions concerning wreath Sponsorships and remittance to groups |
| Julie Bright | 305 | julie@wreathscrossamerica.org | Questions concerning location information and signing up to participate as a new location |
| Marcy Beardsley | 304 | marcy@wreathscrossamerica.org | Questions about fundraising, becoming a new group And general WAA information questions |
| Newsletter | | info@wreathscrossamerica.org | Newsletter and media questions |

General questions can also be asked at the info@wreathscrossamerica.org if you are not sure who you would like to direct your question to.