

National Wreaths Across America Day

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2023



2023 Media Guide



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Introduction

Greetings,

This document will familiarize you with Wreaths Across America and our effort to honor our nation's interred heroes (called National **Wreaths Across America Day**) while bringing attention to our yearlong mission to **Remember the fallen, Honor those who served, and Teach the next generation the value of freedom.**

We are sending you this media package in hopes that you will find it valuable and helpful in your research as you put together your stories for Wreaths Across America Day 2023. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with Wreaths Across America, this document serves as an [introduction to the organization](#).



As part of our introduction, we offer you this free [digital media package](#) containing all the information and materials you might need for an article, interview, show-prep, or research to help you deliver content to your audience.

Including:

- WAA History
- Achievements from 2023
- Pictures, Videos, Web, and Social Links
- Donation/Sponsorship Information

For those familiar with our organization, first, thank you for all you have done. I also want to remind you that **Veterans Day is Saturday, November 11**, and **National Wreaths Across America Day will occur on Saturday, December 16, 2023.**

We sincerely hope to provide you with all the tools and resources you need as we head into Veterans Day and National Wreaths Across America Day. This content will help provide media support for our local volunteers working in your local community. Please get in touch with us **today** if you have any questions, to schedule interviews with WAA executives leading up to Veterans Day and National Wreaths Across America Day, or to connect with **local volunteers**. If you cannot find the information for your stories here, don't hesitate to contact WAA directly.

HQ Press Contact:

Amber Caron

acaron@wreathsacrossamerica.org

(207) 513-6457

We hope you find this information helpful! We also look forward to working with you!

A Letter from Karen Worcester

Wreaths Across America, Executive Director, and Organization Cofounder

Dear Media Professional,

Thank you for opening (and reading) this media guide. We hope you find this document helpful and informative as we work to fulfill our mission to **Remember, Honor, Teach** about our nation's veterans, service members, and their families in 2023.

We look forward to helping you build great media stories that inspire and unify a nation by highlighting stories of service and community.

By caring enough to read the information in this document, you are "serving and succeeding" in your community by serving our Gold Star families and passing along our message of thanks for their service and sacrifice for our freedom.

As we head into the 32nd year of placing wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery, we hope you will join us in volunteering, in support, or spirit as we endeavor to bring people together in solidarity as we place sponsored veterans' wreaths to honor our interred heroes across America.

Your media support is welcome and needed as our volunteers endeavor to place over 2.7 million sponsored veterans' wreaths at more than 4,000 participating locations this year.

It was essential to reach out to you and thank you for everything that you have done for us this past year. Thank you for reading this message and showing interest in helping us in our mission to **Remember** the fallen, **Honor** those who served, and **Teach** the next generation the value of freedom.

With gratitude,

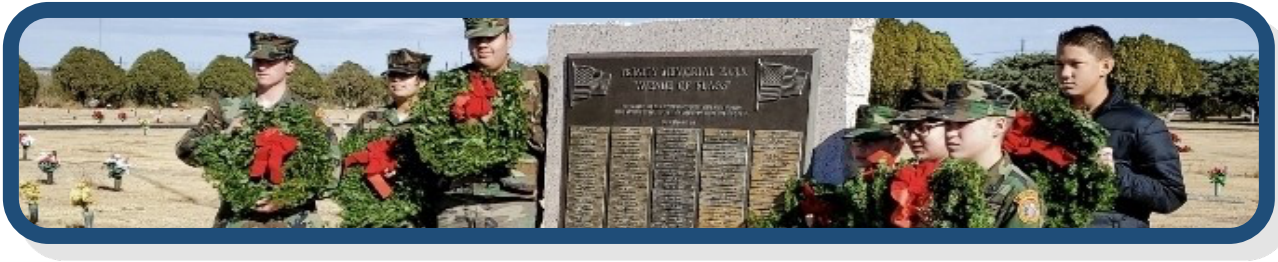
Karen Worcester

WAA Executive Director



WAA Mission

Our yearlong mission to **Remember, Honor, Teach** is carried out, in part, by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, veterans' cemeteries, and other locations in all 50 states and beyond. Although people may be most familiar with National Wreaths Across America Day, the organization's mission lasts far beyond one day in December.



★ “Remember” the fallen.

When a volunteer places a wreath on a servicemember's grave on National Wreaths Across America Day, we encourage them to speak that person's name aloud, thank them for their service and sacrifice, and reflect on their life along with our wreath-laying ceremonies. WAA also holds special memorial ceremonies at all cemeteries throughout the country.

On the tip-lands in Maine, where the tips of balsam fir trees are harvested to become veterans' wreaths, replica dog tags representing thousands of veterans create a living memorial of fallen veterans giving back to other fallen veterans.

Learn more at: <https://wreathsassamerica.org/About/RemembranceTree>



★ “Honor” those who served.

The group participates in veterans' events throughout the year across the country.

Our veteran outreach efforts include partnerships with Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) working to support living veterans and their families nationwide. [We offer resources](#) and access to support and host open discussions about important topics impacting this community via our owned channels.

Learn more at: <https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/Resources/ResourcesForVeterans>

Wreaths Across America Radio, a Voice for America's Veterans, is a 24/7 Internet stream on iHeart Radio, Audacy and the TuneIn apps. Its unique format provides informational and inspiring content about members of the U.S. armed forces, their families, military veterans, and volunteers throughout the country and overseas who support the mission to Remember, Honor, Teach.

Learn more at: www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/radio



★ **“Teach” the next generation the value of freedom.**

Wreaths Across America is committed to teaching younger generations about the value of their freedoms and the importance of honoring those who sacrificed to protect them.

Through our TEACH Program, WAA offers free, downloadable lesson plans and service-based learning for youth of all ages.

Learn more at: <https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/Resources/EducationalResources>

Visit the National Museum and Gold Star Family History & Hospitality House at the National Wreaths Across America Headquarters in Columbia Falls, Maine. These exhibits offer guests an opportunity to learn more about the mission while experiencing the many stories of service, sacrifice, and success shared with the program over the last 15 years.

Learn more at:

<https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/About/NationalWreathsAcrossAmericaMuseum>

Our Mobile Education Exhibit and our “Escort to Arlington” (a veterans’ parade that travels down the East Coast over the course of a week to deliver wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery) stop at many schools. We offer learning experiences, interactive media projects, and opportunities for schools, 4-H, scouts, and other youth groups to participate in our efforts.

Learn more at: <https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/About/MobileEducationExhibit>



WAA History

- ★ **1992:** The first wreaths (5,000) were donated, and a tradition started by Maine wreath-maker Morrill Worcester, owner of Worcester Wreath Co., as a gift of thanks.
- ★ **2005:** An iconic photo of wreaths in the snow became a viral sensation.
- ★ **2007:** Wreaths Across America formed as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.
- ★ **Since 2008:** Congress annually proclaims a Saturday in December as National Wreaths Across America Day. *It will be held this year on Saturday, December 16, 2023.*
- ★ **2012:** Millionth wreath placed at Arlington National Cemetery.
- ★ **2014:** Every headstone at Arlington National Cemetery received a wreath for the first time.
- ★ **2016:** 25th year that veterans' wreaths are placed at Arlington National Cemetery.
- ★ **2018:** Mission advances overseas with the first placement of 9,387 veterans' wreaths at Normandy-American Cemetery in France.
- ★ **2021:** Marked the 30th year veterans' wreaths are placed at Arlington National Cemetery.
- ★ **2022:** 2.7 million wreaths are placed at over 3,700 locations nationwide and abroad.

Full Wreaths Across America History:

<https://wreathsassamerica.org/About/OurMission>

2022 Recap and 2023 Theme

2022 Recap

WAA's annual pilgrimage from Harrington, Maine, to Arlington National Cemetery has become known as the world's largest veterans' parade. Along the way, it stops at schools, monuments, veterans' homes, and communities to remind people how important it is to remember, honor and teach.

- ★ 2.7 million veterans' wreaths are placed nationwide at 3,702 locations.
- ★ More than two million volunteers participated in National Wreaths Across America Day. More than a third of the volunteers were children.
- ★ At Arlington National Cemetery specifically, the Wreaths Across America program saw sixty-six tractor trailers deliver over 250,000 sponsored veterans' wreaths that nearly 38,000 volunteers placed.
- ★ In total, 571 truckloads of wreaths were delivered nationwide by hundreds of volunteer professional truck drivers representing 390 carriers who donated their equipment and fuel to honor our veterans on National Wreaths Across America Day.



2023 Theme: Serve and Succeed

The inspiration for this year's theme came while discussing the significance of 2022's theme, "Find a Way to Serve," and the need to continue to stress the importance of service and the positive ways it can impact lives. Wreaths Across America focused 2023 on veterans and military families who have found success through their service and volunteers from across the country and the success that comes from serving their communities.

WAA Sponsorship Information

Each \$17 sponsorship supports WAA's yearlong program and places a live, balsam veteran's wreath on the headstone of an American hero as we endeavor to honor all veterans laid to rest on Saturday, December 16, 2023, as part of National Wreaths Across America Day.

"Every sponsorship is a meaningful gift from a grateful American who knows what it means to serve and sacrifice for the freedoms we all enjoy," said Karen Worcester, executive director of Wreaths Across America. "We are so grateful to the good people of this great nation for participating in our mission to Remember, Honor, Teach."

To donate online, go to www.wreathscrossamerica.org

To find a cemetery near you to support, [click here for the link](#).

National Text to Donate from AT&T Veterans: Text **WREATH22** to **20222** on your cell.



Upcoming Wreaths Across America Calendar

Please note times, dates, and routes are subject to change and may vary in some local areas.
To confirm your media participation, please get in touch with the local volunteer.

- ★ **Nov 11** Veterans Day
- ★ **Nov 23** Black Friday
- ★ **Nov 25** Small Business Saturday
- ★ **Nov 27** Cyber Monday
- ★ **Nov 28** Giving Tuesday
- ★ **Nov 29** Deadline to sponsor a veteran's wreath for guaranteed placement this year

- ★ **Week of Dec 4** Wreaths Across America Senate Resolution Announcement

- ★ **Dec 9** **Escort to Arlington begins!**
This is a weeklong truck convoy of Gold Star families, veterans and supporters that starts in Maine and travels to Arlington National Cemetery with stops along the way.

- ★ **Dec 9**
 - Columbia Fall, Maine to West Quoddy Headlight, Maine

- ★ **Dec 10**
 - Ellsworth, Maine
 - Belfast, Bank of America
 - Cheverus High School

- ★ **Dec 11**
 - York Middle School, York, ME
 - Boston Commons, Boston, MA
 - Exeter West Greenwich High School
 - New London, CT

- ★ **Dec 12**
 - New Having, CT
 - Darian High School
 - East Orange High School



★ **Dec 13**

- Sayreville Ware Memorial High School, Sayreville, NJ
- NJ Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- Allentown High School, Allentown, PA
- Bordertown Township Senior Center, Bordertown, NJ

★ **Dec 14**

- Delaware County Veterans Memorial, Newton Square, PA
- Lorewood Grove Elementary, Middletown, DE
- Harrington, DE Fire Station
- America Legion, Kent Island, Stevensville, MD

★ **Dec 15**

- Pentagon, Washington, DC
- War Memorials, Washington, DC

★ **Dec 16 NATIONAL WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY**

- ★ **2024 Jan 20** Wreaths out at Arlington National Cemetery, and the unofficial beginning of wreath retirement season.



2023 WAA News Stories

WAA is committed to the mission to Remember, Honor, Teach year-round. These are just some of the stories on the national stage this past year.

★ [Celebrating the Four Chaplains and Charles Walter David Jr](#)

On February 3, 2023, Wreaths Across America honored the Four Chaplains and Charles Walter David Jr. as honorees in our Remembrance Tree Program.

Learn more at: <https://wreathsasscrossamerica.org/About/RemembranceTree>



On January 23, 1943, the **U.S.A.T. Dorchester** left New York harbor bound for Greenland, carrying over 900 officers, service members, and civilian workers. The ship was transiting the Labrador Sea when torpedoed by a German U-boat (U-233) on February 3, 1943. The ship sank, and 675 people on board lost their lives. Amidst the chaos to save 230 lives, four chaplains guided soldiers trapped below deck to escape hatches and gave away their life jackets to save others on that fateful day. When the chaplains had done all they could, they linked arms to pray and sing hymns as the **Dorchester** slipped beneath the waves.

As part of the rescue response to the sinking of the Dorchester, African American Coast Guardsman Charles Walter David Jr. jumped into icy Greenland waters from his rescue ship to save two men from drowning and continued to help rescue a total of 93 survivors from lifeboats. After his heroic acts, 54 days later, Charles Walter David Jr. succumbed to pneumonia stemming from those icy waters.

Learn more: <https://www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org/pages/19520/News/136/?relatedId=0>

★ [Celebrating the Quartermaster Corp of WWII](#)

Assigned to logistics and service units; by 1944, almost all black soldiers were assigned to these units. They were responsible for building bridges, roads, and runways. They moved beans, bullets, fuel, and the fallen – their efforts were critical to the Allied success. They embodied the modern military saying, “Amateurs study tactics, professionals study logistics. The story of black quartermasters is crucial because it not only signifies the courage and bravery of these Americans but demonstrates their ingenuity and how their service led to success on the battlefield and when they came home.



Read the article: <https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/Home/News/912>

Learn more from the Library of Congress:

“What we can learn About World War II From Black Quartermasters?”; Douglas Bristol, Jr.; Aug. 27, 2021; World War 2 Museum.

“Army veteran Medgar Wiley Evers a Foot Soldier in Struggle for Justice”; T. Anthony Bell; Feb. 25, 2020.

“King of Calypso, Harry Belafonte Was WWII Sailor”; David Vergun, DOD News; Feb. 2, 2022.

★ **Remembering the 60th Anniversary of Flying Tiger Line Flight 739**

On March 16, 2023, Wreaths Across America honored the courageous crew of Flying Tiger Line Flight 739 at the only monument on earth dedicated in their honor on the tip lands in Maine.



Very little is known about what happened to Flying Tiger Line Flight 739, a military mission plane that went missing on March 16, 1962, with 93 U.S. Army Soldiers on board and 11 crew members. Due to the complexities surrounding the mission, the names of all those who have been lost have not yet been added to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. WAA unveiled a memorial to these brave men and women and their families on May 15, 2021.

Learn more:

<https://wreathsacrossamerica.org/pages/19520/News/399/?relatedId=0>

★ **9/12 National Flag Waving Effort**

On Tuesday, September 12, 2023, WAA urged all Americans to join in waving the American flag to remind all Americans of our feelings – the pride in the country, the unity and patriotism – expressed on the days following 9/11/01.



Learn more: <https://wreathsacrossamerica.org/Home/News/1002>

★ **WAA Mobile Education Exhibit National Tour**

Wreaths Across America (WAA) proudly announced early in 2023 that its Mobile Education Exhibit (MEE) will travel the country. The WAA MEE mission is to bring veterans, the military, and the community together to teach patriotism while remembering the service and sacrifice of our nation's heroes.

In 2023, the MEE visited CA, AZ, NM, TX, OK, TN, WV, PA, MD, DE, NJ, NY, MA, CT, VT and the America Gold Star Mothers Convention in KY and other notable veterans' events. For the remainder of 2023, the MEE will be traveling to GA, MA, NH, and RI before joining the "Escort to Arlington" in December to help deliver veterans' wreaths as part of National Wreaths Across America Day on Saturday, December 16, 2023.



Learn more: <https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/About/MobileEducationExhibit>

★ **The Escort to Arlington**

The Wreaths Across America annual "Escort to Arlington" is what many people consider the country's longest veterans' parade. This 12-truck convoy begins at the organization's headquarters in Columbia Falls, Maine, the week before Wreaths Across America Day.

As the convoy travels to Arlington National Cemetery to deliver veterans wreaths to our nation's interred veterans, it is accompanied by Chevrolet vehicles, the Wreaths Across America Mobile Education Exhibit, local first responders, and supporters as they make their way down the East Coast.



Learn more: <https://wreathsacrossamerica.org/Newsroom/EscortToArlington>

★ **Wreaths Across America Radio**

Wreaths Across America Radio announced a series of live Broadcasts focused on milestones and important events to the veteran community. These live broadcasts have become essential to Wreaths Across America Radio for sharing stories of resilience, purpose, and success.



In addition, Wreaths Across America Radio has announced partnerships with many other veteran-oriented radio programming and podcasts to give our audience a true veteran's perspective.

Learn more: <https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/Newsroom/WreathsAcrossAmericaRadio>

★ Partnerships

WAA has been very fortunate to work with some amazing partners this past year as we all unite to support the mission to Remember, Honor, and Teach about our nation's interred veterans. We have been incredibly fortunate to work with some enthusiastic, supportive, and generous organizations this year.

UPDATE: Besides the announcements below, look for official announcements from corporate partners MISSION BBQ, Walmart, FASTPORT, Tenstreet, Chevrolet, and more coming soon.

Learn more:

American Legion Axillary

<https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/home/news/1004>

The Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation

<https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/Home/News/976>

Patriot Guard Riders Inc.

<https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/Home/News/977>

★ Wreaths Across America Teach Curriculum

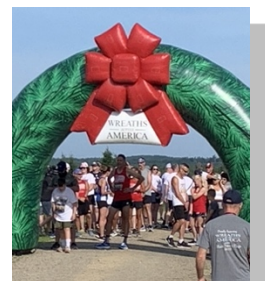
Cindy Tatum, a retired educator and Gold Star Mother from Milan, Tenn., began working with Wreaths Across America. Her mission is to produce FREE educational materials and curriculums for other professional educators to instill American pride in their students (Grades K – 12) and teach them the value of freedom. In addition, she serves as a conduit to share established curriculum materials from partner organizations like The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration, Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, The Congressional Media of Honor Society, and IKEducation at the Eisenhower Foundation.



Learn more: <https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/Resources/EducationalResources>

★ WAA “Stem to Stone” Road Races

Wreaths Across America held its 10th annual 2023 Stem to Stone Race Program in July. This program includes both live and virtual races for participation. The races were very successful this year, and we want to take a moment to thank everyone who took part.



Learn more: <https://wreathsacrossamerica.org/Home/News/944>

★ **National Wreaths Across America Day**

National Wreaths Across America Day is an event held every December, in which millions of volunteers place millions of sponsored veterans' wreaths at thousands of participating locations across the U.S. and abroad. These wreaths are delivered through the generosity of hundreds of volunteer truck drivers and their companies. This year, National Wreaths Across America Day will be held on Saturday, December 16, 2023.

Learn more: <https://wreathsacrossamerica.org>



Remember



Honor



Teach

WAA Quick Reference



Wreaths Across America National Headquarters Contact

4 Point St
Columbia Falls, ME 04623
Phone: (877) 385-9504
Web: www.WREATHSACROSSAMERICA.org

Media Resources Page for Pictures and Video

<https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/Resources/ResourcesForTheMedia>

Wreaths Across America News Stories

<https://wreathsacrossamerica.org/Home/News>

Wreaths Across America Official Facebook Page

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

Wreaths Across America YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCg8qaE2Kwt4U8x5CwsyFXYA>

Sign Up for the Monthly Newsletter

<https://learn.wreathsacrossamerica.org/missionmatters>

Wreaths Across America Mobile Education Exhibit

<https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/About/MobileEducationExhibit>

Wreaths Across America Remembrance Tree Program

<https://wreathsacrossamerica.org/About/RemembranceTree>

Wreaths Across America Radio

<https://wreathsacrossamerica.org/Newsroom/WreathsAcrossAmericaRadio>

WAA Leadership



*A board of directors governs Wreaths Across America.
(Non-voting) Volunteer Executive Director Karen Worcester manages day-to-day operations.*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<i>Wayne Hanson — Chairman, Vietnam veteran, Maine State Society</i>	
<i>Michael Edgecomb — Vice Chairman, Veteran</i>	<i>Patrick Simmons — Veteran, Tyson Foods</i>
<i>David “Mel” Russen, Jr. — Treasurer, Veteran</i>	<i>Col. Dan LeClair (ret) — Civil Air Patrol, Veteran</i>
<i>Renee Saunders Worcester — Secretary</i>	<i>Kevin Haley — Law Enforcement</i>
<i>Debbie Ruane Sparks, National Motor Freight Traffic Association</i>	<i>Daniel Patrick Mead — Veteran</i>
	<i>Nathan Lewis, Tyson Foods</i>
<i>Lorna Harris —Gold Star Mother</i>	<i>Chaplain Karen Diefendorf — Veteran</i>
<i>Randy Lewer — Veteran</i>	<i>Col. Ron Sailor (ret) — Veteran</i>
<i>Pamela W. Slaven-Lee, DNP, FNP-C</i>	<i>Jenny Lovering, Walmart</i>
<i>Sarah J. Worcester</i>	<i>Graig Morin, Brown Dog Transportation</i>

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Scott DeMasi — Location Coordinator, Houston National Cemetery
Michael Calenda — Ponaganset Middle School
Duane Belanger. Knights of Columbus

WAA PRESS CONTACT

Amber Caron
acarone@wreathscrossamerica.org
(207) 513-6457

Thank you in advance for helping to bring attention to National Wreaths Across America Day on December 16, 2023, and advancing the yearlong mission to:

Remember



Honor



Teach



We also want you to know that we appreciate all you do to help us share the mission and make our great country a better community.

Please let us know if you need anything.

