



Wreaths Across America Virtual Road Races Take on A Special Meaning

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COLUMBIA FALLS, ME — Wreaths Across America (WAA) proudly continues its 2021 Race Program with 3 great opportunities to participate.

First, you are invited to take a summer trip and join WAA in-person for the **STEM TO STONE REMEMBRANCE RUN** on July 24th from the Tip-lands in Columbia Falls Maine (this race will also have a virtual option so you can stay out of the heat and run from the comfort of air-conditioning.)

In addition, starting on September 11th, another virtual race, called **RUNNING FOR WREATHS**, will be held nationwide (both 5K and 10K races are available).

Finally, Wreaths Across America has created the ultimate virtual race challenge called **The ESCORT TO ARLINGTON CHALLENGE**. It is a 737-mile long virtual race that follows the route taken by the WAA annual convoy that delivers wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery to honor our nation's heroes.

One of this year's participants wrote to share her story and explain why running these challenges are meaningful.

Emily and her husband, Peter Kraines, began dating Her senior year at Virginia Tech. Upon finishing school, Peter enlisted in the Air Force and Emily developed a passion for

running while he went through the pipeline to become a pararescueman in the Air Force. After marriage, Emily used running as a form of meditation to help her through periods of deployment, pregnancy, and even a car accident. Peter would support Emily's passion by making waffles after long runs, gifting running gear for birthdays, Face-timing support, and occasionally running races with her. One of Peter's proudest moments was watching Emily complete her first marathon.

On October 8, 2019 Peter was involved in a military training accident. Immediately Emily felt that this chapter of her life had abruptly closed. Almost two years later, she saw a Wreaths Across America social media post about "The Escort to Arlington challenge." As fate would have it, this year, Wreaths Across America Day will be held on, December 18, 2021, (Peter's 36th Birthday.) In addition, that date bears even more significance as it is the last day of Wreaths Across America Escort of remembrance wreaths being delivered to Arlington National Cemetery where Peter is interned.

For the first time in a long while, Emily is excited about her passion of training for a goal again. She feels that Peter would have encouraged her to "be together in community." In that spirit, she has created the largest team of runners for this challenge and is presently occupying first place in miles run. Emily stated "This year, I will get to visit his grave with an accomplishment of finishing another race. I know he would be so proud of ALL who have signed on to complete the Escort to Arlington." Her team is Krainesiness and if you own a Peloton you can join the team by following #escorttoarlington.

If you would like to join Emily in running, the complete list of the race options and open registrations can be found at competitorme.com/wreaths-across-america, and include:

- [Stem to Stone Remembrance Run](#) On July 24th, there is an open invitation to register, travel, and participate on the tip lands in Maine where balsam is grown and harvested each year to make the veterans' wreaths placed on the headstones of our nation's heroes. If you cannot make the race in person, a virtual option is available so you can show your support.
- [Escort to Arlington Challenge](#): From the comfort and air-conditioning of your own home, this virtual 737-mile course starts in Columbia Falls, Maine, home of Wreaths Across America, and travels down the East Coast to Arlington, Virginia, following the same route traveled by the annual escort of wreaths to Arlington each December.
- [Running for Wreaths \(5K & 10K\) Virtual Race](#) – From September 11th to September 25th you are invited to sign-up and Participate in this virtual race from anywhere in the USA. You will have the flexibility to run/walk/ruck/bike on the course of your choosing while raising funds to sponsor veterans' wreaths for Participating Locations or local WAA Sponsorship Groups in your area.

Simply click on the individual event and you will be brought to the official RunSignUp registration page which have all the pertinent information, such as event dates, pricing, course maps, and donation opportunities.

Each individual race registration sponsors a fresh balsam veteran's wreath that will be placed on the headstone of an American hero on December 18, 2021, as part of National Wreaths Across America Day. Group or individual fundraising tools and capabilities are available for all of the races and there is a TEAM option for the Escort to Arlington Challenge.

During check out, registrants can designate the Sponsorship Group or participating Wreaths Across America Location they want their sponsored wreath allocated to. Registrants will receive personalized racing bibs and commemorative finisher medallions, with event t-shirts. There is also a free [RaceJoy](#) app available for download by registrants to listen while they participate to learn more about the mission, hear stories of those who have served and the names of those that have sacrificed for our freedom.

This year's race program is the result of an expanded partnership with event-management and timing company [CompetitorME](#), after a successful inaugural year in 2020 where [eight virtual road races](#) were held across the country. The variety of options for supporters provides an opportunity to build community awareness and understanding of WAA's yearlong mission to Remember, Honor, Teach.

“After the success of last year's inaugural Stem to Stone Race Program, which ultimately was executed completely virtual aside from one race in Maine, we saw a great opportunity to try new and creative ways to get the running community involved in the mission,” said Jonathan Kelley, owner CompetitorME. “Through our own team's personal involvement with the WAA escort to Arlington, we've seen what the mission means to our Nation's Gold Star Families and how important it is to Remember, Honor, Teach, every day of the year, and want to bring that experience to more people.”

About Wreaths Across America

Wreaths Across America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery begun by Maine businessman Morrill Worcester in 1992. The organization's mission – Remember, Honor, Teach – is carried out in part each year by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in December at Arlington, as well as at thousands of veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and beyond.

For more information or to sponsor a wreath please visit www.wreathsacrossamerica.org.