Our Veterans
Our Stories
Who are Veterans?

They are men and women who, for many reasons, donned the uniform of our country to stand between freedom and tyranny; to take up the sword of justice in defense of the liberties we hold dear; to preserve peace and to calm the winds of war.

Your mothers and fathers, your grandparents, your aunts and uncles, your neighbors, the shop owners in your community, your teachers, your favorite athlete, a Hollywood star, and your political leaders... each one could be a veteran.

But as much as they may differ by gender, race, age, national origin, or profession, they share a common love for our great nation; a love great enough to put their very lives on the line, if need be, to guarantee the way of life we enjoy today, and to secure that way of life for tomorrow’s generations.

The title “veteran” must be earned. It is a title endowed by a grateful nation on citizens whose shoulders were broad enough to carry the weight of our common defense.

It is a title that speaks of courage and sacrifice in the face of mortal danger.

It is a title that speaks of compassion and heartbreak in the wake of the terrible cost of war.

And it is a title that speaks of love of country, and of a belief in America’s goodness, and our strength.

In each of America’s struggles, heroes in uniform emerged to inspire and spur us on to victory. Our veterans’ steadfast resolve to stand and fight for the American way of life is a constant reminder that the righteousness of our destiny overarches the anguish of our losses.

America’s servicemen and women, who became our nation’s veterans when they set their uniforms aside and resumed their civilian lives, distinguished themselves through their willingness to risk life and limb in defense of the freedoms we all cherish.

Those who have served our nation in uniform are the best people our society has to offer. We owe them our full support, and our sincerest thanks.

America’s veterans did not shrink from battle; they did not yield to fear; they did not abandon their cause. All too often they paid the ultimate price.

By their example of courage under fire, they raised up a new nation, inspired by the dignity of the common man — a nation blessed with heroes and heroes’ dreams.

Credit: Excerpt from 2003 speech at the National Young Leaders conference in Washington, DC.

VETERANS DAY HISTORY

Where does the term “veteran” come from?

Originally, the word veteran meant “a person of much experience or skill.” Derived from the Latin term veteranus, after the American Revolution the word veteran came to be associated specifically with former soldiers of old age who had fought for independence. At some point, “veteran” was used to describe any former member of the armed forces or a person who had served in the military.

In the mid-19th century, this term became shortened to the simple phrase “vets.” The term was then used to apply to any former member of the armed forces or a person who had served in the military.

History of Veterans Day

The idea of observing a day to honor those who served in the military originated in the mid-19th century, when Representative Edward Rees of Kansas proposed a bill that would change Armistice Day to Veterans Day. In 1954, Congress passed the bill that President Eisenhower signed proclaiming November 11 to be Veterans Day. Ray Weeks received the Presidential Citizens Medal from President Reagan in November 1982.

National Ceremonies Held at Arlington National Cemetery

The focal point for official, national ceremonies for Veterans Day continues to be the memorial amphitheater built around the Tomb of the Unknowns. At 11 a.m. on November 11, a combined color guard representing all military services executes “Present Arms” at the tomb. The nation’s tribute to its war dead is symbolized by the laying of a presidential wreath. The bugler plays “taps.”

The President’s Veterans Day National Committee coordinates Veterans Day ceremonies at Arlington and elsewhere. Chaired by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the committee represents national veterans organizations. Governors of many states and U.S. territories appoint Veterans Day chairpersons who, in cooperation with the National Committee and the Department of Defense, arrange and promote local ceremonies.

Newspaper Activities:

Veterans have unselfishly made sacrifices for the sake of their country. Look in today’s newspaper and find either a picture of or an article about a person or veteran who put someone else’s needs above his or her own. What were the consequences of the unselfish act? What might have happened if the person had not acted?

Veterans exemplify good character qualities like loyalty, courage, responsibility, respect and other traits. Find stories in your newspaper about people that exhibit both good and bad character. What choice did they make? What was the outcome? What are the good or bad character traits that they exhibited? What can you learn from them?
Almost four million people a year visit the national cemetery across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C., where a constant vigil is maintained at the Tomb of the Unknowns. Arlington National Cemetery is the site of the changing of a military guard around the clock daily. On Veterans Day 1921, a coffin bearing the body of an unidentified soldier of World War I was entombed adjacent to the Memorial Amphitheater and a monument weighing more than 100 tons was placed atop it in 1932. Nearby crypts bear the remains of unknown American service members of World War II and the Korean War. The remains of a previously unknown Vietnam service member were exhumed on May 14, 1998, identified as Air Force 1st Lt. Michael Joseph Blassie, and removed for burial.

Currently, the main part of the Tomb of the Unknowns' above ground monument is being replaced because of two large cracks that have appeared in the marble. Each Memorial Day and Veterans Day, a presidential wreath is placed at the tomb. This may explain why Arlington is America's most well-known national cemetery, even though it is not the largest or the oldest.

Some 230,000 veterans and dependents are buried on the cemetery's 612 acres. From Pierre L'Enfant, George Washington's aide during the American Revolution, to American service members killed in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, Arlington holds the remains of veterans representing every military action the United States has fought. The cemetery's origins go back to just before the Civil War. George Washington Parke Custis, adopted son of the first president, owned a 1,100-acre plantation and constructed a memorial to Washington on this land. Named Arlington House, this building held the world's largest collection of memorabilia related to the president. Ownership of his estate passed to Custis' daughter, who had married Robert E. Lee. The Lee family lived in Arlington House for more than 30 years, fleeing when the Civil War was imminent. The Union seized the property because of its strategic location overlooking Washington, D.C. Because Brig. Gen. Montgomery Meigs bore a bitter grudge against the South, and at the same time saw the need for burial space for the Union dead, this commander of forces at Arlington urged the federal government to convert 200 acres of Lee's property into a cemetery. Meigs ordered burials near the house to make the grounds uninhabitable after the war.

The first soldier was buried in Arlington in May 1864. By war's end, 16,000 graves filled the spaces close to Arlington House. Though the Supreme Court ruled finally in favor of the heir to the property, the eldest Lee son coded title to the 200 acres of Lee's property into a cemetery. Meigs ordered burials near the house to make the grounds uninhabitable after the war.

Arlington National Cemetery

Facts about Veterans in the U.S.

- The number of military veterans in the United States is 23.6 million.
- **Female veterans:** There are 1.8 million female veterans. 16 percent of Gulf War veterans are women.
- **Race:** The number of black veterans is 2.4 million. Additionally, 1.1 million veterans are Hispanic; 278,000 are Asian; 165,000 are American Indian or Alaska Native; 27,000 are Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; and 18.7 million are non-Hispanic white.
- **When they served:** There are 9.3 million veterans 65 and older while 1.9 million are younger than 35. The number of Vietnam-era veterans is 7.9 million. In addition, 5 million served during the Gulf War; 2.9 million in World War II (1941-1945); 3 million in the Korean War (1950-1953); and 6.1 million in peacetime.
- **On the job:** There are 10.7 million veterans 18 to 64 in the labor force. The average earnings for women veterans is $32,217, higher than the $27,272 for women civilians with no military experience. Earnings for male veterans is $42,128, higher than the $39,880 for non-veterans.
- **Disabilities:** There are six million veterans with a disability.
- **Voting:** The number of veterans who voted in the 2004 presidential election was 17.4 million. Seventy-four percent of veterans cast a ballot, compared with 63 percent of non-veterans. 14 million veterans voted in the 2006 congressional election. Sixty-one percent of veterans cast a ballot, compared with 46 percent of non-veterans.

This information was collected from the 2008 Census, unless otherwise indicated, and is provided courtesy of the U.S. Census Bureau.
The Purple Heart

The Medal of Honor is the highest award for valor in action against an enemy force which can be bestowed upon an individual serving in the Armed Services of the United States. Generally presented to its recipient by the President of the United States in the name of Congress, it is often called the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Here’s an excerpt of the Army regulation that describes the eligibility criteria for the award: “The Medal of Honor is awarded by the President in the name of Congress to a person who distinguishes himself or herself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States...

The deed performed must have been one of personal bravery or self-sacrifice so conspicuous as to clearly distinguish the individual above his comrades and must have involved risk of life. Incontestable proof of the performance of the service will be exacted and each recommendation for the award of this decoration will be considered on the standard of extraordinary merit.”

Learn more at: www.cmohs.org

The Purple Heart

It is one of the most recognized and respected medals awarded to members of the U.S. armed forces. Introduced as the “Badge of Military Merit” by General George Washington in 1782, the Purple Heart is also the nation’s oldest military award. In military terms, the award had “broken service,” as it was ignored for nearly 150 years until it was re-introduced on February 22, 1932, on the 200th anniversary of George Washington’s birth. The medal’s plain inscription “FOR MILITARY MERIT” barely expresses its significance.

On August 7, 1782, from his headquarters in Newburgh, New York, General George Washington wrote:

“The General ever desirous to cherish virtuous ambition in his soldiers, as well as to foster and encourage every species of Military merit, directs that whenever any singularly meritorious action is performed, the author of it shall be permitted to wear on his facings over the left breast, the figure of a heart in purple cloth, or silk, edged with narrow lace or binding. Not only instances of unusual gallantry, but also of extraordinary fidelity and essential service in any way shall meet with a due reward. Before this favour can be conferred on any man, the particular fact, or facts, on which it is to be grounded must be set forth to the Commander in chief accompanied with certificates from the Commanding officers of the regiment and brigade to which the Candidate for reward belonged, or other incontestable proofs, and upon granting it, the name and regiment of the person with the action so certified are to be enrolled in the book of merit which will be kept at the orderly office. Men who have merited this last distinction to be suffered to pass all guards and sentinels which officers are permitted to do.

The road to glory in a patriot army and a free country is thus open to all. This order is also to have retrospect to the earliest stages of the war, and to be considered as a permanent one.”

Learn more at: www1.va.gov/opa/feature/celebrate/purple-heart.asp
Ten Tips for Getting Started on a Veterans Oral History Project

By Paul LaRue, Teacher, Washington High School, Washington Court House, OH
(modified)


This website includes all of the background information and materials necessary to have the oral histories you record entered into the Library of Congress system. Visit www.loc.gov/vets/kitmenu.html for all necessary forms for submitting to the Veterans History Project. Get a digital or tape recorder. You may also want to consider videotaping in addition to the recording.

2. Prepare a script of questions. Sample questions are available at: www.history.com/minisites/veterans/images/veteransoralhistory.pdf Teachers will want to remind students of appropriate and inappropriate questions before they start their interviews.

3. Contact local veterans organizations such as American Legion or Veterans of Foreign War to help find veterans to interview, or ask a family member or friend with military experience if they would be willing to be interviewed. Select a “friendly or familiar face” to interview first to ensure a positive experience while students are still learning.

4. Save your digital recording to a computer and/or digitize your tape using software like PolderbitS and save once the interview is complete (if your tape breaks you will have the audio file for back-up).

5. Transcribe the recording. This can be done from the digital recording on your computer or by listen to a cassette tape or a CD. This may take a very long time—stopping, rewinding and replaying for greater understanding can take many hours.

6. While transcribing, Google any names you cannot understand, or places that you are not familiar with. This will help ensure a correct document. Verify name spellings before finalizing and submitting them to Library of Congress.

7. Write on notebook paper and save the file. Try to establish a standard format to use on all transcripts.

8. If possible have the veteran look over transcript. Ask the veteran, a family member, or friend only to correct names and places, not rewrite the document.


10. The HISTORY™ take a Veteran to School Day site has additional tips and resources for this project at www.veterans.com.

Newspaper Activity:
Over a period of time, or through research at the library or online, locate an article about Veterans Day or an important veteran or military unit in history. Write up a short essay or prepare a poster-board about that veteran or unit and include relevant dates and facts such as which branch of the military they represented, where the veteran or group was stationed and any honors or decorations they received.

George Walker, a 1st lieutenant in the U.S. Army during World War II, answered students questions, in 2004, about his wartime experiences, such as the discovery of a secret Nazi death camp.

Photo by Paul LaRue
France, Oct. 15, 1918.

Mr. McGregor, Smith Cookeville, Tenn.

Dear Greg:

I received a letter from you a few weeks ago but have not had time to answer for we have been exceedingly busy. We are speedy clearing France of the Huns and making Europe safe for you kids to come over next spring. This will be the most peaceable country in the world in about sixty days. You just think that you want to come over here we wont need you. I wanted to come over pretty badly and was happy as a lark the day we left New York but that will be nothing to the state of my feeling when I start back to the states. If the Statue of liberty ever sees me again it will have to about face and come down south to find me after she sees me pass going into the harbor at New York on my way home. This is the wettest muddiest country I ever saw, it has been raining steadily for seven weeks. I stepped in a mud hole the other night and went up to my waist in mud and didn't get to change clothes and in fact I haven't changed yet. I haven't changed for over two month and haven't even had my clothes off for that length of time. I have not had a bath for six weeks and none in sight for I haven't the slightest idea of using what little drinking water I get in my canteen for bathing purposes. I shave as often as possible for the beard on my face keeps my Gas mask from being effective and the Germans use quite a bit of gas. Gas and machine gun is their only effective weapons. I have been on every front in France. You cant imagine how torn up this country really is. Everywhere there are wire entanglements and trenches and dugouts. Even out of the war zone there are entanglements and dugouts to protect the civilians from air raids. I have been from border to border of France and I mean I made the trip on foot throughout the country like a Gypsy horse trader we would hike a while and then stop and fight a while. It was a great hike but a hard one as it was raining every day and night. The hardest fight we were in was in the Argenne Forest. Our batteries were the one that destroyed the machine gun nest at Montfaucon, I was at the Forward observation post the night the barrage was laid during the big drive of the last few weeks. The barrage that night was the heaviest one ever laid in France. I saw ever bit of it and saw the infantry go over the top. That certainly was a night that I will always remember. Our doughboy are the greatest men in the world, they certainly have “Fritz” bluffed: During Aug. When we were in a drive against mount Sac the strongest fortified hill in France we supported a regiment of Negro infantry and when they went over the top and up the hill they were saying to them Germans “take yo hats off white folks no Kazerade [?] to late now.” They sure did slaughter the Huns…

Don't worry about coming over here stay in school that is your service to your country. I am in good health and ready to come home after the war but not before, I will do my bit here. I was appointed for the officers, training camp this month for the third time but refused it, I will go later on in the year I want to stay on the front as long as the war lasts. Be good and study HARD have a good time and write often.

Love to all,

Albert.

Corp. Albert P. Smith

Citation: Dear Home: Letters from World War I. The History Channel. www.historychannel.com/letters/wwiletters.html.
Letter from the Vietnam War

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by Sgt. Robert Gauthier, a platoon leader in the Vietnam War, to Patricia Lala (referred to as Patricia Pugliese) in 1968. As part of the local Junior Women’s Club, Pugliese began writing Marines, and the following text is one of those correspondences. The letter describes the general hardships of war and the moral-boosting impact of these generous letters.

From: Sgt. Robert Gauthier platoon leader
To: Pat Pugliese
Dear Pat and girls,

Let me say girls that the packages of cookies, cheese, crackers and spread couldn’t have come at a better time. The platoon had been out in the field and just came in for a 3 day rest and we were going to go out again for 5-7 days. The packages arrived and we had quite a party, and I must truthfully say that morale was extremely low until your packages came and we had just what you girls wanted, a good old picnic. Everyone joking, talking; the mood changed, we dug up a radio, danced (by ourselves) clowned around and different guys competed for different type dance honors. I won the jitterbug of course, no competition from the younger set. That sure did do a lot more than to mold us back as a good fighting machine…

Now to a sadder note. I regret I must inform you of the deaths and serious wounded of YOUR Marine Pltn., as we have all vowed ourselves YOUR platoon. I and everyman has voted to inform you girls through me and my successor [sic] if I am killed of their fate whether good or bad. As I sit here writing this, alive and recovering from my own wound, the memories of our brave men bring tears to my eyes I am not ashamed of one bit. Each and everyman believed [sic] and died for that belief and that is, America the free and beautiful.

As you can see we lost 25 men and within a week or so now girls you will have about 70-75% of a new platoon…. I can promise you more mail than you’ve been getting. I hope that you’re as understanding as you all seem because the terrible mental and physical strain here is terrific… We have been in the field almost continually for the past 2 months…

With all our love and respect,
Your Temple City Jr. Platoon of U.S. Marines
Your old mean Sgt. Friend, Bob

Citation: Patricia Lala Collection (AFC/2001/001/2236), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

Letter from Horace Evers, World War II

2 May 1945
Dearest Mom and Lou,

A year ago today I was sweating out shells on Anzio Beachhead; today I am sitting in Hitler’s luxuriously furnished apartment in Munich writing a few lines home. What a contrast. A still greater contrast is that between his quarters here and the living hell of DACHAU Concentration Camp only 10 miles from here. I had the misfortune of seeing the camp yesterday and I still find it hard to believe what my eyes told me.

A railroad runs alongside the camp and as we walked toward the box cars on the track I thought of some of the stories I previously had read about DACHAU and was glad of the chance to see for myself just to prove once and for all that what I had heard was propaganda. But no it wasn’t propaganda at all if anything some of the truth had been held back. In two years of combat you can imagine I have seen a lot of death, furious deaths mostly. But nothing has ever stirred me as much as this.

The first box car I came to had about 30 what were once humans in it. All were just bone with a layer of skin over them. Most of the eyes were open and had an indescribable look about them. They had that beaten “what did I do to deserve this” look. Twenty to thirty other box cars were the same. Bodies on top of each other no telling how many. No identification as far as I could see. And then into the camp itself. Filthy barracks suitable for about 200 persons held 1500. 160,000 persons were originally in the camp and 32,000 were alive (or almost alive) when we arrived.

There is a gas chamber and furnace room in one barracks; Two rooms were full of bodies waiting to be cremated. In one room they were all nude — in the other they had prison clothes on. As filthy as dirt itself.

How can people do things like that? I never believed they could until now. Well enough for now — Miss you all very much.

Your son, Horace

This letter used in association with the documentary Dear Home: Letters from World War II aired on The History Channel. No portion of the letter may be published, quoted from, or reproduced in any form without the written consent of the Legacy Project. For more information, please write to: The Legacy Project, Dept. C, PO Box 53250, Washington, DC 20009

Newspaper Activity

Although it seems unimaginable that another Holocaust could occur, even today individuals and groups are the targets of racism, stereotyping, bigotry, discrimination, and, yes, extermination. Watch your newspaper for stories about hate crimes, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, and for each one create a web illustrating who is affected. Write an editorial or short essay about international solutions to this conflict.
In 2007, History Channel developed an outreach initiative called “Take a Veteran to School Day” as a national program to link veterans with students in our schools and communities. Veterans of all backgrounds are invited to share their stories and receive thanks for their years of service. This initiative has been warmly received, with hundreds of schools participating in all fifty states. There are many reasons “Take a Veteran to School Day” resonates so powerfully. We can’t all agree about wars, but we can agree that our vets deserve our support – from the greatest generation to the latest generation. Inviting veterans to share their stories helps illustrate our interest in their experiences while helping young people learn about our past. Participating in this program doesn’t have to be complicated. Holding a “Take a Veteran to School Day” at a school can range from a small program in the library with one or two family members who have served in the military to a district-wide, half-day observance, kicked off by all-school assemblies joined by several veterans, family members, and elected officials. Whether simple or more robust, these events can be a meaningful educational experience for all who are involved.

Many history and social studies classes have done an impressive job of linking students with World War II survivors for powerful oral history projects. Those projects exemplify one kind of curriculum-based activity that HISTORY™ is encouraging. But there are also curriculum links for lower grades. From their special vet visitors, primary students can learn vocabulary (“What does the word veteran mean?”), geography (“Where is Seoul? Where is Fort Hood? Where is Fallujah?”), and concepts such as service. Reading comprehension, always a big focus in many classrooms today, can be another key component. Even small school libraries are often rich in the compelling stories and accounts children find fascinating, from the Revolutionary War to today’s Iraq. Students can create posters about veterans’ affairs, and listen to music that was popular during wartime eras. To encourage these classroom connections to the program, we have developed free guidelines, activities, and resources, linked to state standards, for all grades. These materials are at www.veterans.com. They can help as educators plan a “Take a Veteran to School Day”. We’ve including primary sources as well as helpful web links for more background information and connections to related projects. Some schools in this country are stunningly diverse, others are the exact opposite. “Take a Veteran to School Day” gives your students the chance to meet and talk to men and women from all walks of life. For some children, this alone is an important learning opportunity. To help schools make contact with veterans to participate in this event, we have contacted several not-for-profits to help spread the word. Their information is posted on our www.veterans.com web site. They are eager to link with local schools.

Along with building our students’ core understanding of history and civics, plus art and music, this project can teach a larger lesson. This program gives our young people a chance to welcome all our veterans and recognize their service to our country. We can’t rewrite history, but we can learn from the past. That learning process is something we can share with our students. Many of us remember that Vietnam vets were not given a warm welcome when they came home; in fact, some of them were treated with disdain. We never want to repeat the way some Vietnam vets were treated after they were discharged. Today, most people are eager to welcome our young vets home from wherever they have served. “Take a Veteran to School Day” gives educators and their students the opportunity, and many more rewards. For schools already linking students with veterans, please use this program with our free additional resources to step it up a notch. Some of the inspiration for this project comes from teachers who are currently in the classroom. Tom Gregory and Paul LaRue in Ohio, Tim Gallo in Wilton, Connecticut, Mike Gatto, from Long Island, New York, and Kathryn Parks in Bakersfield, California have worked steadfastly with veterans in their neighborhoods, and shared their impressive results with us. We want to hear more about the ways educators become involved in this program, too. Teachers can email us at veterans@aetn.com to share their plans and student projects. Best practices from some of our teacher advisors will be presented. And by partnering with a local cable provider and newspapers, schools will be able to access even more resources that students will enjoy.

On October 28th, HISTORY™ together with the Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress, will host a National Teach-In on veterans’ history. A panel of scholars and veterans will answer questions from students via video, email, and a live audience. Educators and students nationwide can tune-in and view this LIVE webcast online at www.veterans.com. Viewers will also learn more about how they can record and submit oral histories to the Library of Congress.

To sign up for this webcast and to learn more about how to organize a Take A Veteran to School event at your school or in your community, log on to the “Take a Veteran to School Day” site.

HISTORY™ has identified not-for-profit organizations that support our neediest veterans in a variety of ways, and donated funds to these organizations as part of our commitment. From the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, to the VetDogs organization, to the Wounded Warrior Project, these organizations are just some of the many reputable...
groups that provide service opportunities for young people. Many valuable volunteer and service-based experiences can be woven into “Take a Veteran to School Day.”

All of the information above, and many additional resources, are available at www.veterans.com for any school or community wanting to get involved with this important effort. Reach out to your local cable provider, newspaper (ask for their education representative), and veterans organizations. “Take a Veteran to School Day” can make a difference in your community, in your school’s academic achievement, and in the life of a veteran.

“How To” Guide
Below are some simple steps and a sample agenda for setting up a Take a Veteran to School Day in your local community.

1. Visit www.veterans.com to become familiar with the program and download helpful information HISTORY™ has created to help you get started.

2. Reach out to your local cable provider and newspaper – they may want to collaborate on this project and can help you organize and publicize!

3. Choose a class or school for this program – this can be an elementary, middle, or high school. Activities and events can be tailored to fit a variety of age groups. You may also want to roll out this program in your entire school district.

4. Set up a meeting with teachers, school administrators, or other interested participants to make a plan for Take a Veteran to School Day.

5. Before or after the initial meeting, locate veterans to participate. Three easy ways to reach out to veterans: a) contact your local American Legion or Veterans of Foreign Wars chapter; b) find out if there is a military base nearby – officials there can help you locate appropriate veterans nearby; c) ask students to invite veterans they know in their families or neighborhoods.

6. Try to bring in veterans from more than one branch of the armed forces and/or from different eras – this will give students the opportunity to hear about a variety of experiences.

7. Identify an area within the school in which to have the event. This could be a single classroom, or for a larger group, a cafeteria, auditorium, or school gym. Plan simple invitations to be circulated through the school to veterans, parents, and local officials.

8. Publicize! Notify the press about the project. Get the word out to your communities through school newsletters and other communication routes. Your local newspaper and cable company may be able to help spread the word.

9. Share the activity guides and resources from HISTORY™ with teachers and students. Teachers may want to introduce key concepts to students in preparation for the event.

10. Finalize an agenda for the event.

11. Be sure to document the event through photographs or video.

12. Don’t hide your light under a bushel! Let your community know about your involvement in this project. You might inspire others to make connections with veterans in your community.

Sample Agenda for Take a Veteran to School Day

1. Assemble the class or school for the event.

2. A spokesperson, such as a teacher or other adult, starts the event and welcomes the group. A student representative leads the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. If elected officials or other notable attendees are present, allow them to introduce themselves and say a few words.

4. The group leader introduces the veteran(s).

5. One person, either a designated student or adult, asks the veterans to talk about their roles in the military.

6. Basic questions to ask each veteran: When did you serve? Where did you serve? What was your primary job or role in the military? What do you remember or value most about your years of service? Do you have a story you would like to share? (It would be helpful to assign individual students to ask questions, and make sure their questions are appropriate before the event.)

7. If time allows, locate on a map the areas in which each veteran served.

8. Honor each veteran in some way. Students may want to present a single flower to each veteran, or give the veterans thank you letters that have been written in advance.

9. Close the event with the spokesperson and the class thanking the veteran(s). Applause!

10. If time allows, adjourn for a short reception or lunch. Make sure to take pictures of the event and consider creating a newsletter or an online photo gallery about the event. Send each veteran a thank you note after the event.

Veteran information students should collect or make note of.

1. Veteran(s) name.

2. The branch of the military the veteran(s) served in.

3. The place or places where the veteran(s) served.

4. The war, era and/or years when the veteran(s) served.

5. The veteran(s) name.

6. Note something new about history that you learned.

Newspaper Activities

Find newspaper stories about veteran’s military service, but also people who chose to fulfill their civic responsibility by serving in other ways such as firefighters, police, teachers, volunteers, etc. What is it about their service that makes it stand out beyond being a regular job? What sacrifices may they have to make as part of their service? Discuss ways that you and/or your class can serve your school or community.

Find a newspaper story that identifies a need or problem in your community and develop a class or school service-learning project to help resolve the issue.

Veteran at Susan Wagner High School in Staten Island.

Veteran speaks to PS 56 students in Queens, NY.
General Patton’s Forgotten Troops:

African American Soldiers in World War II in Their Own Words
by Paul LaRue*

African Americans made up over one million of the more than 16 million U.S. men and women to serve in World War II. Some of these men served in infantry, artillery, and tank units. As General George S. Patton Jr. swept across Europe into Germany, in his Third Army were African American combat units. Harry Johns (a veteran of General Patton’s army) sums up their service:

"African Americans served in every branch of service in a mandated segregated military. These men and women discharged their duties with great pride in the face of blatant discrimination and humiliation. The true story and history of their contributions both in combat units and in service units has yet to be included in the complete history of the Allied victory in World War II.

These men and women fought with great courage and faith in the promise of America. They did not despair of this country, for they believed in it and what it stood for."

Biography: Harry Johns

Born 1921, Alliance, OH
Served as a corporal in 999th Field Artillery.

In 1945, there were approximately 240 field artillery battalions in Europe. Approximately eight of these battalions were composed of African Americans. The 999th Field Artillery was one of these African American battalions in Patton’s Third Army. They manned an eight-inch Howitzer that could fire a 200 lb. projectile up to 10 miles. In combat, this battalion fired approximately 22,200 rounds. Corporal Harry Johns was a member of the 999th Field Artillery battalion.

INTERVIEWER: Now, after you were shipped to France, you saw combat throughout this period?

VETERAN: Oh yes, yes, the whole period I was there. So when we were attached to Patton’s Army, they began to plan the break – the fight – at St. Lo, which was big… the hold up. And we, the 999th, fired one of the first artillery barrages at the breakthrough. We called it the “Breakthrough at St. Lo”, France. And we followed Patton all the way through France and all the way through Germany. And at one time we were in continuous combat for nine months and 22 days.

INTERVIEWER: And so you were constantly on the move then?

VETERAN: Always constantly on the move, yes. We would settle in, – I don’t really recall how long we stayed in each place – but once we knocked out the resistance in front of the troops, then we would move, and then the troops would move, you see that’s the way it worked. Sometimes we’d stay in a place pretty long, as I recall, because we’d dig foxholes and fix them up and put logs over them and that’s where we stayed.

Harry Johns returned to Wilberforce University and completed an accounting degree. He then earned a masters degree in Business from Columbia University. Mr. Johns served for thirty years as Dean of the College of Business, controller and Vice President of Fiscal Affairs at Central State University. In 2004, Mr. Johns was one of the five African Americans to attend the 60th anniversary of D-Day in Normandy, France.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us about your Bronze Star?

VETERAN: It was in November around town, called Honskirch, France. The platoon was ordered to move forward after the infantry arrived. The four tanks stayed on road because there could be mines in the field. And so, we sit in the first town, we sit there, waiting. The Germans, being dug in like they were, they knocked the first tank out and it was on fire, burning. They disabled the last one and blocked the road, the other two were blocked in. So, the other two tanks in front of ours, one of them went across a field burning (sigh). I mean, knowing your men are in there burning up is kind of a … something you’ll never forget. And that's why a lot of people don’t like to talk about stuff that happened. But the second tank was on fire and the last one was on fire. And our tank had been hit in the turret and it jammed the turret pointing to the right, that I … and we didn’t know why but it did. We couldn’t turn it and so we, the tank commander had been hit with a piece of shrapnel. I got up and directed driver back the tank around the disabled tank. And we got behind a barn. That’s when, then I got out and went down to try and help some of the men that got out of the other disabled tank. For that I got a Bronze Star.

Bronze Star Citation: Buddie Branch

V. Branch, 35873752, Corporal, Infantry, Company “B”, 761st Tank Battalion, APO 655, U.S. Army, for heroic achievement in action against the enemy on 25 November 1944, in Honskirch, France. Corporal Branch, after having established covering fire for seventeen walking casualties, voluntarily dismounted from his tank, and with utter disregard for his personal safety, distinguished himself by courageous bravery in the face of heavy enemy fire. Corporal Branch succeeded in inspecting six disabled tanks, aided in the removal and evacuation of seven litter cases, carrying each one back approximately three hundred yards to shelters, while enemy 88mm guns, mortars, machine guns, and snipers continued to fire upon the disabled tank column for a period of four and one half hours. Corporal Branch’s courage and devotion to duty is an inspiration to all.

Activities:
1. Identify similarities and differences in the soldier’s stories. How were these veterans’ stories different from what you have seen on T.V. and in the movies? Select a single memory from one of the transcripts and journal about how the story makes them feel.

2. Reflect on these veteran’s and their stories: Patriotism, life in the service, and discrimination. Why do we hear about more of these men? Why did no African American soldier receive the Medal of Honor during WWII?

3. Select and research one of the following topics:
   a.) 761st Tank Battalion.
   b.) Red Ball Express
   c.) African American World War II Medal of Honor winners.
   d.) Segregation of the military in WWII
   e.) Jackie Robinson’s WWII service.
   f.) Life of General George S. Patton Jr.

4. Take part in the Veterans History Project by identifying one or more local WWII veteran and interview them about their service. See information, tips, and examples of interviews at:
   www.loc.gov/vets

*This is a modification of a lesson plan that was created by teacher Paul LaRue and his students at Washington High School, Washington Court House, OH.

Newspaper Activity:
During World War II and beyond, African Americans, other ethnic groups, and women have experienced prejudice and/or racism in the military and society. Based on facts and information from local print and national online newspaper stories, write an editorial or essay on what you believe is the current status of racism and prejudice in America.
Navajo Code Talkers During World War II

Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Peleliu, Iwo Jima: the Navajo code talkers took part in every assault the U.S. Marines conducted in the Pacific from 1942 to 1945. They served in all six Marine divisions, Marine Raider battalions and Marine parachute units, transmitting messages by telephone and radio in their native language — a code that the Japanese never broke.

The idea to use Navajo for secure communications came from Philip Johnston, the son of a missionary to the Navajos and one of the few non-Navajos who spoke their language fluently. Johnston, reared on the Navajo reservation, was a World War I veteran who knew of the military’s search for a code that would withstand all attempts to decipher it. He also knew that Native American languages—notably Choctaw—had been used in World War I to encode messages.

Johnston believed Navajo answered the military requirement for an indecipherable code because Navajo is an unwritten language of extreme complexity. Its syntax and tonal qualities, not to mention dialects, make it unintelligible to anyone without extensive exposure and training. It has no alphabet or symbols, and is spoken only on the Navajo lands of the American Southwest. One estimate indicates that less than 30 non-Navajos, none of them Japanese, could understand the language at the outbreak of World War II.

Early in 1942, Johnston met with Major General Clayton B. Vogel, the commanding general of Amphibious Corps, Pacific Fleet, and his staff to convince them of the Navajo language’s value as code. Johnston staged tests under simulated combat conditions, demonstrating that Navajos could encode, transmit, and decode a threeline English message in 20 seconds. Machines of the time required 30 minutes to perform the same job. Convinced, Vogel recommended to the Commandant of the Marine Corps that the Marines recruit 200 Navajos.

In May 1942, the first 29 Navajo recruits attended boot camp. Then, at Camp Pendleton, Oceanside, California, this first group created the Navajo code. They developed a dictionary and numerous words for military terms. The dictionary and all code words had to be memorized during training.

Once a Navajo code talker completed his training, he was sent to a Marine unit deployed in the Pacific theater. The code talkers’ primary job was to talk, transmitting information on tactics and troop movements, orders and other vital battlefield communications over telephones and radios. They also acted as messengers, and performed general Marine duties.

Praise for their skill, speed and accuracy accrued throughout the war. At Iwo Jima, Major Howard Connor, 5th Marine Division signal officer, declared, “Were it not for the Navajos, the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima.” Connor had six Navajo code talkers working around the clock during the first two days of the battle. Those six sent and received over 800 messages, all without error.

The Japanese, who were skilled code breakers, remained baffled by the Navajo language. The Japanese chief of intelligence, Lieutenant General Seizo Arisue, said that while they were able to decipher the codes used by the U.S. Army and Army Air Corps, they never cracked the code used by the Marines. The Navajo code talkers even stymied a Navajo soldier taken prisoner at Bataan. (About 20 Navajos served in the U.S. Army in the Philippines.) The Navajo soldier, forced to listen to the jumbled words of talker transmissions, said to a code talker after the war, “I never figured out what you guys who got me into all that trouble were saying.”

As of 1945, about 540 Navajos served as Marines. From 375 to 420 of those trained as code talkers; the rest served in other capacities.

Navajo remained potentially valuable as code even after the war. For that reason, the code talkers, whose skill and courage saved both American lives and military engagements, only recently earned recognition from the Government and the public.

The Navajo Code Talker’s Dictionary

When a Navajo code talker received a message, what he heard was a string of seemingly unrelated Navajo words. The code talker first had to translate each Navajo word into its English equivalent. Then he used only the first letter of the English equivalent in spelling an English word. Thus, the Navajo words “wol-la-chee” (ant), “be-la-sana” (apple) and “tse-nil” (axe) all stood for the letter “a.” One way to say the word “Navy” in Navajo code would be “tsah (needle) wol-la-chee (ant) ah-keh-di- glini (victor) tsah-ah-dzoh (yucca).”

Most letters had more than one Navajo word representing them. Not all words had to be spelled out letter by letter. The developers of the original code assigned Navajo words to represent about 450 frequently used military terms that did not exist in the Navajo language. Several examples: “besh- lo” (iron fish) meant “submarine,” “dah-he- ti-hi” (hummingbird) meant “fighter plane” and “debeh-li-zine” (black street) meant “squad.”

Learn more about the Navajo Code Talkers Dictionary at: www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-4.htm

Online resources:
http://bingaman.senate.gov/ features/codetalkers

The following are some excerpts from stories written by students volunteering at the Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans Hospital in Columbia, MO.

**WHY ARE VETERANS SPECIAL? By Cheryl**

In our family room next to the fireplace sits a globe with several black marker lines drawn around it. Your first assumption is that maybe a little kid got hold of it and decided to leave his mark, but on a second look you see that the lines are deliberate routes across the oceans, connecting countries and islands. These lines are in fact the work of my grandpa—a very big kid who took the globe and decided to mark it with his many trips about serving onboard a World War II Naval vessel. I remember listening to him recollect his trips across the Atlantic and Pacific to foreign countries from Great Britain and India to Australia and the Philippines. I also remember wondering what my dad would do when he discovered what my grandpa had done to his globe. Every time my grandparents come to visit, my grandpa has us get the globe and he proceeds to describe his war days to any new “victims” who have not heard the stories.

I don’t think at first I gave my grandpa the respect or admiration he deserved for being a World War II veteran. All I know about the war came from school—it was a horrible part of history that I had no personal connection to, something of a past generation. I politely listened to grandpa at first without any real interest. I was more curious about why he wrote on our globe. I now listen to him with more interest; this is not dull, factual history usually taught at school, but a personal story filled with emotions and eyewitness accounts that will never be in text books. With him, the past comes alive because it is not just about historic figures or major battles of the war, but tales of real people. Veterans like my grandpa are the living bridge to a past. Their memories bring back to life events that are sometimes left in a dusty corner and forgotten. As a younger generation, we need to listen to these veterans because the stories they tell will be something totally unexpected and surprising. You just never know when one will be inspired to draw on your globe!

**WE ARE GRATEFUL by Emily**

Veterans have sacrificed themselves to give to our country. I think it is only right that we give to them the respect and benefits they have earned. I believe all Americans should honor veterans on their special day. There are more than 24 million veterans in the United States. Each one of these men and woman has sacrificed something for our country. I have personally felt what it is like to be close to a veteran. My oldest brother is a Marine who served in Operation Desert Storm. I remember the letters he would write home. They were filled with the sadness of what was happening around him and the hope that the suffering would soon end. He told of how Christmas was going to be especially hard in the barracks. I took one of his letters to school and my class decided to help the soldiers. We made paper chains to decorate the barracks. We made cards to help cheer them. I can still hear my brother’s voice when he called us after the care package had arrived. The soldiers were elated.

They have given us so much. They have sacrificed themselves for our freedom and happiness. All we need to do is show them that they have our respect and care. It is so simple to write a letter and thank someone who has given us our freedom. We can go to a parade. We can visit a VA hospital and talk to a veteran. None of these small acts can compare to what they did for us, but these acts help show our veterans their sacrifices are acknowledged and we are grateful.

**UNDAUNTED SACRIFICE by Josh**

Few can deny feeling a wave of respect, admiration, and thankfulness, overwhelm them as the national anthem echoes notes of freedom. Veterans have not only protected the United States; they are the architect of American nationalism, hold a more zealous connection to this nation than the majority of ordinary citizens. Veterans set aside their personal lives, goals, and ambitions in order to serve. This unselfish commitment to the United States is unparalleled by any other service. Without their bravery, the American dream would perish. Veterans Day is only one day in November, yet every day that we take advantage of our opportunities as Americans, we pay homage to those whose unselfish service protected us and our way of life.
Many veterans return from abroad with injuries sustained on the war front. Numerous government and non-profit agencies and organizations provide care and rehabilitation services for injured veterans. One unique organization, America’s VetDogs, has developed a creative and meaningful way to serve these returning soldiers and veterans of all eras. This organization helps supply and train guide dogs and service dogs for veterans who are visually impaired or who have disabilities other than blindness. The dogs provide a variety of services, helping those with physical injuries maintain balance and independence, as well as giving them great companionship. VetDogs also offers training with assistive technology devices to help blind and visually impaired veterans navigate unfamiliar territory.

The Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind has always served veterans. In 2003, they created America’s VetDogs to be able to serve even more veterans who needed an assistance dog. Since then, the organization has placed numerous guide and service dogs with veterans nationwide.

When they are puppies, these dogs are placed with volunteer puppy raisers who spend a year socializing, teaching basic obedience, and exposing the pups to many experiences before they return to the Guide Dog Foundation headquarters in Smithtown, Long Island for formal training. The dogs can spend up to another 2 years in training before one day partnering with a person with a disability – and some dogs will become VetDogs to assist veterans. Each VetDog is specially trained – whether it’s a guide dog, a service dog, or a military therapy dog. The organization has a detailed application process for veterans who are interested in receiving a dog. Once they have been accepted, VetDogs trains veterans and dogs to work together as a team. Veterans paired with a VetDog are able to keep their new friends permanently, with a lifetime of support from the organization. America’s VetDogs provides these dogs and training free of charge to veterans. Generous donors, foundations, corporations, and service groups help the organization fulfill its mission.

America’s VetDogs has had heartwarming success with this program, helping those who have served our country live with dignity and independence once again. Many veterans who have been given VetDogs speak in their communities about the positive benefits of living with a guide or service dog.

America’s VetDogs® is a non-profit 501(c)(3). To learn more or to make a donation, visit www.guidedog.org/vetdogs.htm.

**Care and rehabilitation organizations for injured veterans.**

**Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund**
www.fallenheroesfund.org
The Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund is a leader in supporting the men and women of the Armed Forces and their families. Since 2000, this independent not-for-profit organization has provided more than $65 million in support for the families of military personnel lost in service to our nation, and for severely wounded military personnel and veterans.

**Wounded Warrior Project**
www.woundedwarriorproject.org
Wounded Warrior Project is a non-profit organization, which provides programs and services to severely injured service members during the time between active duty and transition to civilian life. The organization provides unique, direct programs and services to meet the needs of severely injured service members and helps severely injured service members aid and assist one another.

**PS 83 students in Bronx, NY meet “Mickey” the Vet dog at Take a Veteran to School Day. Credit: Gabe Palacio**
Army Woman Earns Silver Star and Makes History

When a 19 year old from Bowling Green, KY, enlisted in the Army National Guard in 2001, she probably never dreamed she’d become an American hero or that she’d make it into the history books—but that’s exactly what SGT Leigh Ann Hester did in 2005. Her actions during an enemy ambush on a US supply convoy made her an American hero. Being awarded the Silver Star—the nation’s third highest award for valor—for her actions that day, gave her a permanent place in American history.

The enemy ambushed a mission to search convoy routes for Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and to provide additional security to sustainment convoys. Then-23-year-old Hester and her team of military police from the Kentucky National Guard’s 617th Military Police squad, Raven 42, were shadowing a convoy of 30 semi-tractor trailers when insurgents attacked. From irrigation ditches in an orchard near the road, 50 enemy fighters launched their complex attack on the convoy with heavy machine-gun fire and Rocket Propelled Grenades, as well as using parked cars along the route to prohibit movement of US troops. She led her team through the “kill zone” and into a flanking position. SGT Hester assaulted a trench line with grenades and M203 grenade-launcher rounds. Then she and squad leader SGT Timothy Nein cleared two trenches and Hester killed three insurgents. When the firefight ended, only three US soldiers were injured, while 27 Iraqis were dead, six wounded and one captured.

SGT Hester told the American Forces Press Service that she didn’t have time to be scared when the fight began. “Your training kicks in and the soldier kicks in,” Hester says. “It’s your life or theirs. … You’ve got a job to do—protecting yourself and your fellow comrades.”

Being an American hero isn’t something this soldier thinks too much about. She says she was surprised and honored when she found out she was being considered for the Silver Star. She and two others from her unit were awarded the Silver Star at Camp Liberty, Iraq, in June 2005.

Although the Nashville resident is modest about her distinction as a hero, she does recognize the historical significance of being the first woman soldier to be decorated with the Silver Star since WWII. Hester, who was recently discharged from the Army, is one of only 14 women in US military history to receive the Silver Star and the first as a result of direct combat.

Credit: Women In Military Service For America Memorial Foundation, www.womensmemorial.org

An American Hero in Iraq:

Kentucky Army National Guard SGT Leigh Ann Hester, is the first woman since World War II to receive the Silver Star and the first ever as the result of direct combat.

Thank a Veteran at Work

Thank a Veteran at Work encourages employers to take time out of the day to thank the many veterans in our workplaces. On or around November 11th, Veterans Day, take the time to thank the veterans at your workplace.

Tips for how to participate in Thank a Veteran at Work:

1. Organize a morning get-together at your workplace with coffee, juice, and donuts. You may want to hang up a sign of thanks to veterans, or ask someone to say a few brief words of thanks at your gathering. Alternatively, you could host an informal buffet lunch or afternoon cake and coffee break in their honor.

2. HISTORY™ has created Thank a Veteran at Work stickers. Go to www.veterans.com and look for the section on Thank a Veteran at Work to find out how to get these stickers at no charge, while supplies last.

3. Ask your CEO or a senior staff member to send an email message thanking the veterans in your workplace, and the vets who are family members of employees.

4. HISTORY™ offers free Thank a Veteran at Work announcements online to customize, download and print. Visit www.veterans.com to find these flyers and display them in offices, kitchens or other public locations.

Famous Veterans

Actors & Entertainers:
Drew Carey
Gene Hackman
Ed McMahon
Jimi Hendrix
Elvis Presley
Pat Sajak
Charlton Heston
Chuck Norris
Montel Williams
Jim Lehrer

Political Figures
George Bush
Colin Powell
Ronald Reagan
John F. Kennedy
Richard Nixon
Bob Dole

Authors
Dr. Suess
Ernest Hemingway
F. Scott Fitzgerald

Sports Icons
Mike Anderson
Roberto Clemente
Jim Mora
Ted Williams
EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES TO RECOGNIZE VETERANS

Flag-Raising Ceremony
Outdoor flag-raising ceremonies, including the Pledge of Allegiance and the playing of the National Anthem, is a way to recognize Veterans Day. Veterans and special guests may be invited to participate.

Patriotic Groups
Local veterans, historical or other patriotic organizations may enliven Veterans Day programs by providing period-uniformed flag bearers, fife and drum corps, and other marching and musical units. These organizations may also provide speakers with unique military experiences to share.

Messages for Veterans
One of the most personal and meaningful Veterans Day activities for students is to send notes or cards to hospitalized veterans or those living in veterans homes. Students can design and send individual notes or cards or work together as a group to send an oversized card or cards or work together as a group to send an oversized card.

Library Activities
School or community libraries can prepare lists of recommended reading material suitable for Veterans Day. An appropriate display of books or a special shelf containing selected publications can be used to call attention to the project.

Poster Contest
The creative talents of students can be encouraged through a school-wide Veterans Day poster contest. Winners should be appropriately recognized. Local newspapers should be invited to photograph the winning entries.

Musical Program
Veterans Day offers an excellent opportunity for school or community musical organizations to display their talents. A midday concert at the school or at a central location in the community may be dedicated to Veterans Day. Visit the Patriotic Melodies link at the Library of Congress Web site for a sample of patriotic music: www.loc.gov/performingarts/index.html.

Football Games
Veterans Day is observed at the time of year when schools and clubs are engaged in the football season. The presentation of the colors and playing of the National Anthem may be keyed to Veterans Day by an appropriate public address announcement. Halftime presentations by school bands afford an ideal opportunity to offer special patriotic selections and marching routines. Card section displays may also be used to spell out phrases such as “Thank You Veterans” or “Veterans Day” in stadium stands to visually recognize those who served in the military.

Uniforms and Emblems
The colorful and varied uniforms and emblems worn by members of the Armed Forces throughout our history offer students of all ages ideal subjects to draw and paint. Making colored construction paper hats representing various military eras is a modest and effective way of gaining the interest of students in Veterans Day subjects. The official emblems and seals of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard can be portrayed by students in a variety of methods, such as mosaics, applique, decoupage, as well as the traditional painting and drawing approaches.

Movies and Documentaries
To introduce students to a particular war or period of service, show appropriately rated movies and documentaries as a starting point to discuss the history, politics and meaning behind each war.

Students’ Relatives
Ask students to research and list known relatives who have served in the Armed Forces. With nearly a quarter of the United States population consisting of veterans, their dependents and survivors, students may tap into a rich history going back as far as the Revolutionary and Civil Wars.

Writing Assignments
Veterans Day themes can be included in writing assignments. Assign students to write about accounts of military service told by local veterans. Assign students to investigate the various benefits offered to veterans by government agencies. Write about veterans who are receiving educational benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Describe various veterans’ memorials which may be located nearby.

Department of Veterans Affairs
Local VA facilities — medical centers, benefits offices and national cemeteries — can serve as sources of information and speakers for Veterans Day programs. They can also provide contact with local veterans service organizations and arrange visits, tours and other special programs for students. To contact your local VA facilities, look under Department of Veterans Affairs in the federal government listings in the local telephone directory. You can also search by state or zip code at: www1.va.gov/opa/vetsday.

Newspaper Activities
In the days leading up to Veterans Day, November 11, read through your newspaper to discover celebrations that are planned in your area. Talk to your family about attending some of them.

Create a classroom Veterans Day bulletin board or poster by clipping newspaper articles and photographs of veterans and active duty military personnel.

Newspaper Scavenger Hunt and Story: Find at least 15 words that relate to veterans or the armed forces (example: commemoration; war; holiday; military; etc.). Once the 15 words are found, write your own short story using at least 10 of the words you’ve chosen. Give your story a military theme.

Web Resources

American Veterans (AMVET)
K-12 Student Contest Program
http://www.amvets.org/programs/programs_amvets_americanism_program.html

Armed Services YMCA
www.asymca.org

Congressional Medal of Honor
www.cmohs.org

HISTORY™
www.history.com/minisites/veteransday
www.history.com/minisites/letters
www.history.com/minisites/dearhome

Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund
www.fallenheroesfund.org

Take a Veteran to School Day
www.veterans.com

The Purple Heart
www1.va.gov/opa/feature/celebrate/purple-heart.asp

U.S. Army Freedom Team Salute
www.freedomteamsalute.com

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
www1.va.gov/opa/vetsday

VA Kids
www.va.gov/kids

Veterans History Project of The Library of Congress
www.loc.gov/vets

Women in Military Service For America Memorial
www.womensmemorial.org

Wounded Warrior Project
www.woundedwarriorproject.org