HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

Teachers Resource Guide

VETERANS DAY

November 11, 2005

Commemorating 75 Years of Service

Veterans Day 2005

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans Day National Committee are pleased to provide this Teachers Resource Guide. It is our hope that by thanking America's veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice, we can reward them with the honor they so richly deserve.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 24, 2005

I send greetings to teachers and students across America observing Veterans Day.

Throughout our Nation's history, millions of citizens have risked their lives while serving in military conflicts around the globe. Each has answered a great call and demonstrated personal courage, love of country, and devotion to duty. Our veterans give us an example of idealism and character that makes every American proud, and we will always be grateful for their selfless dedication. These patriots hold a cherished place in our history.

Today, as we wage the war on terror and work to extend peace and freedom around the world, we commend the men and women who follow in the footsteps of our veterans. Like generations before them, America's Armed Forces are responding to today's dangers and challenges with firm resolve. Their vital mission helps secure our Nation, and all Americans are grateful for their service and sacrifice.

Mrs. Bush and I thank all those observing Veterans Day. We encourage students to learn more about America, the heroes who defended our country, and those who continue to do so today. By studying our Nation's history, you can take pride in our country and carry our heritage of freedom into the future. On Veterans Day, and in the days ahead, we ask every American to find a way to thank the men and women defending our freedom. By flying a flag, thanking a veteran, or expressing gratitude to family members of our troops, you can show your support. For more information about efforts in your community, visit www.americasupportsyou.mil.

We send our best wishes for a memorable Veterans Day observance. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America.

VETERANS DAY NATIONAL COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 11

Veterans Day National Committee

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Air Force Sergeants Association
United Spanish War Veterans
State Directors of Veterans Affairs
Help Hospitalized Veterans
American Red Cross
American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor
Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge
National Association of State Veterans Homes

Dear Principal:

On Veterans Day, November 11th, the country will recognize America's 25 million living veterans. This is a time for us to pause and reflect upon the sacrifices of our Nation's military veterans, past and present. It is a time not only to recognize them with public ceremonies, but also to seek them out, thank them, and learn from them.

As citizens, we have a responsibility to educate our young people on the contributions veterans have made throughout the years. To help your students gain an appreciation for what America's veterans have done, I have enclosed a CD that features actress/entertainer Jennifer Love Hewitt highlighting youth volunteer opportunities with VA's Voluntary Service, a production segment of "The American Veteran," and a special tribute to VA's National Rehabilitation Special Events.

The CD also contains this year's Veterans Day poster and Teachers Resource Guide. The guide provides information and ideas for your faculty to use in their classrooms as they teach students the true meaning of Veterans Day. For more information, please visit our website at http://www.va.gov/vetsday.

This year, the Department of Veterans Affairs is observing its 75th anniversary of service to veterans and I encourage you to plan an active Veterans Day program in your school and to encourage your students to participate in their community's observance of Veterans Day to show all who served that a grateful Nation remembers.

Thank you for honoring veterans on this special day.

Sincerely yours,

R. James Nicholson

Enclosure

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (002C), 810 VERMONT AVE., N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20420

Area Code (202) 273-8109 http://www.va.gov/vetsday/

Veterans Day 2005

Teachers Resources

THE SCHOOL ASSEMBLY:

Because the weather can be quite cold in November in many parts of the country, an indoor assembly is far more sensible than one that would take place outside, eliminating the need to have foul weather contingency plans.

The scope of such a program may be large enough to permit invitations to the community-at-large, to include local veterans groups. Students can be encouraged to bring family members that are veterans (especially grandparents) or those that are currently in the Armed Forces.

Inviting local veterans groups:

Inviting local veterans groups can make assembly programs far more exciting and meaningful for students. Students tend to better understand and absorb the significance of Veterans Day when they can attach a human face to it.

In addition, veterans groups often put on very exciting shows. From stirring renditions of the National Anthem and Taps to thrilling speeches and stories, veterans, as guests, will both entertain and educate students with enthusiasm.

Veterans groups in your area can be found through your local veterans service organization chapters and VA hospitals. You might be surprised at how many veterans live in your area. Schools that send out invitations often end up with former generals and admirals, Medal of Honor recipients and other distinguished guests coming to speak.

Program Guide:

Undoubtedly, your school will want to put on a program worthy of all these distinguished guests. The following are some suggestions and a sample program guide that will make this Veterans Day memorable for both students and special guests:

Prelude and Posting of Colors – As the audience enters to be seated, a school or community musical organization may offer several appropriate selections. A procession and posting of the Nation's colors (the American flag) is always a stirring event.

Local veterans service organizations often participate in such programs with their impressive array of military banners and American flags.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and singing of the National Anthem – The program chairperson, school principal or student body president, should invite the audience to stand and join in the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem.

Introductory Remarks – Brief introductory remarks set the tone for the program. Consider reading the President's Veterans Day Proclamation, which the White House issues and posts on the Internet shortly before Veterans Day. For more information, go to the web site at www.whitehouse.gov.

Additional remarks and suitable quotations for speeches can be found on the Veterans Day web page or use any of the quotes featured in this guide.

Introduction of Guests – Introduce any special guests, which might include local government officials, school alumni with distinguished military service, veterans from the community who represent different periods of service and faculty members who are veterans.

Principle Speaker – Your principle speaker should be invited far enough in advance to allow adequate preparation for your program.

Special Musical Selection – A band or choral group could offer one of the more impressive patriotic selections available.

Student Essay or Reading – By including various presentations by individual pupils in school programs, student body participation may be increased. Selected essays from class or school-wide competitions may be offered by the student-author. A reading of a well-known patriotic address by an American President or military hero is also effective. There are a number of published musicals/narratives which can enhance your program. A short play or skit performed by the younger students can be exciting as well. One such play is included in the section for younger students.

Moment of Silence, Taps – While Veterans Day is primarily a tribute to America's living veterans, and is typically observed more as a celebration than as a somber remembrance (Memorial Day), it is always appropriate to include a moment of respect for those who gave their lives for their country. The signing of the World War I Armistice took place in a railway coach near the battle zone in France. The bugles sounded cease fire and the hostilities ended, marking a most significant moment in world history. Although 11:00 a.m. remains a traditional hour for this type of tribute, a moment of silence is appropriate at any point in the program. This may be followed by a rendition of "Taps." For more information on the history of Taps please visit www.tapsbugler.com.

Closing – The Master of Ceremonies announces "Retire the Colors." Accompanied by appropriate music, such as a John Philip Sousa march, the Colors are paraded out of the assembly area. This concludes the ceremony.

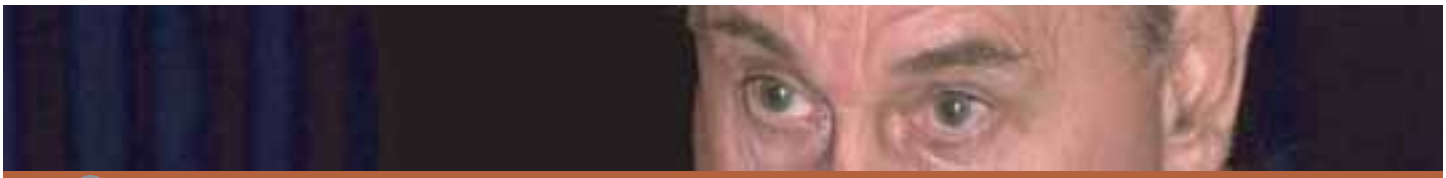
CLASSROOM ACTIVITY GUIDE:

School Newspaper

Veterans Day stories can be featured in school publications. Publish a roster of faculty members who are veterans. Describe Veterans Day activities being held in classrooms throughout the school.

Poster Contest

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



Flag-Raising Ceremony

Weather permitting, outdoor flag-raising ceremonies highlight an activity that occurs daily at many schools, but often goes unnoticed. Such a ceremony, although brief, should include the Pledge of Allegiance and the playing of the National Anthem. A special guest may be invited to participate.

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 poster signed by all of the students in a class. The cards and posters can then be mailed in one large envelope to the nearest VA medical center or state veterans home.

Addresses for state veterans homes and VA medical centers in your area can be found in the blue government pages of the telephone book.

There also is a link to the VA facility locator on the Veterans Day web page: www.va.gov/vetsday.

Envelopes sent to medical centers should be addressed to "Voluntary Service Director" and those sent to veterans homes should be addressed to "Administrator."

Musical Program

Veterans Day offers an excellent opportunity for school or community musical organizations to display their talents. A mid-day concert at the school or at a central location in the community may be especially dedicated to Veterans Day.

An innovative program might include selections known to have been popular during America's wars.

Library Activities

School or community libraries can prepare lists of recommended reading material suitable for Veterans Day. An appropriate display of book jackets or a special shelf containing selected publications can be used to call attention to the project. For more ideas, go to the Library of Congress web site for children at http://www.americaslibrary.gov.

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.

School Cafeteria Activities

Patriotic decorations in school dining areas add a colorful reminder of Veterans Day. One could create special menu items such as decorated cupcakes or cookies. Download VA's Veterans Day 2005 poster from the web site for placement in the cafeteria, in classrooms and on school bulletin boards.

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.

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. Elementary school children enjoy opportunities to create and exhibit costume items. 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. Consider bringing a veteran into the classroom to discuss his or her personal experience in service and how it compares to the movies.

Department of Veterans Affairs

Local VA facilities – medical centers, regional 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.

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. One of the most popular activities among students is to meet with local veterans during an assembly or in individual classrooms to hear veterans share their experiences and answer questions. The veterans can be relatives of students or members of local veterans service organizations.

Students' Relatives

Ask students to research and list all their known relatives who have served in the Armed Forces. With more than 30 percent 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 War.

Plays and Skits

A short dramatic scene can make Veterans Day meaningful for students by providing an opportunity to perform historical research and use creativity to express their feelings about veterans. The script for a play written for elementary school students to perform can be found on page 25 of this guide.

The following sections provide hand-outs and fun games for students, which will help them better understand and appreciate Veterans Day. Please select hand-outs that are appropriate for the grade level of your students and feel free to reproduce the following pages as necessary.

VA NATIONAL REHABILITATION SPECIAL EVENTS

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Rehabilitation Special Events promote the healing of body and spirit. They motivate eligible veterans to reach their full potential, improve their independence, achieve a healthier lifestyle and enjoy a higher quality of life.

Each year VA sponsors four national events for U.S. military veterans served by VA medical facilities nationwide. Each program enhances physical, social and emotional well-being of veterans who participate. Veterans involved in these events and the hundreds of VA employees and volunteers who support them each year all share a strong sense of purpose and camaraderie.

The four special events are the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, National Veterans Wheelchair Games, National Veterans Golden Age Games and the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. To learn more about how to get involved, please log onto:

www1.va.gov/opa/speceven

"The Winter Sports Clinic has made a big difference in my life. I believe that there is life after an injury, and the Climic teaches you to adapt to your disability and to believe in yourself. I enjoy sharing with newly injured veterans what is possible."

-Terry Livingston

Winter Sports Clinic

Wheelchair Games

Golden Age Games

Creative Arts Festival

Veterans Day National Committee
2005

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The Retired Enlisted Association

Congressional Medal of Honor Society of the USA

Disabled American Veterans

Military Officers Association of America

Polish Legion of American Veterans, USA

Korean War Veterans Association

American G.I. Forum

Jewish War Veterans of the USA

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Catholic War Veterans, USA

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Help Hospitalized Veterans

National Association of State Veterans Homes

Gold Star Wives of America

Air Force Association

Air Force Sergeants Association

National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs

Veterans of WWI of the USA

American Red Cross

Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge

National Association for Uniformed Services

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