



## “How to Conduct... Program & Project” Series It's as Easy as 1, 2, 3!

Number 6

Adapted from the Cherokee County Council of PTA's

Operation Honor

# How to Conduct an Operation Honor Program



### *Step 1: Learn about the program.*

#### **What is the Operation Honor Program?**

*Operation Honor* was started by the former Cherokee County Council of PTA Co-President Leslie Cushman. The number of WWII veterans rapidly on the decline, gave importance to the program. *Operation Honor* preserves the memories of these veterans and all military campaigns on video tape. The videos are then used to educate students, families and the general public on the “real-life” of military involvement.

The County PTA requested sponsorship for the program and received more than \$2,500 contributed by the United Way, Sam's Club and the Aerospace Education Foundation. This grant paved the way to enlist a high school to sponsor the program. Etowah High School PTSA enthusiastically embraced the program. The challenge was underway with the cooperation of the PTSA and JR AFROTC who volunteered to interview the veterans and to make the video.

The April 2001 meeting with the PTA Council Co-President, Council *Operation Honor* Chairperson, and the ROTC Commander began the 6 month process of interviewing and videotaping about 20 of Cherokee County veterans who served in WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Gulf War. Many hours of editing, directing and filming by the

Jr. AFROTC cadets produced a 45-minute video that spotlights veterans who share their experiences in combat, and the stories of camaraderie. After listening to what the veterans sacrificed and contributed for their country, the cadets expressed that they could only say, thanks.

#### **The first Operation Honor reception**

The Etowah High School cafeteria was decorated in red, white and blue. War memorabilia including military uniforms, weapons and military goods were displayed on the walls and display cases. Student art projects and reports on the subject of war heroes hung around the room for easy viewing. Flowers and plants donated by a local florist and arranged by the EHS floral department encircled the podium where a local decorated veteran would be the keynote speaker. Local businesses, organizations, churches, and of course parents and students of Etowah High School were excited to see their hard work come together in making the “*Operation Honor*” video debut a classy affair.

JR. AFROTC Cadets served as greeters. The interviewed veterans with their family members were given a corsage or boutonniere and escorted to reserve seating. The program opened with the ROTC presenting the colors, and the EHS Choir performed the National Anthem and God Bless America. The key speaker introduced the special guest and gave a brief overview of the project. Drama students performed an especially moving short play entitled “The Wall of Pilgrimage”. A short clip of the video was previewed and the former council president and current council president presented a copy of the

video and specially made “*Operation Honor*” commemorative ball cap to the interviewed veterans.

The Etowah High School Veterans Day program event was attended by nearly 200 people. “*Operation Honor*” was a labor of love by many people.

### **More about the program**

Local media covered this event and the entire program was video taped to be distributed to those who are shut-in or otherwise unable to attend. Extra copies of the documentary was distributed to all Cherokee County School Media Centers, to the United Way, to the County Public Libraries, various veteran organizations, area nursing homes housing veterans, state and national government military offices, and state and national PTA offices. The charge is for other schools to duplicate this program and share with their community.

A copy was also sent to The American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. This center supports the Veterans History Project; the mission is to collect the memories, accounts, and documents of war veterans and to preserve their stories of experiences and service for future generations.

Cherokee County Council of PTA goals were to make the video available through the school and the library system for anyone interested in the project.

### **A Second Operation Honor Program**

The second *Operation Honor* was held at Sequoyah High School. A new video was created and shown to each grade level on a different day of the week. This led to Friday when the veterans and their families were invited to a huge pep rally held in their honor. Every student had seen the video and was familiar with each veteran. There wasn't a dry eye in the house.



### ***Step 2: Plan and publicize the program.***

#### **Organizing an Operation Honor Program**

If your local unit is a member of a council, find out if the council

plans to have a council-wide *Operation Honor* program. If so, follow their directions and rules.

If your local unit is not a member of a council or if your council does not plan to participate in the program, your local unit can still conduct the program. Either the regular program chairperson and committee or a special committee formed for that purpose can plan the *Operation Honor* program. If you choose a special committee, be sure they coordinate efforts with the regular program committee.

### **If conducting your own program:**

- Select veterans that have served in WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Gulf War.
- Choose veterans that live within your council's county.
- Decide how many veterans you will interview and who will be interviewing them.
- Decide who will coordinate how the veterans will be contacted and interviewed.
- Set a deadline for completing the interviews.
- Choose a date and location for your recognition reception.
- If conducting at a local unit level, you may want to do this during November 11-17 which has been recognized by President George Bush in 2001 as National Veterans Awareness Week.
- Plan your reception/program. Do you want to have entertainment? Who will provide it? Who will you invite to the program?
- What will be your budget for the program?
- Will certificates or commemorative gifts be presented to veterans, and/or to all participants?
- Will refreshments be served?
- Involve your principal/superintendent in the planning of your program. He/She may have resources available to assist you.
- Publicize the program in your newsletter, at PTA meetings, on bulletin boards, and other local media. Ask your local newspaper to do a story on the veterans.
- Send a public service announcement (PSA) to your local radio stations at least a week prior to the event.
- Prepare a program sheet and handouts, and be sure to have enough for everyone.

### ***Step 3: Conduct and evaluate the program.***



After you've made your plans, prepare an assignment list and delegate the various tasks to committee members. If you are hosting a recognition reception, remember to invite PTA/PTSA presidents, principals, local administrators, past presidents, and any other special guests.

After the program has been completed, write a report for next year's committee. Be sure to include a timeline for the program, a budget, copies of all forms (rules, entry form, certificates, etc.) and suggestions for improvements.

Remember to send thank you notes to everyone involved – judges, businesses that made donations, etc.

### ***Did You Know?***

The term the whole 9 yards came from WWII fighter pilots in the Pacific. When arming their airplanes on the ground, the .50 caliber machine gun ammo belts measured exactly 27 feet, before being loaded. If the pilots fired all their ammo at a target, it got "the whole 9 yards."

Rank Five Star General was created during WWII to address the fact that several American commanders found themselves in the delicate position of supervising Allied officers of higher rank. There were 9 Five Star Generals; they are **Generals of the Army:** Dwight D Eisenhower, George C. Marshall, Omar N. Bradley, and Douglas MacArthur. **General of the Air Force:** Henry H. Arnold **Fleet Admirals:** William D. Leahy, Earnest J. King, Chester W. Nimitz, and William F. Halsey. When General of the Army Omar N. Bradley died in April of 1981, the five star ranking was consigned to history.

In World War II approximately 400,000 American military women served stateside and overseas? Women served in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps,

and Coast Guard and as members of the Women Air force Service Pilots.

Servicewomen Overseas: **World War 11** (1941-45) 18,000, **Korean War** (1950-53) 600, **Vietnam War** (1964-73) 7,500 **Grenada** (1983) 116, **Panama** (1989) 700, **Persian Gulf** (1991) 33,365, **Somalia** (1992-94) 300, **Haiti** (1994-95) 400, **Bosnia** (1996-97) 3,000.

The VA estimates that more than 275,000 veterans are homeless on any given night and more than half a million experience homelessness over the course of a year.

### **For additional information go to:**

- [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)
- [www.loc.gov/folklife/vets](http://www.loc.gov/folklife/vets)
- [www.lcweb@loc.gov](mailto:www.lcweb@loc.gov)
- [www.veterans-upwardbound.org](http://www.veterans-upwardbound.org)
- <http://veterans.house.gov>

### **Canine Heroes**

Dogs have served in the U.S. military during every modern war—World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War, in Bosnia, and in Afghanistan—as trackers, scouts, sentries, and messengers; as attack dogs, mine detection dogs, and rescue dogs.

**Internet links:** [www.vdhaonline.org](http://www.vdhaonline.org)  
[http://www.greatpyreneesrescue.net/dogs\\_who\\_serve.htm](http://www.greatpyreneesrescue.net/dogs_who_serve.htm)

**NOTE:** Material presented was taken from research on the Internet related to US War Veterans. If you disagree with the facts presented on this page, let us know- we stand to be corrected.





## Flag Folds...

Have you ever noticed the honor guard pays meticulous attention to correctly folding the American flag 13 times? You probably thought it was to symbolize the original 13 colonies, but we learn something new every day!

**The 1st fold** of our flag is a symbol of life.

**The 2nd fold** is a symbol of our belief in eternal life.

**The 3rd fold** is made in honor and remembrance of the veterans departing our ranks who gave a portion of their lives for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world.

**The 4th fold** represents our weaker nature, for all American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in time of war for His divine guidance.

**The 5th fold** is a tribute to our country.

**The 6th fold** is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that We pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States Of America, and the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.

**The 7th fold** is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they are found within or without the boundaries of our republic.

**The 8th fold** is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day.

**The 9th fold** is a tribute to womanhood, and Mothers. For it has been through their faith, their love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great has been molded.

**The 10th fold** is a tribute to the father, for He, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born.

**The 11th fold** represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies in the Hebrews' eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**The 12th fold** represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in the Christians' eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit.

**The 13th fold**, or when the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost reminding us of our nation's motto, "In God We Trust."

~After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington, and the Sailors and Marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones, who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for us the rights, privileges and freedoms we enjoy today.

In the future, when you see flags folded you will know the reason for each fold.

***“Go to any community in this country and you will find veterans in positions of service and leadership. In so many ways, veterans live out the meaning of patriotism and idealism and concern for others. Those of us who are the children and grandchildren of veterans have seen those qualities up close -- each of us is better because of the influence of a veteran. And so is America.”*** President George Bush

Veterans Day, November 11, 2002  
Arlington National Cemetery  
Arlington, Virginia

Special thanks to the Cherokee County Council of PTAs and Debi Radcliff of Etowah High School PTSA for developing the *Operation Honor* program and sharing it with the Georgia PTA!