

SPECIAL OBSERVANCE PLANNING GUIDE

EVENT IDEAS

- PPT Presentation run on Base CCTV
- Did You Know/Facts of the Day
- Email/Broadcast/Base Paper Contest with Prizes?
- Art Exhibit
- Luncheon
- Musical Concert
- Film Festival at Base Theater
- Historic Artifact Display
- Cultural Display
- Cultural Food Festival
- Fun Run
- Poster Contest
- Pole Ceremony
- Signage
- Parade Walk
- Baker
- Bunting
- Entertainment
- at Library

MAY						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3				
8	9	10				
15	16	17				
22	23	24				
29	30	31				

JUNE						
Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo
2	3	4	5	6		
8	9	10	11	12	13	
15	16	17	18	19	20	
22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30				

TASK CHECKLIST

- Identify project officer and alternate
- Receive command guidance
- Identify key supporting staff
- Announce and hold initial coordination meeting
- Identify committee chairs and establish subcommittees
- Recruit committee volunteers
- Identify theme
- Develop events/activity plan—check calendars and select date
- Develop budget
- Develop timeline
- Provide status updates to commander/senior leader and receive feedback
- Reserve venue
- Reserve speaker and alternate (if required)
- Develop publicity plan, write articles, promote the event
- Coordinate menu and special meals (if required)
- Coordinate for special accommodations (if required)
- Coordinate for medical and security (if required)
- Coordinate/reserve lodging and transportation (if required)
- Coordinate entertainment
- Coordinate audio-visual support, public address systems, lighting
- Schedule PAO coverage (writers, photographers, videographers)
- Print programs, flyers, brochures, tickets, recognition certificates
- Plan decorations
- Identify escorts and ushers
- Reserve senior leader calendar (minimum 45 days prior to event)
- Conduct final coordination

OCTOBER

Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
5						

TIMETABLE

ACTION	POC	TASKED INDIVIDUAL(S)
Design & order flyer/poster displays for exchange, library, theater, dining facility		
Reserve and confirm entertainment		
Task displays		National singer/band limits with...
		Request use of write verbiage for announcement
	Project officer and committee chairs	
		Send email to all personnel on the master guest list; maintain list of all who RSVP; add roster to VIP memo for protocol
		Submit civilian bio to legal for review and approval
	Coordinate venues	
	Send POC flyer	
	Project officers, committee chairs	
		Proof prior to printing

PROPOSED BUDGET

Venue	\$250
Posters	\$60
Signage	\$40
Flyers	\$30
Promo Items	\$100
Total	\$480

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Internet Site

You can check the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) website, www.deomi.org, for the latest observance themes and information.

Cover

The cover was created by DEOMI's graphic artist, Mr. Pete Hemmer. The DEOMI Staff also develops free observance posters that are downloadable and available at www.deomi.org.

This Guide

Planning in detail and coordinating with command and support offices are critical from initial concept development to event completion and closing of the historical files. Observances are command functions that support equal opportunity goals and ethics/values training. Maximum participation should be one objective.

As with all programs of a professional nature, planning must be conducted in a meticulous manner and preferably with the use of milestones and detailed checklists. This guide has been developed to support planning and conducting a special observance. The examples provided in this guide are not inclusive in nature and can be modified as necessary to support the needs of project officers and established committees.

It is suggested that planners use all available local resources in planning an observance. Staff members (military and government civilian), family members, and local community members may all be willing to assist in the planning and/or conduct of an observance.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of Mr. Jay Steinke, Ms. Rebecca (BJ) Marcum, Mr. Bryan Ripple, SFC Michael Christian, Ms. Stacy Cochcroft, and many others for their assistance and insight in the development and update of this publication.

Overview

Your organization has decided it wishes to conduct a special observance. So, where do you start? What should you do? This guide will provide you with instructions and considerations you may wish to explore as you begin this rewarding process. But first, let's look at some common questions that typically arise regarding this topic.

What are Special Observances and why do we do them?

From a Department of Defense (DoD) standpoint, special observances are events and activities designed to enhance cross-cultural and cross-gender awareness and promote harmony, pride, teamwork, and esprit de corps among military members, their families, and the civilian work force. They are conducted to recognize the continuous achievements of all Americans to American culture and to increase awareness, mutual respect, and understanding. The focus of a special observance should be on encouraging interaction, not just recognition.

Background

Observances are held annually in support of Joint Congressional Resolutions, Presidential Proclamations, and achievements of all groups that comprise American society. Since 1968, the DoD has proudly supported observances through the development of local recognition programs and diverse activities.

There are more than 112 different observances that the President and/or Congress annually recognize by designating specific days, weeks, or months to commemorate groups, causes, or events with special recognition and activities.

From an equal opportunity and historical standpoint, most military organizations have typically recognized eight specific special observances throughout the year. Appendix A is a list of those special observances historically recognized within the DoD and those that have been added later. Many of these observances have evolved over time and may be named slightly differently depending upon the issued Presidential Proclamation, law, and/or sponsoring organization's guidance. Yet, despite the possible title differences, the purpose and emphasis of the events remain the same.

Which observances are recognized and ultimately supported is determined by the commander based on individual organizational desires and Service guidance.

How extensive is an observance? What activities do we conduct?

Recognizing and honoring an observance can take many forms. It can range from something as simple as issuing a written observance proclamation to a full slate of activities (see page 5 for a range of ideas). The magnitude of the observance depends on the interest, desire, available resources, and involvement of the community. Past observances have included poster displays, essay contests, dances, games, plays, movies, facilitated discussions, luncheons or dinners, guest speakers, and reenactments. Ultimately, what a unit decides to do is only limited by available resources and the imagination of the planners and participants.

Who conducts the observance?

Conducting a quality special observance requires a dedicated team effort. Depending on the scope of the observance and the size of the organization, key roles, responsibilities, and tasks can vary among organizations and team members. Some key participants may include:

- The organizational commander or senior leader
- The project officer and alternate
- Special observance committees
- Other unit leaders and members
- Community volunteers—family members, civilians, special interest groups
- Guest speakers
- Other staff
 - Military equal opportunity office/equal opportunity advisor/command climate specialist/equal employment opportunity office
 - Staff judge advocate
 - Protocol
 - Public affairs office
 - Resource management office (budget)
 - Chaplain
 - Morale, welfare, and recreation office (MWR)

What resources are available to assist me in conducting an observance?

The DEOMI website, located at www.deomi.org, provides a variety of tools and information to support conducting a special observance. Additionally, DEOMI produces high-quality posters and other media for potential use. These items are free and can be downloaded in high resolution form and printed locally. Other key resources are your own staff experts and unit members. Additionally, local civic groups, cultural groups, civil rights groups, and others have a wealth of expertise and contacts with other speakers, dancers, singers, etc., who may be appropriate for supporting your observance. At the end of this guide are sample checklists, timetables, and other documents that can be tailored for use in developing a special observance event.

What is the Observance Theme?

The observance theme can come from a variety of places. Many special observances have civilian sponsoring organizations that issue a unique or standard theme to support the observance. The president of the United States also typically issues a Presidential Proclamation for many of these observances. Organizations may use the provided theme, a previously published theme, or they may create one for their own use. To assist in identifying an appropriate theme, DEOMI updates and publishes identified themes for historically recognized special observances as they are announced by various groups. A listing of these themes can be found on DEOMI's website, and you should check it regularly for the most recent announcement. It is important to note, however, that DEOMI does not create special observance themes.

How do I make my observance successful?

To ensure a successful special observance, the following components should be considered.

- Strong command support – The organization's commander or senior leader is key to a successful observance. The senior leader provides essential guidance and intent and approves all activities. The senior leader also ensures adequate support, participation, and resources are available for an effective observance.
- Quality leadership – An energetic and aggressive project officer and alternate are

essential for coordinating and ensuring the observance meets the commander/senior leader's and community's intent.

- Planning – Thorough and detailed planning is essential for success. Planning must be conducted in a meticulous manner and should include using milestones and checklists to ensure all particular details are identified and appropriately coordinated or addressed. Examples of committee member responsibilities, milestones, and timetables can be found in this guide and can be tailored for unit use.
- Funding – Adequate funding is critical. Without it, programs may be limited in scope and/or success. Tailoring an event to available funding or acquiring additional funding may be necessary to meet the needs and abilities of the organization.
- Use of on-installation resources.
 - Staff agencies
 - Libraries
 - Army and Air Force Exchange Service/Navy Exchange (AAFES/NEX)
 - Recreation centers/morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) facilities
 - Department of Defense dependent schools (DODDS)
- Engagement of off-installation resources.
 - Civil rights groups
 - Ethnic/cultural groups
 - Special interest groups
 - Local military support organizations
 - Local and community governments
 - Schools and universities
 - Religious groups
 - Radio/television/newspapers

Budgetary Requirements

Properly funding an observance is an essential element in the success or failure of the unit program. Depending on the size, location, and scope of the observance, resource needs will vary. As with any DoD-supported program, thorough forethought and planning must be accomplished well in advance of the target date of the observance. To support your efforts in this area, consider the following sequence of events and recommendations:

Before the submissions for the annual budget proposals for the fiscal year, a thorough review of the observances for scope and costs should be developed. Factors to consider include the degree of past local interest in each event or observance, command emphasis, the overall unit budget history, and potential costs for the observances. Anticipated costs for guest speakers (honorariums, transportation, per diem, lodging, plaques), publicity, education programs, literature, entertainment, luncheons, and any other related miscellaneous expenses should be identified. An estimated budget should be prepared for each observance. Finally, the support and personal emphasis of the commander will play a major role in determining adequacy of funding.

Upon approval of the annual budget, funds must be phased into the proper fiscal quarter to coincide with the observances to pay for the services, transportation, per diem, and lodging cost for any guest speakers.

Depending on the Service, operating and maintenance (O&M), EO program management, or education and training funds may be spent on activities and publications that are intended to promote cross-cultural harmony and awareness. Examples of permissible expenditures include guest speaker fees, travel, guest speaker meals, artistic or cultural activities, food exhibits, or samples (samples are not intended as meals or refreshments). An honorarium is usually limited to a set dollar amount. Invitational travel orders can be issued for travel, per diem, and lodging. Additionally, funds may be allocated to commercial entertainment groups as part of an educational awareness program. Coordinate funding actions with your servicing staff judge advocate general and see appropriate Service regulations for specific guidance.

It is critical that the project officer meet with the resource advisor as early as possible after appointment. During this initial meeting, the project officer must determine the dollars available for the observance and begin initial planning. He or she might also appoint a finance committee to coordinate the expenditure of funds with the other committees and with the resource advisor. The project officer should closely monitor the finance committee and be apprised of any problems or shortfalls encountered.

Event Ideas

A full range of options exist for your observance. Use your ingenuity and be imaginative. The senior leader's desires, available funding, other resources, community participation, and organizational size may also dictate your final concept. Below are potential ideas that can be conducted singularly or in conjunction with others.

- Installation closed captioned television (CCTV) presentations
 - PowerPoint presentations
 - Cultural/historical movies
- Did You Know/Facts of the Day
 - Email/broadcast/installation newspaper
 - Installation marquee/kiosk
- Art exhibit
- Musical concert
- Film festival at installation theater
- Contests with prizes
 - Essay contest
 - Poster contest
 - Historical/cultural knowledge games
- Dramatic reenactments of historical events
 - Plays or skits
- Dramatic readings
 - Poems
 - Speeches
 - Legislation
 - Book excerpts
- Historical artifact/cultural displays
- Museum or historical and cultural site visits or staff rides
- Cultural dance demonstration
- Cultural food festival
- Cultural education, training, or facilitated discussions
- Cultural food tasting
- Fashion show
- Craft show
- Fun run
- Orienteering and trivia physical training (PT) event
- Remembrance walk
- Poster displays
 - Historical achievements
 - Historical/cultural achievers – military heroes, scientists, artists, innovators, etc.
 - Contributions to society
 - Cultural challenges
- Luncheon or dinner
- Guest speaker
- Book signing
- Book reading at child development center or library
- Flag pole remembrance ceremony

Guest Speaker Considerations

Many organizations use a guest speaker as their program's main event or to augment one of its activities. Guest speakers can add a personal flavor to any observance, and a great variety of possibilities exist from which to choose. Guest speakers can include military or government employees, civic leaders, academics, historical figures, individuals of prominence, civil rights members and leaders, those who were the first in their field, and others.

Choosing the right speaker can significantly add to a program's impact. However, not all speakers are the right choice. Speakers don't need to be members from the referenced group to be effective but are individuals who can connect with the audience and who can clearly articulate the reason and purpose for the observance. Speakers should meet the observance's primary objective of promoting the achievements and awareness of the recognized group and encouraging pride, teamwork, and esprit of corps among the entire workforce. Below are some possible candidates.

- Leaders who have valued, managed, mentored, and assisted members of the group.
- Individuals that have a positive, historical tie to the reference group; examples include civil rights advocates or others who have lived, experienced, or contributed to the positive life history of the group.
- Individuals who are bona fide researchers, academicians, or others who have studied aspects of the reference group.
- Individuals who have been a first for the referenced group in some capacity, occupation, or major achievement.

Finding the right speaker for an event can be a challenge. Many speakers are recommended based on word-of-mouth or through a group connected to the referenced group, but even these may not be appropriate for your setting. It is highly encouraged that a first-hand observation of a prospective speaker be made at an event if at all possible prior to the final selection being made. Many organizations and installations have a speaker's bureau operated by the installation Public Affairs office; check with them to see if there is someone they can recommend for your observance.

Your guest's speech or talking points should be acquired in advance. The remarks should be provided to the commander, the public affairs office, and the staff judge advocate for review. It is highly encouraged that you provide your guest speaker, once confirmed, with some recommended talking points, which may prevent certain pitfalls and misstatements.

Pitfalls

Many things can affect a speaker's performance (e.g., illness, age, mental lapses). A distraction (e.g., a loss of glasses) can be detrimental. Speakers, regardless of age or experience, can unexpectedly deviate from the plan. An unprepared, rambling speaker or one who intentionally or unintentionally attacks a group or its members can be extremely damaging to a program.

Don't assume that an organizational senior leader is an adequate speaker based on position, rank, and/or affiliation with a reference group. Leaders may or may not be aware of the challenges, contributions, achievements, or sensitivities of a particular group to include their own. Leaders should be adequately prepared by their staff with relevant talking points and potential considerations prior to speaking before a group. Off-the-cuff comments are almost always dangerous to some degree and should be avoided. Nothing is worse than having a senior

leader make a faux pas in an open forum.

A senior member should always be identified and ready to assume control if a speaker strays into the unexpected or begins a damaging tirade. Plans to address an issue of this type can include turning off the speaker's microphone, having a leader interrupt the speech for the sake of time, or re-sequencing the program's events. If necessary, a senior leader may also have to make subsequent remarks and conduct damage control if inflammatory or inappropriate comments are made. Always have a plan and be prepared for the unexpected.

Planning Steps

Following specific steps can ensure all relevant details and necessary planning tasks are identified and accomplished to support the observance. To assist in this process, the 12-step process below has been developed with an extensive observance in mind but can be simplified based on local needs and desires.

12-Step Special Observance Planning Process

Depending on the size, scope, and complexity of the planned observance, the following 12-step process can assist an organization in conducting an effective special observance.

Step 1: Select the Project Officer and an Alternate.

Between 90 and 120 days prior to the anticipated event, the commander should appoint an energetic project officer and alternate to develop and conduct the special observance. These individuals are responsible to the commander for event execution.

Senior leaders should view conducting a special observance as a superb mentorship opportunity for developing junior and mid-grade leaders. It provides the commander with critical one-on-one interaction and direct observation of key unit members. It provides the commander with direct opportunities to learn about key leaders and their abilities. It can also be used for capturing those elusive accomplishment bullets for the next personnel evaluation.

The commander might consider a mix of junior officers, noncommissioned officers, and civilians for these roles. Selecting members from other positions or ethnic/cultural/racial/gender backgrounds can also foster the observance's primary purpose of enhancing cross-cultural and cross-gender awareness throughout the force. The project officers are responsible to the commander for successful planning, timelines, and coordination for the observance events and activities.

Many people are under the false impression that the project officer must be an equal opportunity, command climate, or equal employment opportunity staff member. These representatives should definitely be advisory members of the overall planning committee, but in most cases should not be—the project officers.

The project officer has several specific tasks and responsibilities:

- Receives and executes guidance from the commander.
- Coordinates and provides regular status reviews/updates to the commander on progress.
- Reviews continuity binders and previous after-action reports.
- Identifies or assists in developing observance themes, if necessary.
- Chairs initial coordination meeting and identifies/recruits committee chairs.
- Oversees coordination between established committees for development of:
 - The overall plan
 - Execution timetables
 - A budget
 - Activities and events
 - Publicity
 - Security
- Monitors committee progress, resolves problems, and provides guidance as necessary.
- Presents proposals to the commander for approval/additional guidance.
- Oversees and ensures coordination with other staff elements.

Step 2: Receive the Commander or Senior Leader's Initial Guidance and Vision.

Having a clear understanding of the commander's intent and ability to support a special observance is critical. The commander is the one who fully understands what support the organization can provide in terms of time, resources, funding, and personnel. Failing to plan within a commander's ability to support may lead to a lackluster observance with little participation or resources.

Step 3: Identify Key Supporting Staff.

Various staff members (staff judge advocate, chaplain, protocol, MWR, etc.) may become involved at different points in the planning process. However, some initial key staff members are involved from the beginning. They are from the equal opportunity office, the resource management/budget office, and the public affairs office (PAO).

The Equal Opportunity Office/Advisor Role.

A key resource to the project officer and commander is the equal opportunity advisor (EOA) or command climate specialist (CCS). These individuals are the resident staff experts for equal opportunity and can advise the project officer and committees on details of past events, lessons learned, available resources, community support groups, and historical information on various ethnic, cultural, and gender group achievements and contributions.

EO offices are not responsible for program management or event planning. EOAs and CCSs assist in the planning and conduct of special observances. They are the subject matter experts and maintain close liaison with the special observance groups and serve as advisors to each committee. Advisory duties may include:

- Attending committee meetings as required.
- Providing guidance on the appropriateness of the events/activities held.
- Reviewing coordination on required publicity (articles, programs, advertisements, etc.).
- Providing continuity binders/books (copies of past schedules, programs, flyers, programs, etc.) and lessons learned from past events.
- Advising committees on budgetary limits.
- Reviewing correspondence prior to the start of official coordination.
- Identifying or developing the special observance theme.
- Documenting assistance for the special observance.

Resource Management/Budget Office.

What funds are available or programmed? What can they be spent on, and what are the limitations? The resource management/budget office can provide a realistic idea on what monetary resources are initially available to support the event. As planning progresses, funding limitations may become apparent and other resources may need to be identified.

Public Affairs Office.

After discussions with the EO office, the project officer should coordinate with the PAO to openly announce the forming of an organizational observance exploratory committee for the upcoming event and to solicit a diverse pool of volunteers. The public announcement should begin publicity of the first organizational meeting at least 85 days prior to the event and run for two consecutive weeks before the first organizational meeting.

The PAO staff will also manage any contact with local radio and news media

representatives to provide coverage of the special observance program. The PAO staff can also publish articles ahead of the actual event to inform the unit populace of the details of the upcoming event. The staff can also provide coverage of the event in follow-on articles and photographs, as well as access to the unit website.

Step 4: Announce and Hold an Initial Organizational Coordination Meeting.

Community and unit participation are essential. Military members, government civilians, spouses, family members, and civilian community members may all be willing participants in the planning and execution of the observance. The project officer should request the commander attend and kick off the initial meeting. The project officer should schedule the meeting at least two weeks after the initial PAO announcements. The attendee turnout to this initial meeting may be an indicator of the community's interest in the project. If turnout is lacking, follow-on announcements and meetings may be necessary to spur interest with the commander's support.

Step 5: Identify Committees, Solicit Committee Chairs, and Establish Roles and Responsibilities.

Committee Chairs

Committee chairs may be volunteers, or they may be recruited or appointed depending on the participation within the organization and the commander's intent. The committee chairs are responsible for:

- Recruiting a diverse group of volunteers to assist with conducting the observance.
- Coordinating actions among committee members to ensure all tasks are accomplished per the established milestones and timetables.
- Preparing and coordinating all official correspondence.
- Coordinating with other required staff elements, staff judge advocate, public affairs, chaplain, protocol, and security offices as required.
- Keeping the project officer and alternate informed of all required coordination and requirements.
- Participating in status briefings to the commander/senior leader as required.

Committees

Depending upon the needs of the organization and observance scope, committees are established to coordinate special observance requirements/actions. Some committee functions may be combined with others based on the number of available members, size of the observance, and participants involved. Below are some committees and tasks that might be established:

- Scheduling committee – Develops recommended timelines, dates for the observance, and potential locations.
- Planning committee – Develops agenda, events, activities, and estimated costs.
- Finance committee – Determines funds available from resource management office, identifies funding shortfalls and needs. Acquires additional funding as required (coordinates this action with the staff judge advocate as necessary).
- Publicity committee – Plans, develops, and implements publicity programs to increase awareness of the activities and scheduled events and coordinates coverage for the events. This committee also acquires and coordinates for a guest speaker and alternate and acquires copies of their proposed speeches.

- Education subcommittee – Plans, develops, and implements educational programs.
- Luncheon/banquet committee – Coordinates dates and obtains reservations for venue, develops menu, tickets and distribution plans, and coordinates presentation support (sound systems, audio visual, etc.).
- Protocol subcommittee – Coordinates for general/flag officer/senior executive service (SES) flags and placement, distinguished visitors, seating, and other items. Coordinates and supports guest speaker requests and acquires biographies. Reserves lodgings and arranges travel dates, times, and requirements as needed. Meets guest speaker at arrival point. Escorts speaker to the temporary lodging and the introduction meeting with the commander, to the venue, and to the departure point after the event. Provides installation tours as desired/required. Acquires recognition items (plaques, certificates) and develops a consolidated after-action review report upon observance completion.

Step 6: Develop draft and tentative commemoration activity plans and agenda. Brainstorm possible ideas for the event. Check the installation, unit, commander, and community master event calendars for conflicts with potential dates. Don't forget to check the local school calendars as well. Verify availability of desired facilities and select backup locations and inclement weather locations. Prepare rough drafts of required documents (publicity announcements, programs, speakers and alternates, draft invitation letters, agendas, etc.). Brief the commander on the tentative concepts and obtain approval to proceed. Adjust plans based on guidance received.

Step 7: Identify Planning Milestones and Timetables. Based on the commander's approved plan, each established committee and subcommittee should develop a timetable and list of milestones to guide completion of necessary actions for the observance. Each committee chair must ensure committee members complete required tasks and keep the project officer informed of any issues, conflicts, and accomplishments as coordination proceeds. Coordination and dialogue among committees is crucial.

Step 8: Conduct Regular Committee Planning Meetings and Provide Status Updates to the Commander. Regular and periodic meetings keep the coordination on track and ensure all tasks are completed as required. Adjustments are made as necessary, and the commander is kept informed of all developments and proposals by the project officer and alternate.

Step 9: Ensure Final Coordination (1 week prior to event). Verify that required individuals are still available for the day of the event (commander, chief of staff, speakers and alternates, community dignitaries, singers, chaplains, musicians, etc.). Ensure all travel and lodging plans are made. If a speech is being made, ensure the commander has a copy of it and the PAO has reviewed it. Double check meals (see if special dietary, vegetarian, and other non-standard meals were identified). Who pays for meals for speakers/entertainment? Are they included? Are programs and printed agendas, tickets, and other items available, and how are they provided to attendees? Are escorts and ushers identified and prepared? Ensure setup and tear down crews are identified and available for the event.

Step 10: Conduct Setup, Walkthrough, Rehearsal (1–3 days prior to event). Time to look for Murphy: check, check, and recheck. Verify all plans and backup plans. Walk through the

event from beginning to end. Visit all locations and backup sites. Check all audio, visual, and lighting support. Verify seating arrangements and flag placement with protocol. Show speakers, entertainment, escorts, and other key players where they are to be located. Check transportation requirements. Are presentation and recognition items on site? Are accommodations made for attendees with disabilities? Is security required and on hand? Must the building be swept by security before the event, and how is it secured after the sweep? Are medical personnel necessary and present? Is the event being recorded? Is PAO televising or documenting the event? Have each committee review its checklist to ensure all is complete.

Step 11: Conduct the Event. Time to shine and have fun! Be flexible and adjust the plan if issues occur.

Step 12: Complete an After-Action Report (AAR) and Recognize Contributors. Throughout the process, committees should have been documenting their actions, identifying and addressing challenges, and maintaining a copy of their completed projects (flyers, programs, tickets, etc.) for future reference. Don't forget participant feedback—design comment cards to be placed around the venue(s) to solicit participant thoughts/recommendations. Collect all items and consolidate them into a final report. List all committees and their respective members. Submit all documentation to the commander and EO office for preservation and future use. All committees should meet together one final time to discuss the things that went well and the things that could be done better in the future. These comments are an important part of the final event report. Finally, key members should be recognized for their contributions on completing a successful project.

Duties and Responsibilities

Below are sample duties and responsibilities for various individuals/committees. (*Note: Numbers in parentheses reflect the estimated number of days prior to the event for completion of the action.*)

Project Officer Duties:

- Review previous observance after-action reports (90–120)
- Coordinate/publish news release with Public Affairs Office, announcing the formation of an observance committee and a request for volunteers. The release should run two consecutive weeks before the first organizational meeting (85–100)
- Chair the organizational meeting and invite the commander to open the meeting (70)
- State the purpose of the committee and establish/publish guidelines
- Brainstorm for ideas
- Appoint planning and finance committees
- Review ideas with planning committee and prepare a proposed agenda with a list of suggested guest speakers
- Review the budget with the finance committee
- Present proposal to the commander for approval
- Chair general meeting of volunteers (60)
- Present commander-approved agenda
- Appoint committees/subcommittees
- Monitor progress of committees and resolve problems (ongoing)
- Chair status meeting with committee chairpersons (45, 30, and 15)
- Begin publicity campaign (30 and 15)
- Brief senior staff on planned activities, dates, and times (10)
- Confirm all activities, reservations, printing, publicity, tickets, etc. (5)
- Brief the commander on status of the programs (5)
- Monitor events for problems and resolve as rapidly as possible (ongoing)
- Collect after-action reports from the committees; consolidate and submit to commander

Planning Committee Duties:

- Review results of brainstorming efforts
- Develop proposed agenda of events and activities, including estimated costs
- Identify potential guest speaker(s) and determine costs: honorarium, lodging, and transportation
- Coordinate estimated costs with finance committee for budgeting
- Present proposed agenda and suggest guest speaker(s) to the commander for approval
- Prepare after-action report for the project officer, outlining the final agenda, problems encountered, and lessons learned

Finance Committee Duties:

- Determine dollar amount available
- Review plans or schedule of events to determine areas for funding
- Verify funding needs with committee chairpersons

- Prepare finance forms, as required
- Allocate funds for expenses, not to exceed budget
- Coordinate requirements with the base contracting office (or equivalent), as required
- Verify timeliness of any contracts
- Maintain a ledger of expenses and keep the project officer current on the balance
- Prepare an after-action report for the project officer, itemizing all expenses, payments, problems encountered, and lessons learned

Publicity Committee Duties:

- Plan, develop, coordinate, and implement publicity programs to increase the awareness of the accomplishments and achievements of the group to be recognized during observance; additionally, plan, develop, and coordinate advertisement of planned activities
- Coordinate program with other committees and installation PAO
- Coordinate with the PAO for local radio and newspaper coverage
- Prepare articles for publication in coordination with PAO
- Conduct interviews with PAO assistance
- Coordinate suspense and publication dates with base newspaper through PAO
- Determine photography requirements and schedule photographic support
- Review article and photography proofs before publication
- Monitor events for interesting follow-up articles
- Use base marquees and kiosks for recognizing/publicizing events
- Prepare after-action report for the project officer, outlining the publicity program, problems encountered, and lessons learned

Education Committee Duties:

- Plan, develop, coordinate, and implement educational programs to increase awareness of the historical and cultural accomplishments and achievements of the group being recognized
- Identify subject(s) to be presented and develop lesson plans or identify guest speaker(s) to present the desired subject
- Locate and reserve a suitable location for presentation(s)
- Verify adequacy of seating at location selected for presentation(s)
- Develop news releases in coordination with the publicity committee that generate interest in the presentation(s) and the speaker(s)
- Coordinate estimated costs with the finance committee
- Request preparation of necessary forms for the finance committee, as required
- Coordinate travel, lodging, and per diem requirements for guest speaker(s), if required
- Coordinate activities/speaker requirements with the protocol committee
- Monitor educational programs to identify potential problems early and resolve as quickly as possible
- Prepare an after-action report for the project officer, outlining the education programs, problems encountered, and lesson learned

Luncheon/Banquet Subcommittee Duties:

- Coordinate dates and obtain reservations for luncheon/banquet with open mess
- Coordinate with finance committee to determine availability of funds
- Select menu, basing cost on food only (include special dietary requirements/requests of attendees)
- Review seating arrangements for practicality and protocol
- Arrange entertainment for luncheon/banquet; cost to be paid by budgeted money
- Design and prepare centerpieces and place cards, if required
- Schedule public address system for date and time; pretest before activity
- Coordinate publicity efforts with publicity committee to ensure extensive publicity early
- Schedule photographic support
- Monitor activity for potential problems and resolve as rapidly as possible
- Prepare an after-action report for the project officer, outlining the programs presented, problems encountered, and lessons learned

Protocol Subcommittee Duties:

- Support official requests of guest speaker(s)
- Reserve quarters for guest speaker(s)
- Arrange travel requirements, as needed
- Coordinate and confirm travel dates and times with speaker(s)
- Acquire a biography of the speaker(s) for the commander's information; use in the base newspaper and luncheon/banquet programs
- Verify readiness of quarters before the speaker(s) arrival
- Meet the speaker(s) at arrival point and escort to temporary quarters
- Escort speaker(s) to commander's office and introduce him or her to commander
- Present a tour of the installation/facilities to the speaker(s), if desired
- Escort speaker(s) to the event
- Introduce speaker(s) to dignitaries and others present at the event
- Escort speaker(s) to departure point
- Prepare a letter of appreciation to the speaker(s) for the commander's signature and ensure timely forwarding of the letter
- Coordinate for general/flag officer/SES flags and placement, distinguished visitors, seating, and DV support
- Prepare an after-action report for the project officer, outlining the costs incurred/paid, problems encountered, and lessons learned

Appendix A

The list below is not all-inclusive. Based on specific needs and desires, organizations may recognize other observances and are not required to limit their special observances to those listed here. Organizations are reminded that special observances are conducted to recognize the continuous achievements of all Americans to American culture and to increase awareness, mutual respect, and understanding.

Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday

January, 3rd Monday

- Public Law 98-144 established a federal legal holiday honoring Martin Luther King Jr., which is celebrated on the third Monday in January of each year
- January 20, 1986, marked the first observance of the legal holiday
- Such holidays should serve as a time for Americans to reflect on the principles of racial equality and nonviolent social change espoused by Martin Luther King Jr.
- It is appropriate for the federal government to coordinate efforts with Americans of diverse backgrounds and with private organizations in the observance of the federal legal holiday honoring Martin Luther King Jr.

African-American/Black History Month

February

- First Presidential Proclamation: February 1976
- The first ethnic observance was the brainchild of Carter G. Woodson, a noted African-American author and scholar.
- Woodson established Negro History Week in 1926.
- The week evolved into a month-long celebration in 1976 and is observed every February.

Women's History Month

March

- Authority: Public Law 100-9, March 1987
- In 1981, Congress passed a joint resolution proclaiming March as Women's History Month based on a 1978 model of Women's History Week established by California's Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women.

Days of Remembrance of Victims of the Holocaust

April/May

- The United States Holocaust Memorial Council (USHMC) was established in 1980 by Public Law 96-388.
- The council coordinates an annual, national civic commemoration of the Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust, held in Washington, DC.
- Ceremonies are conducted throughout the U.S. during the annual Days of Remembrance, proclaimed by the USHMC for a designated one-week period (Sunday to Sunday) incorporating Yom Hashoah each spring between mid-April and mid-May.

Asian Pacific-American Heritage Month

May

- *US Code Title 36—Ceremonies, and Organizations Sec. 169k.* Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month
- May of each year is designated as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month.
- Federal proclamation: The President is authorized and requested to issue annually a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.
- Began as Asian-Pacific American Heritage Week by Congressional Resolution in 1977.

Women’s Equality Day

August 26

- On August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote was certified as part of the U.S. Constitution.
- Referred to as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, it states, “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”
- The U.S. Congress designated August 26 as “Women's Equality Day” in 1971 to honor women's continuing efforts toward equality.

Hispanic Heritage Month

September/October

- Authority: Public Law 100-402, August 1988
- The President is authorized and requested to issue annually a proclamation designating the 31-day period beginning September 15 and ending on October 15 as "National Hispanic Heritage Month" and calling upon the people of the United States, especially the educational community, to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.
- The start date of September 15 is significant because it is the independence day of several Latin American countries: Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Also falling within this month are the independence days of Mexico (September 16) and Chile (September 18).
- Began as Hispanic Heritage Week in 1968 under President Johnson.

American Indian Heritage Month

November

- Authority/comment: Public Law 102-188, March 1992
- It took more than 80 years for the nation to establish National American Indian Heritage Month.
- The Boy Scouts set aside a day for the “First Americans” in the early 1900s.
- On Sept. 28, 1915, the Congress of the American Indian Association declared the second Saturday of each May as an American Indian Day.

- Since then, several states declared American Indian days until 1976, when Congress passed a joint resolution authorizing the President to proclaim the week of October 10–16 as Native-American Awareness Week.
- Days and weeks of different months were set aside to honor the first Americans until they were given a month in 1990.
- President Bush proclaimed 1992 as the Year of the American Indian, based on legislation by Congress.

Over time, other groups have been added for recognition. Some organizations also recognize:

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month

June

- Presidential Proclamation, May 31, 2011
- The President of the United States of America proclaimed June 2011 as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month, calling upon the people of the United States to eliminate prejudice everywhere it exists, and to celebrate the great diversity of the American people.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

October

- Authority: *36 USC 121—National Disability Employment Awareness Month*
- The month of October in each year is designated as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. During this month, appropriate ceremonies are held throughout the U.S., the purposes of which are to enlist public support for and interest in the employment of qualified workers with disabilities.
- The President is requested to issue a suitable proclamation each year, and the governors of states, mayors of cities, and heads of other instrumentalities of government, as well as leaders of industry, educational and religious groups, labor, veterans, women, farm, scientific and professional, and all other organizations and individuals at interest are invited to participate.
- Began as National Employ the Physically Handicapped week in 1962.

Appendix B

There are many approaches one can take in conducting a special observance. The steps ultimately required will depend on the scope of the observance. The following pages provide a variety of example timelines/timetables, checklists, programs, invitation letters, and other documents that can be tailored to support individual organizational needs. Once the organization identifies what it wishes to do for the observance, these documents should be modified to support that intent.

Example of Simple Timetable

Note: This sample timetable may be tailored to the specific requirements needed. Not all steps/actions may be required dependent upon the size and scope of the observance.

DAYS BEFORE OBSERVANCE	ACTIVITY
120-90 (5 Unit Training Assemblies (UTAs))	Commander appoints project officer and alternate.
80-85 (4 UTAs)	Begin publicity of first organizational meeting.
85-70 (4 UTAs)	First organizational meeting.
70-60 (3 UTAs)	General meeting, establish committees.
60-45 (3 UTAs)	Project officer/committee chairperson's status meeting. Status update briefing for commander.
45-30 (3 UTAs)	General meeting, status update. Status update briefing for commander.
30-15 (2 UTAs)	Project officer/committee chairperson's status meeting. Begin publicity campaign. Status update briefing for commander.
15-10 (1 UTA)	General meeting, status update.
10-5 Final Coordination (1 UTA)	Confirm all reservations, contracts, printing, publicity activities, etc. Status update briefing for commander. Confirm travel plans, lodging, etc.
3-1 Conduct Setup, Walkthrough, Rehearsal	Check and recheck plans. Walk through event and schedule. Visit all venues. Conduct security sweeps. Check all audio, visual, lighting, etc.
DAY OF EVENT	
DAY OF EVENT	
DAYS AFTER OBSERVANCE	ACTIVITY
5-10 (2 UTAs)	Committee after-action report submitted to project officer.
10-15 (3 UTAs)	Letters of appreciation forwarded. Recognize contributors/participants.
15-30 (3 UTAs)	Consolidate ethnic observance after-actions report and submit to commander.

Example of Extensive Timetable

Note: This sample timetable may be tailored to the specific requirements needed. Not all steps/actions may be required dependent upon the size and scope of the observance or may be conducted in different order based on local requirements.

OBSERVANCE		Enter Title Here			
NLT	ACTION	POC	TASKED INDIVIDUAL(S)	REMARKS	STATUS
Planning Phase E=Event date; days shown are approximate number of days prior to event					
E-120 - 90	Identify intent/requirement		Commander	Develop commander's intent	
E-100 - 90	Select project officer and alternate; establish exploratory committee (as desired)		Commander/project officers	Project officers will attend all IPRs; brief concept and AAR to commander	
E-90	Receive initial guidance & concept from commander; publicize organizational meeting		Project officers	Meet with EO, PAO, and budget as soon as possible	
E-75	Initial organizational meeting/establish committees and chairs; recruit volunteers		Project officers	Set dates for in-progress review (IPR) meetings 1, 2, 3, 4	
E-75	Define objectives; develop concepts and events, draft agenda; select proposed dates and venues			Compare proposed dates with unit master events and other calendars; confirm date with HQs prior to locking in venues	
E-70	IPR#1 – Brief commander on concept		Project officers & committee chairs	Acquire commander's approval on concept	
E-70	ID speaker (if required); obtain bio and contact info; send official invite			Official invite; speech should be 10-15 min on theme and educational focus; acquire copy of bio and speech	
E-70	Lock in venue(s)			Plan alternate and inclement weather locations	
E-60	IPR # 2		Project officers & committee chairs		
E-60	Cost analysis & funding procurement				
E-60	Proclamation letter			Submit to commander for signature	
E-60	Support tasking order	Request necessary support: Chaplain, band, participants, set-up/tear down details, opening/closing remarks, narrator, guest speaker intro, recognitions, food pick up, plates, chairs, tables, flatware, generators with distribution boxes, extension cords, audio/visual support, escorts for entertainment/speaker, ushers, etc.			

NLT	ACTION	POC	TASKED INDIVIDUAL(S)	REMARKS	STATUS
E-60	Design & order flyer/poster displays for exchange, library, theater, dining facility, etc.				
E-60	Reserve and confirm entertainment (if required)			National anthem, singer/band; discuss time limits with all performers for planning purposes	
E-60	Marquee/kiosk announcements			At various locations; request use and write verbiage for announcement	
E-60	Send flyer to MWR				
E-30	IPR # 3		Project officers & committee chairs		
E-30	Send official VIP invites			Send email to all personnel on the master guest list; maintain list of all who RSVP; add roster to VIP memo for protocol	
E-30	PAO request for publicity coverage			Local and installation radio, TV, newspapers	
E-30	Design & sign certificates of appreciation				
E-30	ID gift/memento & protocol/SJA approval			Submit civilian bio to legal for review and approval	
E-30	Protocol items/flags/equipment			Coordinate locations/arrangements	
E-30	Facebook/Twitter			Send POC the announcement flyer	
E- 10	IPR #4		Project officers & committee chairs		
E-10	Establish program sequence & timing			Review prior to print	
E-10	Programs, narration confirmed; order/print programs				
E-7	Conduct final coordination		Project officers & committee chairs		
E-3 to 1	Setup/rehearsal			Ensure command presence	
Event - Commemorate the Observance					
E+10	Thank you letters to speakers/performers				
E+10	AAR with commander				

Sample Project Officer Coordination Checklist

Sample checklists, timetables, and other documents are provided that can be tailored for use. This checklist is, of necessity, general in nature. Nevertheless, it is based on extensive experience in the planning and conduct of a variety of special observances. It is expected that the project officer and established committees will need to tailor this checklist to meet local requirements, to conform to command guidance, and to be consistent with command or installation standing operating procedures. *Items in the following checklist are not necessarily accomplished sequentially.*

Checklist Items

- Contact appropriate installation/local organizations (e.g., public affairs; morale, welfare, and recreation or similar organization; command section; schools, etc.) to compare calendar of events for installation/command activities during the time frame being considered for this observance. Inform staff members of your preliminary plans and look for interface with other local activities planned for the observance (either on the installation or in the local civilian community).
- Determine availability of facilities to accommodate the program. Reserve facilities on a tentative basis. Consider back-up facilities.
- Verbally apprise your commander, chief of staff, or appropriate supervisor of your general plan. Obtain essential planning guidance from this discussion.
- Compose a rough draft of each of the following documents:
 - Publicity releases announcing event
 - Observance program outline
 - Lists of possible guest speakers, including name, title, address, and background information
 - Brief description of desired and/or planned events (e.g., auditorium ceremony, exhibits, luncheon with speaker, panel, audio-visual presentation, etc.)
 - Structure of desired planning committee showing proposed members and their organizations of assignment (e.g., personnel, public affairs, equal opportunity, chaplain, military police/security, etc.)
 - Estimated funds required for program
 - Introductory message (i.e., first draft of welcoming remarks)
 - Draft letter to proposed keynote speaker
 - Memo or letter to the commander, summarizing what you are planning
- Present the proposal to your commander (or the person to whom you will be reporting); obtain additional guidance.
- Upon commander/responsible official's approval, schedule a planning committee meeting; this meeting should result in the assignment of tasks to committee members; keep minutes of these meetings and send copies promptly to committee members.
- Ensure planning committee members cover all aspects of the observance; it is recommended that *detailed* checklists be developed; many of the following categories may be applicable:

- Funding requirements established and/or approved
 - Desired advertising of the program, including any special invitations to be sent
 - Facility acquisition/confirmation; verify in detail what is needed (e.g., flags in stands, chairs for stage, lectern, restrooms, etc.)
 - Arrangements for Color/Honor Guard
 - Initial contact with keynote speaker
 - Written invitation to speaker
 - Musical support (including coordination with the Color Guard)
 - Audio-visual support and materials for program
 - PAO support
 - Photographic support
 - Signing (i.e., interpreter) support for hearing impaired guests
 - Special support/accommodation for physically disabled guests
 - Exhibit/display materials
 - Reception arrangements (including refreshments, if required)
 - Luncheon/panel arrangements
 - Program design and printing arrangements (including time constraints)
 - Biography and photograph of speaker(s) and other special guests
 - Transportation requirements (to include meeting of speakers and/or special guests)
 - Support for conduct of program (e.g., use of a command post with telephone, distribution of programs, greeting and accommodation of stage party; escorts for special guests, seating of special guests, etc.)
 - Decide on and arrange to obtain appropriate presentation items (e.g., plaque, certificate, souvenir items, etc.) for speaker(s) and other special participants
- Secure copy of speaker's presentation in advance, if applicable.
 - When complete package is formulated, send copies to your commander/commanding officer (and other individuals, as required).
 - When the observance is over, obtain copies of publicity coverage of the program(s), to include articles with pictures of installation and community activities.
 - Compile comprehensive after-action report.
 - Report should include at least the following:
 - Narrative summary of planning and implementation of the observance
 - Include lessons learned, pitfalls, success stories, and recommendations for future observances
 - List of all committees and their respective members, organizations, telephone numbers, and tasks each member performed
 - Minutes of all committee meetings
 - Copies of any printed materials used (e.g., programs, invitations, tickets, press releases, parking permits, etc.)
 - Invitation list used
 - Copy of all correspondence (sent or received) related to the observance
 - Miscellaneous materials of potential value to planners of similar future events

Short List of Special Observance Tasks

- Identify project officer and alternate
- Receive command guidance
- Identify key supporting staff
- Announce and hold initial coordination meeting
- Identify committee chairs and establish subcommittees
- Recruit committee volunteers
- Identify theme
- Develop events/activity plan—check calendars and select dates and proposed venues
- Develop budget
- Develop timeline
- Provide status updates to commander/senior leader and receive additional guidance
- Reserve venue
- Reserve speaker and alternate (if required)
- Develop publicity plan, write articles, promote the event
- Coordinate menu and special meals (if required)
- Coordinate for special accommodations (if required)
- Coordinate for medical and security (if required)
- Coordinate/reserve lodging and transportation (if required)
- Coordinate entertainment
- Coordinate audio-visual support, public address systems, lighting
- Schedule PAO coverage (writers, photographers, videographers)
- Print programs, flyers, brochures, tickets, recognition certificates, etc.
- Plan decorations
- Identify escorts and ushers
- Reserve senior leader calendar (minimum 45 days prior to event)
- Conduct final coordination
- Setup venue
- Conduct walkthrough/rehearsal
- Conduct event
- Tear down/cleanup venue
- Final committee meeting, after action report/recognition

Sample Program

Name of Observance

Date

Pre-program concert/music/entertainment
Welcoming remarks
Presentation of the colors
National anthem
Invocation
Introduction of special guests (may include remarks)
Musical interlude, audio-visual program, and/or selected reading
Introduction of guest speaker
Keynote address
Benediction or closing remarks
Retirement of colors

In addition to a main event, actions and programs during an observance might include the following:

- News articles in base/post/installation/command newspapers. Background articles may include excerpts from this guide, announcements of local observances, and command-specific or location-specific material.
- Daily bulletin/weekly bulletin/plan of the day notes.
- Exhibits and displays, including bulletin board/gate plaque announcements of the observance.
- Command information presentations.

Sample Memorandum (Requesting Participation)

MEMORANDUM FOR (Refer to your Service directive on correspondence preparation)

SUBJECT: (Name of observance)

This is to request your participation in (subject) ceremony. Traditionally, the President has declared (month/week) as (name of observance) month/week, and has supported this event by issuing a Presidential Proclamation. Accordingly, we have prepared a memorandum for your signature as part of the program that will be distributed at this observance.

Your participation in this year's (name of observance) would greatly enhance the program. The theme of this year's observance is (observance theme).

We would appreciate your making opening remarks regarding the (importance of the subject). If (name of speaker) accepts the invitation to attend as our special guest, we would also appreciate your introducing him/her.

We propose to invite (name of speaker) as the guest speaker, who is the (brief identification of guest speaker). His/her biography and photograph are attached. If you approve, please sign the attached letter of invitation to (name of speaker).

The observance is scheduled (date) at (time) at (place). We recommend you host a reception immediately following the ceremony from (time) to (time). Request your concurrence.

Sample message from

(Name and Title)

(Name of Observance)

(Year)

I am pleased to welcome all who have joined us today to celebrate the very special contribution of (group) to the defense of our Nation. The theme for this year's (observance) is (observance theme).

This ceremony is dedicated to the commemoration of all (group) who have contributed so much to our Nation and our American culture. Contributions made by (group) have been truly outstanding, and the Nation acknowledges these contributions by honoring them today.

Please join us as we salute our fellow (group) and pay tribute to all the aspects of their lives, which have been interwoven into and have deeply enriched the fabric of the United States of America.

Sample Invitation Letter for Guest Speaker

Speaker's Name

Title

Address

City, State, and Zip Code

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms.

On (date), the (name of organization sponsoring observance) is sponsoring an observance in honor of (group). This will mark the (number) annual national celebration of the role of (group) in all segments of life in this Nation.

This year's theme is (observance theme).

On behalf of (host organization), it is my privilege to invite you to be our guest speaker. It will be a great honor if you are able to accept our invitation.

The program will take place (date) from (time) to (time) with a reception to follow. (Person/office) is coordinating this effort and is available to provide additional details. He/she/office staff can be reached at (area code)-(phone number).

I look forward to your participation in the celebration of (observance) (year).

Sincerely,

(Senior Commander)

Sample News Release

POST/BASE

**(NAME OF ORGANIZATION HOSTING
EVENT)**

(Rank/name of senior officer officiating), will participate in a commemorative ceremony observing (observance), (day/date) at (time) in the (location).

Joining (rank/name) in this year's observance is (guest speaker's name), who is (brief identification of guest).

This observance will incorporate the theme (title of theme).

List other key event details as appropriate.

Sample Request for Commander's Signature

MEMORANDUM FOR (Refer to your Service directive on correspondence preparation.)

SUBJECT: (Observance and year) Letter of Appreciation to (name of speaker)

This is to request your signature on the attached letter to (name of speaker) thanking (him/her) for providing the keynote address at the (name of observance), held on (date).

Sample Guest Speaker Thank You Letter

Address:

Dear (Speaker):

I would like to personally thank you for your interest, support, and participation in our observance of (observance) on (date) and for sharing your personal thoughts and sincere, warm concern for the men and women in the (sponsoring organization).

Your inspiring and educational speech was the highlight of this year's observance. You were able to help us understand and feel the grandeur and importance of the historical times in which we live. It enhanced our comprehension of (group)'s participation in contemporary American society. We are indeed fortunate to have citizens such as you who are willing to give their personal time and lend their talents to ensure the success of such programs. Your participation attests to your character and professionalism.

Again, many thanks for your interest, support, and outstanding presentation.

Sincerely,

(Senior Commander)