



SPECIAL OBSERVANCE PLANNING GUIDE



Disclaimer

Opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied within are solely those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Department of Defense or any other U.S. federal government agency. DEOMI does not endorse the content of any specific reference material or the organization that is the source of the material.

-Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI), June 2023

Special Observances Purpose

Various offices within the Department of Defense (DoD) collaborate to establish the special observance policies and guidance that the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) follows when it designs and creates the supporting annual DoD-approved Cultural Observances and Awareness Events List, themes, and products. Currently, DEOMI supports observance events as outlined on the DoD-approved cultural Observance and Awareness Events List that are directed by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) and established by law, bill, or Congressional resolution. Special observances are conducted to recognize the continuous achievements of all Americans to American culture and to increase awareness, mutual respect, and understanding. We encourage you to acknowledge and celebrate the diversity within your workforce.

Since 1968, the DoD has proudly supported observances by developing local recognition programs and diverse activities. Many of these observances were first established to support six areas identified within Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 1440.1, The DoD Civilian Equal Employment Opportunity Program (Chap 6.2.12). Over time, additional focus areas were incorporated from an equal opportunity (EO) and historical standpoint. Most military organizations typically recognize six to eleven special observances annually. Appendix A is the current DoD-approved list as an example of those historically recognized observances within the DoD. Many of these observances have evolved and names have changed based on public law or other guidance. Despite the title differences, the purpose of these events and their emphasis on awareness remains the same.

The Special Observances Program is a commander's program. Within Service guidelines, the commander can best develop and support these observances based on their organizational needs and resources. Commands may celebrate additional observances as desired within the intent of the overall purpose.

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 also provides direct opportunities to learn about key leaders and their abilities. Professionally, leading or participating in an observance event can provide high visibility and used as accomplishment in personnel evaluations. Since the late 90's, DEOMI has taken pride in providing unique theme-related materials to showcase observance group contributions to American culture and history. All products DEOMI develops are in the public domain. However, users must credit DEOMI when using them.¹ All DEOMI special observance poster images are high resolution and may be used to print posters up to 30x40 inches. DEOMI does not print or mail posters to requestors. Customers should check our website for a wide variety of new products prepared to help our Equal Opportunity/Equal Employment Opportunity and Command Climate Professionals in the Field, Fleet, Wing, Delta, and Agency. For more details contact DEOMI Public Affairs Office: 366 Tuskegee Airmen Dr., Patrick SFB, FL 32925, Email: deomipa@us.af.mil. Visit DEOMI's public website at: <https://www.defenseculture.mil/> to learn more about the various products and tools available.

DEOMI's goal is to release items 60-days prior to the start of each observance, and we strive to be timely. Once a theme is determined development begins. Draft products are submitted through a multiple review process involving various public affairs offices, legal reviews, and leadership until approved/released by the USD P&R. If these levels cause a delay for unit use, organizations may use previously developed products to accent their observance events. DEOMI products are undated and satisfactory for general awareness and use to support any occasion. Once the USD P&R approves current items, they are posted to the DEOMI website. Frequently asked questions about the Special Observance Program Process can be found at: https://www.defenseculture.mil/Portals/90/Documents/Observances/OBKGD-Special_Observance_Program_Process-20220323.pdf?ver=H1e156YALCGqEOZiUQYmxA%3d%3d

Please visit our website regularly for new products to assist our Equal Opportunity/Equal Employment Opportunity and Command Climate Professionals in the Field, Fleet, Wing, Delta, and Agency.

Note: It is advised that personnel tasked to conduct an event or recognition familiarize themselves within the tools, products, websites, and videos that can be used to complement their internal programs and to recognize the different groups and their contributions. Libraries, community centers, and public affairs should also be considered when bringing awareness to the different topics such groups bring to the American culture.

¹**Note:** the items may not be used in any manner that would reflect negatively on the DoD; degrade the name, reputation, or public goodwill of the DoD Components; or be contrary to DoD community relations objectives. Furthermore, use by non-federal entities may not create the appearance of DoD endorsement, affiliation, or sponsorship.

INTRODUCTION

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

BACKGROUND

This guide is a toolkit to help commanders, workplaces, and personnel prepare for any special observance event. It is the commander's decision if such observances will occur and how they will be recognized. The examples provided in this guide are not prescriptive and they can be modified as necessary to support the needs for any special observance program, project officer, and established committee.

- Personnel tasked to conduct an event or recognition familiarize themselves with the tools, products, websites, and videos that can be used to complement their internal programs and to recognize the different groups and their achievements and challenges. Libraries, community centers, and public affairs should also be considered when bringing awareness to the significant contributions such groups bring to the American culture.

Commanders

The special observance program is a commander's program. Each commander determines which observances are recognized and ultimately supported based on individual and organizational desires and Service guidance. The events and activities should be designed to enhance diversity awareness and to promote harmony, pride, teamwork, and esprit de corps among military members, their families, and the civilian workforce. Observances are conducted to recognize the continuous achievements of all Americans in American culture and to increase awareness, mutual respect, and understanding.

Event Success

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 proactive 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 meticulously and include milestones and checklists to ensure specific details are identified and appropriately coordinated or addressed. Examples for committee members responsibilities, milestones, and timetables can be found in this guide and can be tailored for unit use.
- **Funding-** Adequate funding is critical. Commander should attempt to provide equitable funding across supported events. 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.
- **Reliable technology-** With the way technology works today, not all events have to be done on-site. Having internet-based communication can be just as effective, and it gives more people an innovative opportunity to celebrate or participate in these events. In some cases, using platforms such as Zoom, Facebook, Team Groups, etc., can expand the audience and decrease event cost.

On-Site Resources

The following on-site resources can also help create a successful special observance program. The library has books that provide history on all observances. Locations such as recreation centers could be used to hold special observance celebrations.

- Staff Agencies
- Protocol Office
- Installation Dining Facilities
- Libraries/Education Center
- Army and Air Force Exchange Services (AAFES)/Navy Exchange (NEX)/ Marine Corps Exchange (MEX)/USCG Exchange
- Base Family Readiness Center/Program
- Recreation centers/morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) facilities
- Department of Defense dependent schools (DODDS)

Off-Site Resources

The below are considered off-site resources that may be useful when creating a special observance program. The DEOMI website has a multitude of resources such as posters and mini fact posters that can be displayed throughout the workplace. Also, it may be beneficial to network with local cultural groups.

- DEOMI
- Civil rights groups

- Chamber of Commerce
- Ethnic/cultural groups essential
- Special interest groups
- Local military support organizations
- Local and community governments
- Schools and universities
- Religious groups
- Radio/television/newspapers
- Podcast culture groups

Observance Theme

The observance theme can come from a variety of places. It is essential to note that DEOMI does not typically create special observance themes except for the annual Days of Remembrance theme and in other rare cases. Most special observances have civilian sponsoring organizations/affinity group that issues a unique or standard theme to support the observance. Historically, the Department has supported using those themes. However, the DoD is not required to use observance themes provided by external/affinity group. Where a theme does not align with the DoD mission, core values, or reflect positively on the Department and the special group being recognized, or it is not timely for product development, DEOMI will develop one. Organizations may use the provided theme, a previously published theme, or develop their own for organizational use.

Two observances don't have a 'them' per se: Juneteenth and Women's Equality Day. These events recognize a specific historical achievement, either freedom for former slaves or passage of the 19th Amendment and women acquiring the right to vote. DEOMI typically adds a 'tag line' to its posters and products to emphasize or reinforce key points or relationships to each event.

Budget Requirements

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

- Before submitting 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 other 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 the 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 any guest speakers' services, transportation, per diem, and lodging costs.
- 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.
- After being assigned as a project officer, one must immediately meet with the resource advisor. During this initial meeting, the project officer must determine the dollars available for the observance and begin planning. The project officer might also appoint a finance committee to coordinate the expenditure of funds with the other committees and the resource advisor. The project officer should closely monitor the finance committee and be apprised of any encountered problems or shortfalls.

Important Note

Coordinate funding actions with your servicing staff judge advocate general and see appropriate Service regulations for specific guidance.

Policies and Regulations

- **Department of Defense**, Department of Defense. (2022, December 20). *DOD Military Equal Opportunity Program* (DOD Instructions 1350.02) Washington, DC: Department of Defense.
- **Army**, Department of the Army. (2021, July 1). *Army Command Policy* (Army Regulation 600-20 Rapid Action Revision). Washington, DC: Department of the Army.
- **Navy**, Chief of Naval Operations. (2021, November 3). *Navy Equal Opportunity (EO) Policy*, (OPNAV Instruction 5354.1H). Washington, DC: Department of the Navy.
- **Air Force**, Secretary of the Air Force (2010, October 5). *Equal Opportunity Program Military*

and Civilian (AF Instruction 36-2706).

Washington, DC: Department of the Air Force.

- **Air Force**, Secretary of the Air Force.(2012, August 16). *Financial Management: Budget Guidance and Procedures* (AF Instruction 65-601). Washington, DC: Department of the Air Force.
- **Marine Corps**, *Marine Corps Equal Opportunity (EO) Manual* (Marine Corps Order P5354.1F). Washington, DC: Department of the Navy.
- **Coast Guard**, Commandant of the Coast Guard. (2020, October 21). *Coast Guard Equal Opportunity Manual* (U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Instruction M5350.4E). Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security.
- **Coast Guard**, Commandant of the Coast Guard. (2020, February 27). *Financial Resource Management Manual* (COMTINST M7100.3 series). Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security.

Conduct of Observances

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 ‘event ideas’ for a range of concepts). The magnitude of the observance depends on the interest, desire, available resources and community involvement. Past observances have included poster displays, newsletters, command web pages, essay contests, dances, games, plays, movies, facilitated discussions, luncheons or dinners, guest speakers (panel), 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 Observances?

From a DoD perspective, the Department views observance events as complementary to the diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility goals and strategic messaging. Each Service provides differing guidance on which events it supports during the year. Within that guidance, commanders may develop and support these and other observances based on their resources and needs.

Many people falsely believe that the project officer must be an equal opportunity, command climate, or employment opportunity staff member. These representatives should be advisory members of the overall planning committee, but in most cases, should not be—the project officers. Commanders should view participation as a developmental opportunity for their immediate staff members.

Event Ideas

A full range of options exists 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. DEOMI developed themed products for each annual observance to include posters, informative PowerPoints, fact sheets, invitations/thank you cards, program templates, web banners, social media banners, activity books, placemats, and other items. Review how you can incorporate these items into your selected events. Below are potential ideas that can be conducted singularly or in conjunction with others.

- Installation of closed-captioned television (CCTV) presentations
 - ❖ PowerPoint presentations
 - ❖ Cultural/historical movies
- Did You Know/Facts of the Day
 - ❖ Email/broadcast/installation of newspaper
 - ❖ Installation marquee/kiosk
 - ❖ Installation Web-Page
- 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
 - ❖ Panel -
- Dramatic readings
 - ❖ Poems
 - ❖ Speeches
 - ❖ Legislation
 - ❖ Book excerpts
- Historical artifact/cultural displays
- Unit’s Dining Facility Special Menu
- 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 walks
- 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 the child development center or library
- Flagpole remembrance ceremony

Guest Speakers

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 many 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 of the referenced group to be effective but are individuals who can connect with the audience and 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 group members.
- Individuals with 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.

It is highly encouraged that a first-hand observation of a prospective speaker is made at an event before the final selection is 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 point should be acquired in advance. The remarks should be provided to the commander, the public affairs office, and the staff judge advocate for review. Once confirmed, it is highly encouraged that you provide your guest speaker with some recommended talking points, which may prevent certain pitfalls and misstatements.

Pitfalls

Recent global events, such as COVID, have demonstrated how many things affect an event and a guest speaker's ability to attend those events. Illness, age, and mental lapses are concerns leadership may encounter when selecting a guest speaker successfully.

The quality of the internet service can disrupt many things, including the guest's train of thought and the audience's ability to hear the speaker clearly. It can also delay the events if the guest speaker has limited technical skills. A distraction (e.g., a loss of glasses) can be detrimental. Regardless of age or experience, speakers 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 a senior organizational leader is an adequate speaker based on position, rank, and/or affiliation with a reference group. Leaders may or may not be aware of a group's challenges, contributions, achievements, or sensitivities, including their own. Leaders should be adequately prepared by their staff with relevant talking points and potential considerations before 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 enters 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 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 that 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 extensive observance in mind but can be simplified based on local needs and desires.

Step 1: Select the Project Officer and an Alternate

The commander might consider a mix of junior 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 for the successful planning, timelines, and coordination for the observance

events and activities.

The project officer has several specific tasks and responsibilities:

- Receives and executes guidance from the commander
- Coordinates and provides the commander with regular status reviews/updates 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 the development of:
 - ❖ The overall plan
 - ❖ Execution timetables
 - ❖ A budget
 - ❖ Activities and events
 - ❖ Publicity
 - ❖ Security
- Monitors committee progress, resolves problems, and guides as necessary
- Present 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

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.

The Equal Opportunity Office/Advisor Role

The equal opportunity advisor (EOA), command climate specialist (CCS), and equal employment opportunity practitioner, are key resources to the project officer and commander. 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, CCSs, and equal employment opportunity practitioners assist in the planning and conduct of special observances. They are the subject matter experts, maintain close liaison with the special observance groups, and serve as advisors to each committee. Advisory duties may include:

- Attending committee meetings as required
- Guiding the appropriateness of the events/activities held.
- Review coordination on required publicity (articles,

programs, advertisements, etc.)

- Providing continuity binders/books (copies of past schedules, programs, flyers, etc.) and lessons learned from past events
- Advising committees on budgetary limits
- Review correspondence before 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 of 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 before 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 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 and access to the unit website.

Step 3: Announce and Hold an Initial Organizational Coordination Meeting

Community and unit participation is 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 that 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 at this initial meeting may indicate 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 4: Identify Committees, Solicit Committee Chairs, and Establish Roles and Responsibilities

Committee Chairs

Committee chairs may be volunteers or 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, the size of the observance, and the 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 the resource management office and 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 event coverage. This committee also acquires and coordinates for a guest speaker and alternates and acquires copies of their proposed speeches.
- Education subcommittee – Plans, develops, and implements educational programs.
- Luncheon/banquet committee – Coordinates dates and obtains reservations for the venue; develops menu, tickets, and distribution plans; and coordinates presentation support (sound systems, audiovisual, 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 the arrival point. Escorts the speaker to the temporary lodging and the introduction meeting with the commander, the venue, and 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 5: 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 the 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 6: Identity 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 the 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 7: 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 informs the project officer and alternate of all developments and proposals.

Step 8: Ensure Final Coordination (1 week prior to the event)

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 informed of all developments and proposals by the project officer and alternate.

Step 9: Conduct Setup, Walkthrough, and Rehearsal (1–3 days before the 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 the protocol. Show speakers, entertainment, escorts, and other key players where they will be. Check transportation requirements. Are presentation and recognition items on-site? Are accommodations made for attendees with disabilities? Is security required and on hand? Must security sweep the building before the event, and how is it secured afterward? 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 10: Conduct the Event

Time to shine and have fun! Be flexible and adjust the plan if issues occur.

Step 11: Complete an After-Action Report (AAR) and Recognize Contributors

Throughout the process, committees should have been documenting their actions, identified, and addressed challenges, and maintained a copy of their completed projects (flyers, programs, tickets, etc.) for future reference. Don't forget participant feedback—design comment cards 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 one final time to discuss what went well and what 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 to completing a successful project.

Duties and Responsibilities

Below are sample duties and responsibilities for various individuals/committees. (Note: Numbers in parentheses reflect the estimated days before the event to complete the action).

Project Officer Duties:

- Review previous observance after-action reports (90–120)
- Coordinate/publish news releases with Public Affairs Office, announcing the formation of an observance committee and a volunteer request. 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 the 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 meetings of volunteers (60)
- Present commander-approved agenda
- Appoint committees/subcommittees
- Monitor the 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 the status of the programs (5)
- Monitor events for problems and resolve them 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 the finance committee for budgeting
- Present proposed agenda and suggest guest speaker(s) to the commander for approval
- Prepare an after-action report for the project officer, outlining the final agenda, problems encountered, and lessons learned

Finance Committee Duties:

- Determine the 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 the 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 the 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 an 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 the 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 them as quickly as possible
- Prepare an after-action report for the project officer, outlining the education programs, problems encountered, and lessons learned

Luncheon/Banquet Subcommittee Duties:

- Coordinate dates and obtain reservations for luncheon/banquet with the open mess
- Coordinate with the finance committee to determine the 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 the 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 the arrival point and escort them to temporary quarters
- Escort speaker(s) to the commander's office and introduce him or her to the 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 the 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 reflects those events historically supported by most Service EO/EEOs programs. 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 in American culture and to increase awareness, mutual respect, and understanding among the Force.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday: 3rd Monday in January

- 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
- In 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed a bill stating the third Monday of January will be known as Martin Luther King Jr. Day to begin in 1986
- 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 by President Gerald Ford.
- African American/Black History Month recognizes the achievements and contributions of African Americans to the nation's history.

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
- The resolution was sponsored by Representative Barbara Mikulski and Senator Orrin Hatch.
- Every year March is designated Women's History Month by presidential proclamation

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 the Jewish religious holiday Yom HaShoah each spring between mid-April and mid-May

Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month:

May

- In May of 1992 AAPIHM began
- May 7, 1843 the first Japanese immigrants arrived to the United States
- May 10, 1869 transcontinental railroad is completed and significant contributions were completed by Chinese pioneers
- Celebrates the services and sacrifices of Asian/Pacific Islanders throughout the United States

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

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., to enlist public support for and interest in the employment of qualified workers with disabilities
- Began as National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week in 1962
- In 1988 President Ronald Reagan expanded it to a month-long observance with a presidential proclamation
- The President is requested to issue a suitable proclamation each year

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 George Herbert Walker Bush proclaimed 1992 as the Year of the American Indian, based on legislation by Congress

Under the Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD (P&R)) other recognized events:

Juneteenth: June 19

- January 1, 1863 President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves
- June 19, 1865 General Gordon Granger announced General Order No. 3 freeing all slaves in Texas
- June 17, 2021, President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act declaring June 19 a federal holiday
- Juneteenth represents the end of slavery in the United States

Pride Month: June

- This is the only observance that is not established by law and support for this observance has typically varied by Presidential Administration
- Current support and guidance for this observance for this observance is directed by the USD P&R, (added in June 2022)
- First recognized by Presidential Proclamation, May 31, 2011, under President Obama
- The President of the United States of America proclaimed June 2011 as 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

Example of a Simple Timetable

Note: This sample timetable may be tailored to the specific requirements needed. Only some 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 a project officer and alternate.
80-85 (4 UTAs)	Begin publicity of the first organizational
85-70 (4 UTAs)	First organizational meeting.
70-60 (3 UTAs)	General meetings, establish committees.
60-45 (3 UTAs)	Project officer/committee chairperson's status meeting. Status update briefing for the commander.
45-30 (3 UTAs)	General meeting, status update. Status update briefing for the commander.
30-15 (2 UTAs)	Project officer/committee chairperson's status meeting. Begin publicity campaign. Status update briefing for the 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 the commander. Confirm travel plans, lodging, etc.
3-1 Conduct Setup, Walkthrough, Rehearsal	Check and recheck plans. Walk through the event and schedule. Visit all venues. Conduct security sweeps. Check all audio, visual, lighting, etc.
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-action report and submit to the commander.

Example of an 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 a 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 the approximate number of days prior to the event					
E-120 - 90	Identify intent/requirement		Commander	Develop the commander's intent	
E-100 - 90	Select a project officer and alternate; establish an exploratory committee (as desired)		Commander/project officers	Project officers will attend all IPRs; brief concept, and AAR to the commander	
E-90	Receive initial guidance & concept from commander; publicize the 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 a date with HQs prior to locking in venues	
E-70	IPR#1 – Brief commander on the concept		Project officers & committee chairs	Acquire the commander's approval on concept	
E-70	ID speaker (if required); obtain bio and contact info; send an official invite			Official invite; speech should be 10-15 min on the theme and educational focus; acquire a 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 the 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)			The 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 the 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 a 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 planning and conducting various special observances. It is expected that the project officer and established committees will need to tailor this checklist to meet local requirements, conform to command guidance, and be consistent with command or installation standing operating procedures. *Items in the following checklist are only sometimes 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 the calendar of events for installation/command activities during the timeframe 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 the 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 the 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 the 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., the 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.
- Review what event-themed items DEOMI has available to support your program to include, posters, informative PowerPoints, fact sheets, invitations/thank you cards, bookmarks, program templates, web banners, social media banners, activity books, placemats, and other items.
- Upon the 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 the keynotespeaker
 - Written invitation to the speaker
 - Musical support (including coordination with the Color Guard)
 - Audio-visual support and materialsforthe program
 - PAO support
 - Photographic support
 - Signing (i.e., interpreter) support for hearing-impaired guests
 - Special support/accommodation for physically disabled guests
 - Exhibit/displaymaterials
 - Reception arrangements (including refreshments, if required)
 - Luncheon/panel arrangements
 - Programdesign and printing arrangements (including time constraints)
 - Biography and photograph of speaker(s) and other special guests
 - Transportation requirements (to include a meeting of speakers and/or special guests)
 - Support for the conduct of the program(e.g., useof acommand post with telephone,distribution of programs,greetingandaccommodation of stage party; escorts for specialguests, the seating of special guests, etc.)
 - Decide on and arrange to obtain appropriatepresentation items (e.g., plaque, certificate,souvenir items, etc.) for speaker(s)and other special participants
- Secure a copy of the speaker'spresentation in advance, if applicable.
 - When a complete package is formulated, sendcopies to your commander/commanding officer(and other individuals, as required).
 - When the observance is over, obtain copies ofpublicity coverage of the program(s)including articles with pictures ofthe installation and communityactivities.
 - Compile comprehensive after-action report.
 - Reportshould include at least the following:
 - Narrative summary of planning and implementation of the observance
 - Include lessons learned, pitfalls, successstories, and recommendations for futureobservances
 - List of all committeesand their respectivemembers, organizations, telephone numbers,and tasks each memberperformed
 - Minutes of allcommittee 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 an 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 the commander/senior leader and receive additional guidance
- Reserve venue
- Reserve speaker and alternate (if required)
- Develop a publicity plan, write articles, and 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

DEOMI provides themed tools for each observance which can be tailored to organizational needs. This includes a program cover, invitations, and thank you cards. Check DEOMI's website for options.

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)

A 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.

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

SUBJECT: (Name of observance)

This is to request your participation in the (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 photographs 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 our nation's defense. This year's (observance) theme is (observance theme).

This ceremony is dedicated to commemorating all (group) who have contributed so much to our Nation and 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.

Speaker's Name Title
Address
City, State, and Zip Code

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms.

On (date), the (name of the 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 this Nation's life segments.

This year's theme is (observance theme).

On behalf of (host organization), I am privileged 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)

SampleNewsRelease

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 the theme).

List other key event details as appropriate.

SampleRequestforCommander'sSignature

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)

References

African American History Month. (2015). February is African American history month.

Retrieved from <http://www.africanamericanhistorymonth.gov/about.html>

DEOMI. (2023). Cultural Observance and Events Listing.

[OBCGD_CY23_Special_Observance_Listing_20221006.pdf \(defenseculture.mil\)](#)

DEOMI. (2015). Special observance planning guide.

[GRP-Special_Observance_Planning_Guide-20151029.pdf \(defenseculture.mil\)](#)

DEOMI. (2023). The Special Observance Process.

[OBKGD-Special_Observance_Program_Process-20220323.pdf \(defenseculture.mil\)](#)

Government Printing Office. (1983). Public law 98-114, 98th congress. an act making the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., a legal public holiday.

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-97/pdf/STATUTE-97-Pg917.pdf>

Government Printing Office. (1986). Public law 99-244, 99th congress. a joint resolution designating February as “national black (African American) history month.

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-100/pdf/STATUTE-100-Pg6.pdf>

Hispanic Heritage Month. (2015). Hispanic heritage month.

<http://www.hispanicheritagemonth.org/>

Jewish Virtual Library. (2015). Jewish holidays: yomha'shoah—Holocaust Memorial Day.

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Judaism/yomhashoah.html>

National Archives. (2015). Equal employment opportunity program: special emphasis observances. <http://www.archives.gov/eo/special-observances/>

National Archives. (2015). Equal employment opportunity program: special emphasis programs—January: Dr. Martin Luther King, jr.

<http://www.archives.gov/eo/special-observances/#jan>

National Women's History Project. (2015). History of national women's history month.

<http://www.nwhp.org/about-2/our-history/>

The Library of Congress. (2015). About LGBT Pride Month.

<http://loc.gov/lgbt/about.html>

The Library of Congress. (2015). Asian Pacific American History Month.

<http://asianpacificheritage.gov/about.html>

U.S. Department of Labor. National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/>

U.S. Department of the Interior Indian Affairs. (2015). The Creation of National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month.

<http://www.bia.gov/DocumentLibrary/HeritageMonth/>

U.S. Government Publishing Office. (2015). Amended Executive Order 11246 and 11478 including “sexual orientation” and “sex or national origin.”

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-07-23/pdf/2014-17522.pdf>