



Eternal Salute Essay Contest

Honoring Veteran Legacies is proud to announce its inaugural essay contest for public and private school students in Alabama. The essay contest is divided into a Middle School category and a High School category.

Rules and Procedures for High School (Grades 9-12)

- Students will write an essay using a subject related to an HVL Eternal Salute lesson plan, found in our lesson plan gallery at www.eternalsalute.org.
- **ESSAY PROMPT:** Our veterans served our country and may have done and seen some terrible things that they don't want to talk about. But through their experiences, we can learn so much about service, sacrifice, duty. **What is something you learned about one or more of the following: service, duty, history, veterans, or war, through the veteran's story you found in the Eternal Salute lesson plan gallery? Please focus on the war/period in history in which they served, his/her branch of service and particular job, what other veterans might share something similar with this one and why, and about this time in history. Your essay should reveal how you better understand what it means for this veteran to have served our nation.**
- The essay should reference the veteran's video and what is addressed/learned in the lesson in answering in the essay prompt.
- The essay should be no more than 1,000 words, but a minimum of 700. The essay should be typed in Arial, 12 pt. font. A works cited page should be included. The works cited page does not count toward word count. Besides citing the lesson plan a minimum of two other sources should be cited in the essay.
- The essay should be the original work of the student. The essay is subject to evaluation by AI assistance. If an essay is suspected of AI it will be disqualified from the competition.
- The essay, along with the attached entry form, should be saved as a PDF and submitted to Director of Education Programs, Erin Coggins at erin.coggins@honoringveteranlegacies.org
- We do recommend teachers utilize an HVL Eternal Salute lesson plan to help students understand how an Eternal Salute lesson can teach history through veterans as a primary source. Teachers must submit the reflection/evaluation form, along with the student's essay and entry form.
- The deadline to enter the contest is **April 3, 2026**.
- All winners will be treated to a lunch with our veterans in June.
- A monetary award will be given for first, second, and third place. The teacher of student winners will also receive the same cash prize as his/her student.

First Place-\$1,000

Second Place-\$500

Third Place-\$300

For more information contact:

Erin Coggins, Ed.S.

erin.coggins@honoringveteranlegacies.org



Eternal Salute Essay Entry Form

Student Name: _____

School: _____

Student Address: _____

Student's Email: _____

Essay Title: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Parent's Email and Phone: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Teacher's Email: _____

Teacher's Cell Number: _____

I certify that I have used my own words to construct the essay entry.

Student Signature: _____

I consent to my child's participation in the HVL Eternal Salute Essay Contest. I also consent to my child's photograph and name to be used in any HVL promotion of the contest winners.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

I certify that to my knowledge, my student submitted their own work. I also consent to my photo and name being used in any HVL promotion of contest winners.

Teacher Signature: _____



TEACHER REFLECTION/EVALUATION

DIRECTIONS: The Teacher Reflection/valuation should be typed in the space provided or attached as a separate document.

Name: _____

Email/Cell Phone: _____

What lesson plan are you evaluating?

Describe how the students in your classroom reacted to the lesson, what they learned, any adjustments you made, etc. Be sure to address the impact the HVL Veteran video has on the lesson and learning. (A minimum of 300 words)