



ECHOTAPS WORLDWIDE

LOI – 01

1 May 06

This Letter of Instruction (LOI) has been created to outline the Concept of Operations and Logistical Operations needed to support one of two scenarios of an ECHOTAPS event.

Scenario 1 – A simple mass playing of taps in one location.

Scenario 2 – Cascading echo through and around the cemetery property (using boundary lines or internal access roads), followed by a mass playing at a determined location (flag pole or presentation area)

Overview

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration maintains 123 national cemeteries in 39 states (and Puerto Rico) as well as 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites. The goal of ECHOTAPS ACROSS AMERICA is to conduct either Scenario 1 or Scenario 2 at each of the 123 national cemeteries on 11 November 2006.

Mission

On order (O/O) members of the assigned unit or organization will conduct logistical operations in support of ECHOTAPS ACROSS AMERICA. Each assigned unit or organization will be assigned one or more cemeteries depending on the scope of their Area of Operations (AO).

Concept of Operations

Scenario 1 – A simple mass playing of taps in one location.

Step 1 – Receive the Mission.

Your organization will receive a mission that will task you to create and execute a plan to accomplish scenario 1 at a designated national cemetery.

Step 2 – Issue warning order (WARNO)



Step 3 – Make tentative plan

- a. Assemble your staff – discuss the mission that you’ve received
- b. Develop Courses of Action (COA’s).

COA 1 – Scenario 1
COA 2 – Scenario 2
COA 3 – Scenario 1 and 2 combined
- c. Write and distribute OPLAN

Step 4 – Initiate pre-planning requirements

During this step your staff will coordinate with the national cemetery officials and other agencies to execute a successful mission.

- Coordination with local emergency services to include local police/fire/ambulance departments.
- Coordination with pertinent elected officials to check on the need for permits and guidelines that might limit your activities or planning.
- Coordinate with local social clubs, i.e.: American Legion, Elks, VFW, Moose Lodge. They have a lot of members that can be volunteers to assist you with planning and execution.
- Select a volunteer coordinator – he/she would be responsible for all volunteers.
- Select a registration coordinator – they will keep track of the registered brass players. One week before the event they should produce a spreadsheet listing the number of participants.
- Select a means to collect volunteers, i.e. website, dedicated phone number etc.

Step 5 – Conduct Reconnaissance

Your staff should conduct a recon of the area of operations that you’ll be conducting your mission. Since you selected COA1 – your recon should focus on the national cemetery ground. Coordinate with the cemetery’s director for a location for the mass playing of taps and a location for all the players to park their cars on the day of the event. If the cemetery has limited space for parking, you must develop a parking plan. (**Recommendation**) contact local officials and inquire about local park and ride areas or parking lots that might be available for use. If the lot is close to cemetery, people can walk. If it’s a distance, you might consider using buses to transport the people.

Step 6 – Complete the plan

Create an OPORD/plan that your soldiers or organization can use as a guide while performing mission.



Rehearse event – have your soldiers/civilians walk the area AO and figure out how the brass players will enter the AO and how they will be situated. Make sure that you mark that area. **(Recommendation)** Mark area by placing colored tape on ground, spray paint or if on grass ... cut grass very low – allow grass surrounding area to grow. (Do this the day of or day before)

Step 7 – Issue Orders – execute plan

Have a meeting with your staff and brief them of your plan – then begin the execution of the plan.

Step 8 – Supervise and refine

Throughout the execution of the plan you will refine your plan because of factors that may arise. If the plan is refined, make sure that all persons are notified of the changes through either a FRAGO or memo.

Service Support

Limited service support is needed if this scenario is used. Examples of some things that may be needed are:

- (1) Spray paints or flags to mark area of mass toot.
- (2) MRE for soldiers/Boxed lunch for civilians.
- (3) Bottled water/water cans etc

Command and Signal

- a. Command: Create your command structure for event.
- b. Signal: **(Recommendation)** Use FRS/GRMS radios for command and control.
 - (a) Make a list of frequencies and call signs that you'll use.
 - (b) Make a cell phone directory of all critical people within your command.
 - (c) Primary means for medical transportation is ground ambulance via the 911 emergency system.



Scenario 2 – Cascading echo through and around the cemetery property (using boundary lines or internal access roads)

Step 1 – Receive the Mission.

Your organization will receive a mission that will task you to create and execute a plan to accomplish scenario 2 at a designated national cemetery.

Step 2 – Issue warning order (WARNO)

Step 3 – Make tentative plan

- a. Assemble your staff – discuss the mission that you've received
- b. Develop Courses of Action (COA's).
 - COA 1 – Scenario 1
 - COA 2 – Scenario 2
 - COA 3 – Scenario 1 and 2 combined
- c. COA 2 is approved – This COA is labor intensive during the preplanning phase. Logistical planning is the main focus for a successful event.
- d. Write and distribute OPLAN

Step 4 – Initiate pre-planning requirements

During this step your staff will coordinate with the national cemetery officials and other agencies to execute a successful mission.

- Coordination with local emergency services to include local police/fire/ambulance departments.
- Coordination with pertinent elected officials to check on the need for permits and guidelines that might limit your activities or planning.
- Coordinate with local social clubs, i.e.: American Legion, Elks, VFW, Moose Lodge. They have a lot of members that can be volunteers to assist you with planning and execution.
- Select a volunteer coordinator – he/she would be responsible for all volunteers.
- Select a registration coordinator – they will keep track of the registered brass players. One week before the event they should produce a spread sheet listing the number of participants.
- Select a means to collect volunteers, i.e. website, dedicated phone number etc.



- Create a **Registration Plan** for the brass players; pre-register by mail, on-line or the night before to avoid a large amount of chaos on the morning of the event.
- If database will support, give out bus/location assignments as early as possible (even before registration). If players and volunteers know their bus/location number, the Bus/Area Captains can complete the registration process on the bus or on site if time becomes an issue.
- Create a Volunteer Plan – as you plan for this event you’ll need to request volunteers from the community – “civic groups, organizations are a great place to get volunteers”.
- You will need a large number of volunteers to process the players on the morning of the event. You can ask for guidance on this from local sponsors of foot races and other such events. They know how many volunteers are needed to process participants in a short time.
- You need 1 volunteer per 5 brass players – this individual will be responsible to place the brass player in the proper location, get him on and off the bus (if buses are used).
- If buses are used, assign a “Bus Captain” and an assistant to monitor the bus and drop off the brass players and volunteers to their positions. These individuals need to be disciplined and must know the route well.
- Create and distribute lists of who’s on what bus/location – make sure that the “Bus/Area” Captain and his assistant have this. If time becomes an issue, the bus captains can complete registration on the bus or on site.
- If multiple buses are used – mark the buses with colored construction paper or its equivalent by placing a number on it – place the signs in the front window and the first side windows of the bus for easy recognition.
- If buses are used, have the drivers do a dry run of the route a few days before to be familiar with it.
- Other things to consider;
 - (a) Rations requirements (if any) for whom – Players and Volunteers? – Must plan 2 – 3 months out and ask for funding.
 - (b) Porta Johns (if needed – who’s responsible – who funds them – company can advise you on number needed by number of people expected)
 - (c) Police/Fire departments have the authority to close roads if needed for safety during event.



- (d) Using local police and/or fire departments gives you the ability to communicate if they are positioned throughout the route.
- (e) Use of HAM (amateur radio operators) can also be used as your primary source of communications.
- (f) Rear Detachment may be needed to collect all supplies, rented items, etc as well as general clean up of the AO.
- (g) Permits and/or insurance may be needed to commence event.

It's important to have a “cut off” date for registration – this is needed so that the route can be planned and set up.

- Create a **Transportation Plan** to transport personnel to the location that they are assigned. The “Rule of thumb” is 20 buglers spread out over a one-mile section of the road. The most important thing when planning and marking your route is to remember that the brass player must see the person to his/her right and left so that he can see the signal to start playing their instrument.

Transportation assets are a concern and can be costly – recommend that a military unit in charge of mission request transportation support through their higher headquarters ... GSA vehicles and buses might be available.

If buses are needed to transport players over a long route, money will have to be generated to pay for those buses if GSA vehicles are not available. School districts will generally rent out buses for events like this. You will need 1 school bus (that seats 55) for a 2-mile section of your route.

- Two days prior to the event – send out your route marking teams to mark the route with either a dot of spray paint at the precise location that the brass player will stand, a small flag or a stake pounded into the ground. You may be able to get small marking flags donated from electronic pet containment system companies and/or public utilities. The person in charge should have already calculated the length of the route by the number of registered brass players. **(Recommendation)** The person in charge of this mission should start from the end of the route and drive the route back to the beginning. They should mark the end point and travel one-mile down the road and mark the next point and continue to mark each mile point with a different color spray paint, flag or stake. This will give the teams a quick reference point where each mile starts and assist them in marking the route correctly since the teams will be starting at different locations. **(Recommendation)** Have a team go out and check to make sure that the areas marked aren't tampered with or destroyed either the night before or no later than 4 hours before the event.

Step 5 – Conduct Reconnaissance



You and your staff should perform an on ground reconnaissance (OGR) as early as possible to give your staff the ability to view their AO and have time to develop your plan.

Route Reconnaissance is integral to the plan. Drive the route and write down a mile marker, intersection, and house or business address at each 10th of a mile. This will give, those not familiar with the area, easy landmarks to learn the route. Check with local authorities for the methods of road marking that they will allow.

You must then create a **Movement Plan** for the buses. Using the 1/10th mile Route Reconnaissance, assign a number to the bus and then assign it a 2-mile section. You need to write exact directions for each driver including the return directions. Suggest using MapQuest.com or other similar web-based mapping programs. Since travel times are in these programs, you can then determine your departure times for the buses. One bus should carry enough players for a 2-mile section of road. An orange traffic cone with the bus number on it is suggested to be placed at the beginning of the bus's 2-mile section. This gives the driver easy recognition of his starting point.

NOTE: If a group of Tuba Players is used, it is best to place them in a 1-mile section and use a coach bus with a cargo bay to stow the tubas. Some school districts have a band bus that can carry large size instruments.

Step 6 – Complete the plan

- Add strip map of the route to the OPORD (use map quest)
- Have the route end inside cemetery by either a flag pole or monument.

Step 7 – Issue Orders – execute plan

Have a meeting with your staff and brief them of your plan – then begin the execution of the plan.

Step 8 – Supervise and refine

Throughout the execution of the plan you will refine your plan because of factors that may arise. If the plan is refined, make sure that all persons are notified of the changes through either a FRAGO or memo.

Service Support

In this scenario, extensive service support is necessary. Examples of some things needed are:



1. Billeting for those individuals on the ground 2-3 days (or more) out. Suggest looking into VA facilities, VFW, American Legion and Volunteer Fire Departments for this. Contact American Red Cross for loan of cots for those needing billeting. Need to secure shower facilities at billeting site (in place or temporary), local YMCA's or camp grounds.
2. Food for those individuals on the ground 2-3 days (or more) out. This needs to be planned a minimum of 3 months before the event. A hot breakfast, bag lunch and hot dinner should be planned for those individuals.
3. Spray paints or flags to mark route and area of mass toot.
4. MREs/ Boxed Lunch for the day of the event. May want to consider a continental breakfast for volunteers at registration.
5. Cell phones and/or FRS radios to use while marking the route.
6. Bottled water/water cans etc Contact local water companies to request sponsorship.

Command and Signal

- c. Command: Create your command structure for event.
- d. Signal: **(Recommendation)** Contact your local Ham operator clubs in your area and ask them to assist you in the communications up and down the route. A second means of communication could be the local law enforcement/fire departments – they all have radios. **(Recommendation)** Use FRS/GRMS radios for command and control.
 - (a) Make a list of frequencies and call signs that you'll use.
 - (b) Make a cell phone directory of all critical people within your command.
 - (c) Primary means for medical transportation is ground ambulance via the 911 emergency system.

Scenario 3 - Cascading echo through and around the cemetery property (using boundary lines or internal access roads), followed by a mass playing at a determined location (flag pole or presentation area)

This scenario would be a combination of Scenarios 1 and 2 – this was used and was highly successful during the first ECHOTAPS event in New York State (42.2 Miles)