Boeing to Host 'Operation Homecoming' Book Tour at Museum of Flight

The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] will host a discussion and signing of the book "Operation Homecoming: Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Home Front in the Words of U.S. Troops and Their Families" at 6 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 7 at the Museum of Flight.

Published by Random House Publishing Group and edited by Andrew Carroll, the anthology is the result of a groundbreaking National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) initiative that preserves the stories and reflections of U.S. military personnel who served in Afghanistan and Iraq and their families. Boeing, which made the Operation Homecoming initiative possible, is supporting book tour visits worldwide, including more than 10 military bases nationwide and overseas.

The NEA's Operation Homecoming project gathered distinguished writers -- including Tobias Wolff, Tom Clancy, Marilyn Nelson, Jeff Shaara, Bobbie Ann Mason and Mark Bowden -- to conduct writing workshops at 25 domestic and overseas military installations from April 2004 through July 2005. Operation Homecoming also offered an open call for writing submissions to troops who have served since 9/11, along with their spouses and families. That call resulted in more than 1,200 individual submissions.

The book features almost 100 writings -- including journal entries, letters, short stories, poetry and e-mails sent to friends and family from the front. The writings express the range of emotions of life during wartime -- the severity of combat, the heartache of loved ones on the home front, the tedium and humor in day-to-day life in a war zone, and tearful homecomings for those returning to the United States.

"Operation Homecoming is important on three levels -- the human, historic and literary," said NEA Chairman Dana Gioia. "In human terms, the program and the resulting anthology have helped our troops and their families express their thoughts about the experience of wartime. 'Operation Homecoming' has historic importance in creating personal accounts of the war by individuals who would not normally be heard. In artistic terms, this book will help discover new literary talent."

"Operation Homecoming" editor Andrew Carroll will read excerpts from the book and autograph copies of the book at the Museum of Flight event. Carroll has edited several bestselling books, including "Letters of a Nation," "Behind the Lines," and "War Letters," which also was a PBS film. He founded the Legacy Project, a national, all-volunteer effort to preserve wartime correspondence of veterans and active duty troops. Carroll edited the "Operation Homecoming" anthology on a pro bono basis.

"The Operation Homecoming initiative has provided a unique venue for our nation's servicemen and women and their families to share their experiences and stories with others," said Jim Albaugh, president and CEO of Boeing Integrated Defense Systems. "The Boeing Company is proud to continue our support of the National Endowment for the Arts and the important work they do in bringing the arts to all Americans."

"Operation Homecoming" now is available in bookstores and online. Proceeds from the anthology will be used to provide arts and cultural programming to U.S. military communities. The book also will be given to military installations, schools and libraries.

Other Operation Homecoming Resources
Operation Homecoming will preserve all submissions in a federal government archive. A television documentary on Operation Homecoming will air on PBS in 2007. The NEA also has produced educational resources to encourage troops and their families to write about their experiences. The "Operation Homecoming" CD features recordings of war letters, poems, fiction and memoirs from the Civil War to the Vietnam War. Copies of the "Operation Homecoming" CD can be ordered free of charge through the NEA Publications section at www.arts.gov.

Information on the "Operation Homecoming" book tour, essays on writing, streaming video of "Operation Homecoming" writing workshops and audio clips from the CD are available at www.operationhomecoming.org.

Operation Homecoming has been administered by the NEA in partnership with the Southern Arts Federation. The initiative was made possible by generous support from The Boeing Company, which has helped the NEA bring numerous quality arts and arts education programs to military communities nationwide and overseas.

About the National Endowment for the Arts
The NEA is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts -- both new and established -- bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Arts Endowment is the largest national funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities and military bases. For more information, please visit www.arts.gov.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $30.8 billion business. It provides network-centric system solutions to its global military, government, and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems; the world's largest military aircraft manufacturer; the world's largest satellite manufacturer; a foremost developer of advanced concepts and technologies; a leading provider of space-based

communications; the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense; NASA's largest contractor; and a global leader in sustainment solutions and launch services.
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