

Military Funeral Honors - www.memphisbagpipes.com

Military honors take place after the minister's words. The order of ceremony is the sounding of "Taps", folding of the flag and its presentation to the family. If the deceased was retired from the military, or was killed-in-action, a firing party will be present. They will fire three volleys before sounding "Taps". Afterwards, the flag is folded and presented. A detail leader is responsible for ensuring each step is executed precisely.

1. The bugler and color guard are situated at graveside so that they are in view of the family, approximately 30-40 yards from the grave. The firing party also is in view, but 45-75 yards from the grave.
2. The firing party includes 2-8 riflemen, reflecting the military custom of firing "three volleys of musketry" over the graves of fallen comrades. This is incorrectly referred to as a "21-Gun Salute". It is a "rifle salute".
3. The Military Honors detail positions itself where the hearse will stop. The pallbearers move into position behind the hearse. When the entire procession has arrived, the funeral director opens the rear of the hearse and readies the pallbearers.
4. Pallbearers are directed to withdraw the casket from the hearse and carry it to the grave. The piper leads them to graveside playing an appropriate selection. The bugler and firing party already are in their positions.
5. All detail participants (excluding pallbearers) come to "Attention" and "Present Arms" as the casket is carried to graveside. All detail participants will "Order Arms" after the casket has been placed on the lowering device. Pallbearers are instructed to stand aside together for the duration of the service.
6. During the committal, all honors detail participants go to "Parade Rest".
7. When the minister's committal is completed, the detail leader assumes the clergy's position at the head of the grave and all honors detail participants come to "Attention".
8. If a firing party is present, all honors participants will execute "Present Arms". Attendees may be asked to stand. Three volleys will be fired, followed immediately by the sounding of "Taps".





9. Flag folding is next. A United States flag drapes the casket of deceased veterans to honor the memory of their service. The flag is placed on a closed casket so the union blue field is at the head and over the left shoulder of the deceased.

If cremains are to be interred, the flag will be in possession of a detail member. It will be unfolded and re-folded and presented in a standard military fashion.

Folding is performed by two detail members, or by as many as six if sufficient personnel are present. If there is a firing party, three of the spent brass cartridges will be inserted into the folded flag. The folded flag then is passed to detail leader for inspection and presentation.



10. The detail leader presents the folded flag to the next of kin who is determined by the family. Most often this is the surviving spouse, parent, or child.



11. Following flag presentation, the detail leader stands to attention and salutes. Next, the detail assembles and marches to their vehicle and departs.

12. Upon presentation of the flag, the piper pipes a selection. Most often "Amazing Grace" is performed at this time.



13. Afterwards, the funeral director concludes the service.