



**SARATOGA NATIONAL CEMETERY
HONOR GUARD ASSOCIATION
SCHUYLERVILLE, NEW YORK**

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES - HG 3:
RENDERING MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS (MFH) -
POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

October 1, 2019

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) supersedes all previous editions of Standard Operating Procedures - HG-3.

PURPOSE: This SOP defines and provides guidance to all Honor Guard Association members in rendering Military Funeral Honors (MFH) to deceased Veterans at the Saratoga National Cemetery. The information, policy and procedures contained herein refines previous versions of this SOP and serves as a tool in standardizing the performance of each Honor Guard Squad. This SOP is sensitive to the culture, tradition, age, and capabilities of our membership, yet reinforces and distinguishes a degree of precision, professional demeanor and consistency in honoring our deceased Veterans. The SOP does not address every possible action or contingent circumstance; however, does provide an overarching standard for preparing, conducting and concluding each MFH ceremony on any given day.

APPLICABILITY: The policies, procedures and representations contained in this SOP apply to all Honor Guard Association members participating in MFH at the Saratoga National Cemetery.

AUTHORITY: Compliance with this SOP is derived from approval of this revised SOP by the Saratoga National Cemetery Honor Guard Association elected leadership, implemented by the Commander on the date signed herein.

REFERENCES:

- A. Numerous ceremonial procedures, standards and positions defined within this SOP have been extracted from “The Honor Guard Manual”, dated 2011 and authored by John K. Marshall, Drillmaster
- B. Dept of Veterans Affairs Human Capital Management Letter No: 005-18-43F1, “National Cemetery Administration Military Funeral Honors Safety”
- C. Public Law 106-65 – Oct 5, 1999, “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000”, Sec. 578. Funeral Honors Details for Funerals of Veterans
- D. National Cemetery Administration Memorandum - Military Funeral Honors "Honoring Those Who Served"
- E. FM 7-21.13, The Soldier’s Guide, Chapter 4 - Customs, Courtesies, and Traditions - Colors, Flags, and Guidons, 4-32.

ACRONYMS & DEFINITIONS:

BUGLER: Member of the Honor Guard Squad playing Taps during MFH, either live or a recorded version, and visible to the Funeral Party.

CEREMONY: “A funeral honors detail shall, at a minimum, perform at the funeral a ceremony that includes the folding of the American flag and presentation of the flag to the veteran’s family and the playing of Taps. Unless a bugler is a member of the detail, the funeral honors detail shall play a recorded version of Taps using audio equipment which the detail shall provide if adequate audio equipment is not otherwise available for use at the funeral.” (Ref C)

COLORS: “The National and organizational flags carried by Color-bearing units are called the National Color and the organizational color respectively. When used singularly, the term ‘Color’ implies the National Color. The term ‘Colors’ means the national and organizational colors.” (Ref E)

COMMITAL SHELTER: One of two designated facilities within the Saratoga National Cemetery dedicated to conducting MFH for deceased Veterans.

FLAG DETAIL (FD): A component of each Honor Guard Squad performing Military Funeral Honors, either assisting an Active Duty team or representing the respective military service, to include: Funeral Party reception; transport or escort deceased Veteran remains to the shelter; announce initiation of Military Funeral Honors; fold & present the American flag to Next of Kin; present shell casings to Next of Kin; retire the Military Service Flag; and render a Final Salute.

FLAG DETAIL LEADER (FDL): Squad Leader or designee selected to initiate & supervise the Flag Detail component of Military Funeral Honors.

SARATOGA NATIONAL CEMETERY HONOR GUARD ASSOCIATION (SNC HGA): The designated and Department of Veterans Affairs approved volunteer organization, located in Schuylerville, New York, performing Military Funeral Honors at the Gerald B. H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery.

MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS (MFH): The DOD program for providing dignified military funeral honors at the Saratoga National Cemetery to Veterans who have defended our nation (Ref D). The service “...refers to the folding and presentation of the American Flag, the playing of ‘Taps’, and/or the discharge of firearms (blanks) when a rifle volley is included.” (Ref B)

NEXT OF KIN (NOK): Member of the Funeral Party receiving the American flag and spent rifle casings during the MFH ceremony.

PATRIOT GUARD (PG): Volunteer group of Veteran motorcycle riders attending MFH.

RIFLE DETAIL (RD): A component of each Honor Guard Squad, visible to the Funeral Party, performing a three-volley rifle salute in honor of the deceased Veteran during MFH.

RIFLE DETAIL LEADER (RDL): Squad member designated by the Squad Leader to organize and command the firing of three rifle volleys.

SARATOGA NATIONAL CEMETERY (SNC): Officially known as the Gerald B. H. Solomon National Cemetery located in Schuylerville, NY.

SERVICE FLAG: The flag representing the deceased Veteran's designated service (US Army, US Navy, US Air Force, US Marine Corps, US Coast Guard, or US Merchant Marine), posted in the Committal Shelter on display prior to and during Military Funeral Honors at the Saratoga National Cemetery.

SHELL CASING COLLECTOR: Squad members designated to collect spent rifle shell casings following the three-volley salute by the Rifle Detail, under command of the Rifle Detail Leader.

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CHAPTER 1: PRE-CEREMONY PROCEDURES & CHECKLIST

1. Squad Leader identifies the specific uniform ensemble for the day.
2. Squad Leader or designee visually inspects, and if observed, advises member(s) on proper wear and appearance of uniform.
3. Squad Leader or designee ensures:
 - a. Each member signs in on the Honor Guard Association Form upon arrival.
 - b. Each rifle selected for service is noted in Rifle Usage Binder and inspected to ensure compliance with operational & safety protocols.
 - c. Bugle is inspected, battery tested & noted in Bugle Log.
 - d. Adequate inventory of uniform items is on-hand, and as needed, prepare documentation for additional items for submittal to Quartermaster.
 - e. Final attendance taken before departing for Shelter.
 - f. Squad member cell phones are set for vibrate only or turned off.
4. Squad departs the Squad Room no less than 15 minutes prior to the scheduled service.
 - a. Prior to departure, rifles are placed and secured in the rifle racks on the transport vehicle, and blank ammunition, shell casing containers and bugle are on-board.
 - b. Rifle safe is locked and all rifles other than designated for use are in safe.
 - c. Squad Room is locked.

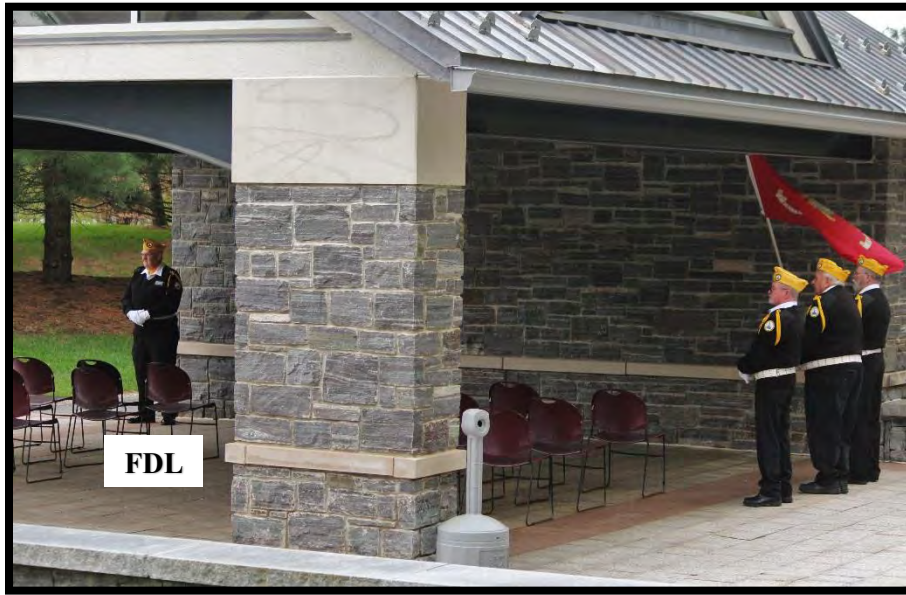
CHAPTER 2: ARRIVAL AT THE SHELTER

1. Personnel assemble at respective locations in & around Committal Shelter, primarily:
 - a. Flag Detail (FD) – Shelter & curbside vicinity
 - b. Rifle Detail (RD) & Shell Casing Collectors – Pre-position as determined by the Rifle Detail Leader (RDL)
 - c. Bugler – Cemetery designated location.
2. Squad Leader or Flag Detail Leader (FDL) communicates with Active Duty Honor Guard, and any other attending service organizations, to coordinate on Military Funeral Honors (MFH) command & protocol procedures.
 - a. Specifically coordinate with USMC Honor Guard on initiating Military Funeral Honors. Suggested procedure: USMC Honor Guard unfolds or raises American Flag immediately following FDL comments to Funeral Party (see Chapter 4, A. 4. a., pg 27).
3. FD posts the deceased Veteran's Service Flag in bracket on shelter wall.
4. FD inspects shelter area to ensure chair alignment and clean surfaces.
5. FDL coordinates with FD personnel on specific positions in Shelter (see Figures depicting both Active Duty Present and No Active Duty), sequence of procedures including whether the deceased Veteran will be honored in a casket or urn, and rehearses FD functions (positions at curbside if no Active Duty present, saluting, facing movements, & retiring the Service Flag).
6. Squad Leader communicates with Cemetery representative noting arrival at shelter, concurrently validating proper radio operation and frequency.

CHAPTER 3: RECEPTION OF DECEASED VETERAN

A. FLAG DETAIL (FD) - ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT

1. FD positions (**Figures A1 & A2**) for both Casket and Urn ceremonies:



**Figure A1. FD Positions in Shelter awaiting Casket or Urn
– Active Duty Present (PARADE REST)**



**Figure A2. FD Positions in Shelter awaiting Casket or Urn
– Active Duty Present (ATTENTION)**

Chapter 3, A, FD – ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - CASKET & URN

2. FD personnel positioned on both sides of open space, under roof line, awaiting arrival of deceased Veteran remains and Funeral Party.
 - a. FD faces toward center of Shelter.
 - b. FDL faces Funeral Party & Active Duty Detail at curb (see **Figure A2, pg 8**).
3. Upon visual observation of the Funeral Party turning into Shelter roadway, FDL will call Detail to ATTENTION, then exercise judgment to stand at PARADE REST or remain at ATTENTION, depending on the size of the Funeral Party and whether a Casket or Urn.
4. As Casket pallbearers or Flag & Urn Holders proceed to the shelter, FDL executes a LEFT FACE, facing into the Shelter. If FD is at Parade Rest, FDL commands “DETAIL, ATTENTION”, then commands “PRESENT ARMS”. If FD is at ATTENTION, FDL commands “PRESENT ARMS” (**Figure B**).



Figure B. Flag Detail (FD) at PRESENT ARMS in Shelter – Active Duty Present

Chapter 3, A, FD – ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - CASKET & URN

5. FD remains at PRESENT ARMS until the Casket or Urn is in-place and the Active Duty Detail takes their position adjacent to the Casket or Urn.
6. Once the Active Duty Detail is in-place, FDL commands “ORDER ARMS”.
7. FDL pivots 45 degrees to face the seating area, remains at ATTENTION and waits for the Funeral Party to congregate inside and around the Shelter.

B. FLAG DETAIL (FD) - NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT

B-1 - CASKET:

1. FD will assemble at curbside in designated positions for Casket (**Figure C**).
2. FDL stands at curbside, to the right of Shelter sidewalk, while FD personnel stand in rear and flank the outside edge of Shelter sidewalk. All personnel face roadway awaiting arrival of the deceased Veteran.



Figure C. Flag Detail (FD) Positions at Curbside awaiting Funeral Party – Casket

3. FDL commands “PARADE REST” as Funeral Party drives through Cemetery.

Chapter 3, B-1, FD – NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - CASKET

4. As Funeral Party turns into Shelter roadway, FDL commands “DETAIL, ATTENTION”.
5. As the hearse approaches the Shelter sidewalk, FLD commands “PRESENT ARMS”.
6. Once the hearse comes to a stop, FDL commands “ORDER ARMS”.
7. FDL waits for Casket to be removed from the hearse, executes a LEFT FACE, facing the Shelter sidewalk, and commands “CENTER FACE”. FD executes a RIGHT or LEFT FACE in order to flank the sidewalk, facing in.
8. As the pallbearers begin to transport the Casket covered by the American Flag toward the Shelter, FDL commands “PRESENT ARMS” (see **Figure D**).



Figure D. Flag Detail (FD) at PRESENT ARMS during Casket Transport to Shelter

9. Once the Casket passes the FD toward the Shelter, FDL commands “ORDER ARMS”, followed by “POST”. FD executes a RIGHT or LEFT FACE in order to face the Casket.

Chapter 3, B-1, FD – NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - CASKET

10. FDL commands “FORWARD MARCH”, and FD steps forward following the Casket to the Shelter. The front right FD member sets the cadence.
11. As the FD approaches the front row of seats inside the Shelter, FDL commands “DETAIL, HALT”.
12. Once the pallbearers and funeral personnel place the Casket in position and step away, FDL commands “POST”.
 - a. Flag Holder and Flag Folder step to ends of Casket, halt facing Shelter wall, execute LEFT and RIGHT FACE to face the Casket, and stand at ATTENTION.
 - b. Remaining FD personnel march to their respective positions, pivot to face toward the Casket, and stand at ATTENTION.
13. FDL steps to side of Shelter near the NOK, halts, executes a 3-step ABOUT FACE (see Para D, pg 63), then pivots 45° to face NOK and Funeral Party, and stands at ATTENTION, awaiting Funeral Party arrival and seating.
14. FD remains at ATTENTION.

B-2 - URN:

1. FDL, Flag Holder and Urn Holder stand at curbside, in front of the Shelter sidewalk, while FD personnel flank the Shelter sidewalk in the rear.
2. FDL stands to the left, Urn Holder in center and Flag Holder on right. All personnel face roadway awaiting arrival of the deceased Veteran (**Figure E**).



Figure E. Flag Detail (FD) Positions at Curbside – Urn

3. FDL commands “PARADE REST” as Funeral Party drives through Cemetery.
4. As Funeral Party turns into Shelter roadway, FDL commands “ATTENTION”.
5. As the vehicle transporting the Folded Flag and Urn approaches the Shelter sidewalk, FLD commands “PRESENT ARMS” (see **Figure F, pg 14**).

Note: If vehicle transporting Urn does not include the American Flag, Flag Detail remains at ATTENTION.

Chapter 3, B-2, FD – NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - URN



Figure F. Flag Detail (FD) in PRESENT ARMS Position at Curbside – Urn

6. Once the vehicle transporting the American Flag and Urn comes to a stop, FDL commands “ORDER ARMS”. FD remains at ATTENTION.
7. FDL executes a LEFT FACE and commands “CENTER, FACE” to the FD. FD executes a LEFT or RIGHT FACE, flanking the sidewalk (Figure G).



Figure G. Flag Detail (FD) Positions at CENTER FACE – Urn

Chapter 3, B-2, FD – NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - URN

8. Upon receipt of the folded American Flag and Urn, FDL issues command “POST” to Flag & Urn Holders.
 - a. Flag & Urn Holders execute RIGHT and LEFT FACE respectively so both now face toward the Shelter, with the American Flag on the right.
9. (If other members of the FD are present) FDL commands “PRESENT ARMS” to the FD (**Figure H**). If no other FD members are present, skip this item.



Figure H. Flag Detail (FD) at PRESENT ARMS as American Flag & Urn Holders Proceed to Shelter

10. FDL commands “FORWARD, MARCH”, and Flag & Urn Holders proceed to the Shelter. Cadence is set by the Flag Holder. **Figure I** (see pg 16) depicts US Flag & Urn Holder carrying positions with FDL in rear.

Chapter 3, B-2, FD – NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - URN



Figure I. Carrying American Flag & Urn to Shelter

11. (If FD members present) Once the Flag & Urn Holders pass the FD, FDL returns to ATTENTION and commands “ORDER ARMS” to the remaining FD members flanking the sidewalk.
12. (If FD members present) FDL commands “POST”. Remaining FD members execute a RIGHT or LEFT FACE facing the Flag & Urn Holders.
13. (If FD members present) FDL commands “FORWARD MARCH”, and FD members step forward in synch with the Flag & Urn Holders cadence to the Shelter. FDL follows the FD members to the Shelter.
14. As the Flag & Urn Holders approach the front row of seats:
 - a. Flag Holder continues forward and crosses in front of the Urn Holder, comes to Halt facing Shelter wall on left side of the table.
 - b. The Urn Holder marks time while the Flag Holder steps in front and to the left, then steps forward and comes to a Halt facing Shelter wall on right side of the table. Both Holders should come to Halt simultaneously.

Chapter 3, B-2, FD – NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - URN

15. Both Holders then execute a LEFT and RIGHT FACE to face the table.
16. Urn Holder places & centers the Urn on the table, then stands at ATTENTION facing the deceased Veteran.
17. The Flag Holder either:
 - a. Places the Flag in front of the Urn, comes to ATTENTION, tilts head down and salutes the Flag, raises head, and stands at ATTENTION facing the deceased Veteran (**Figure J**), or...



**Figure J. Flag Detail (FD) Positions in Shelter – Urn
Folded Flag on Table**

- b. Continues to hold folded Flag until Taps is played (see **Figure K, pg 18**).

Chapter 3, B-2, FD – NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - URN



**Figure K. Flag Detail (FD) Positions in Shelter – Urn
Flag Holder holds Folded Flag**

18. As the remaining FD and FDL follow the Flag and Urn Holders to the Shelter and approach the front row of seats, FDL commands “DETAIL, HALT”.
19. Once the Flag & Urn Holders are in-place beside the table, FDL commands “POST”. FD personnel step to their respective positions and pivot inward to face the deceased Veteran.
20. FDL steps to side of Shelter near the NOK, halts, executes a 3-step ABOUT FACE (see Para D, pg 63), then pivots 45° to face NOK and Funeral Party, and stands at ATTENTION, awaiting Funeral Party arrival and seating.
21. FD remains at ATTENTION.

C. RIFLE DETAIL (RD)

1. RD will assemble outside Bus or rifle transport vehicle, offload rifles in designated area and load blank ammunition.
2. Rifle Detail Leader (RDL) will direct RD to designated Assembly Area to inspect uniforms, ensure safety on and rehearse commands & procedures.
3. Upon notification of Funeral Party proceeding to Shelter , RDL assembles Detail, commands “DETAIL, ATTENTION” ...”RIGHT SHOULDER ARMS”...”RIGHT FACE”...”FORWARD MARCH”. RD proceeds to the Cemetery-Designated Firing Line (Reference B, 3a & b).
4. RDL commands “MARK TIME”, allowing RD personnel to establish proper spacing and alignment.
5. RDL commands “DETAIL, HALT”, then “LEFT FACE”. The RD is lined up at ATTENTION (**Figure K**) on Cemetery-Designated Firing Line.



Figure K. Rifle Detail (RD) at ATTENTION

Chapter 3 ,C – RIFLE DETAIL

6. RDL commands “DRESS RIGHT, DRESS”, providing RD personnel slight movements to align down the Firing Line, then commands “READY, FRONT”, and finally, “PARADE REST.” **Figure L** depicts RD at DRESS RIGHT, DRESS, and **Figure M** depicts RD at PARADE REST.



Figure L. Rifle Detail (RD) at DRESS RIGHT, DRESS



Figure M. Rifle Detail (RD) at PARADE REST

Chapter 3, C – RIFLE DETAIL

7. Upon visual observation of the Funeral Party approaching Shelter, RDL commands “DETAIL, ATTENTION”, then exercises judgment to have RD stand at PARADE REST or remain at ATTENTION, depending on the size of the Funeral Party and whether a Casket or Urn.
8. As the Casket pallbearers or Flag & Urn Holders begin walking to the shelter, RDL commands “PRESENT ARMS” (**Figures N-1 & N-2**).



Figures N-1 and N2. Rifle Detail (RD) at PRESENT ARMS



Chapter 3, C – RIFLE DETAIL

9. The RD remains at PRESENT ARMS until the Casket or Urn is in-place and properly positioned, at which time the RDL commands “ORDER ARMS”. RD returns to position of ATTENTION.
10. Upon visual observation of the Funeral Party moving into the Shelter, RDL will exercise judgment to have RD stand at PARADE REST or remain at ATTENTION, depending on the size of the Funeral Party and whether a Casket or Urn.
11. RDL faces Shelter in position of ATTENTION and awaits salute from FDL, initiating Military Funeral Honors.

D. BUGLER

1. Upon arrival at Shelter, Bugler coordinates with Squad Leader to confirm playing of Taps whenever another Bugler arrives to participate in MFH, and defers to Active Duty Bugler at their request.
2. Occasionally, NOK will request a personal Bugler to play Taps during MFH.
 - a. Bugler will defer to--or coordinate with--other Buglers to ensure cooperation among other Buglers in the playing of Taps.
 - b. Bugler will identify Cemetery-designated location to other Buglers.
3. Upon receiving notification of Funeral Party departing for Shelter, Bugler will step to Cemetery-Designated location in the CARRY POSITION (**see Figure O, pg 23**).

Chapter 3, D – BUGLER

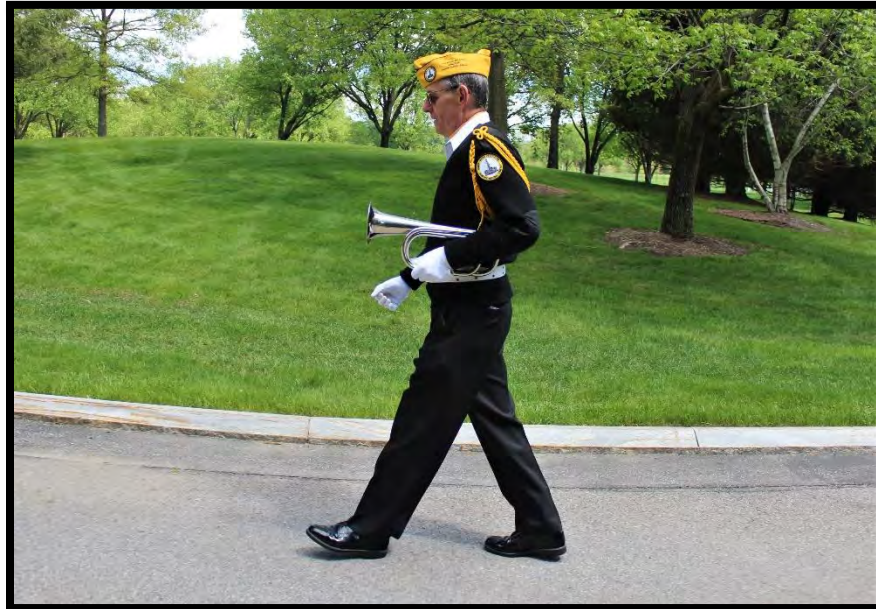
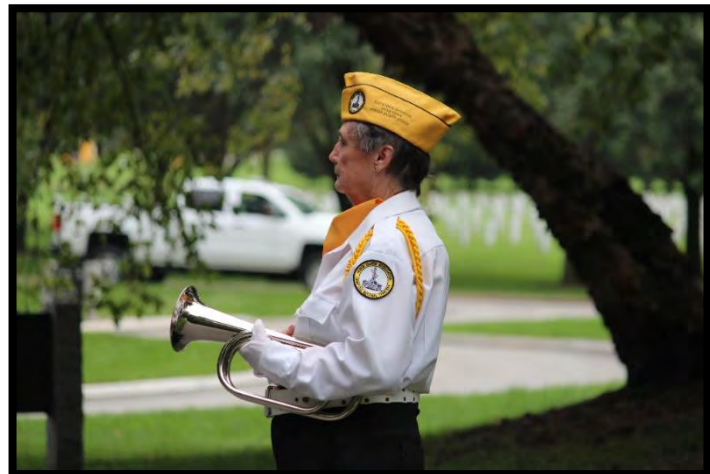


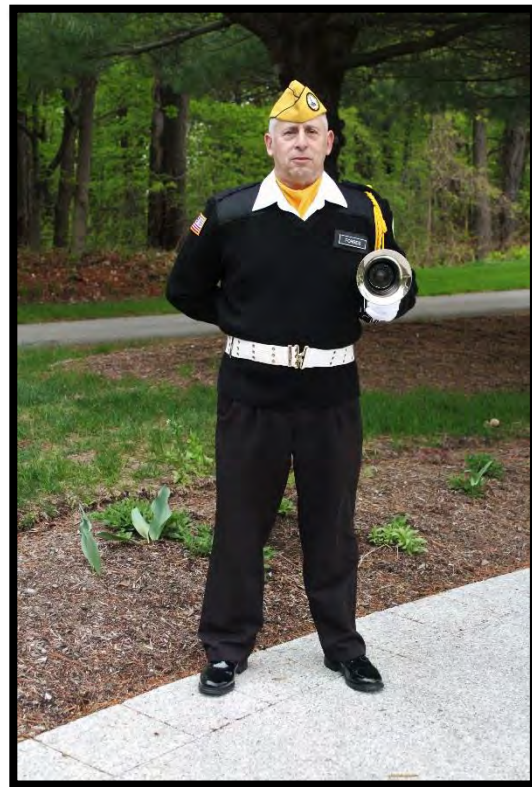
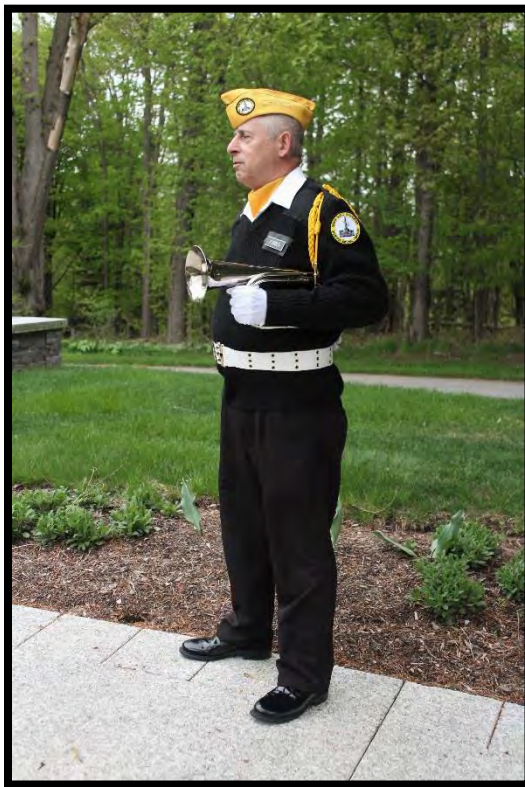
Figure O. Bugler in Carry Position

4. Upon visual observation of the Funeral Party turning into Shelter roadway, Bugler will stand at ATTENTION (see **Figures P1 & P2, pg 24**) or PARADE REST (see **Figures Q1 & Q2, pg 24**), following RDL commands.



Figures P1& P2. Bugler at Position of ATTENTION

Chapter 3, D – BUGLER



Figures Q1 & Q2. Bugler at Position of PARADE REST

5. Bugler will follow commands of RDL from arrival of Funeral Party to completion of MFH.
6. **Figure R** (see pg 25) depicts Bugler at Position of PRESENT ARMS.
7. **Figure S1** (see pg 25) depicts Bugler playing Taps with Bugle, and **Figure S2** (see pg 25) depicts Bugler playing Taps with Trumpet.

Chapter 3, D – BUGLER



Figure R. Bugler at Position of PRESENT ARMS



S1. Bugler playing Taps with Bugle



S2. Bugler playing Taps with Trumpet

CHAPTER 4: RENDERING MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS (MFH)

A. FLAG DETAIL (FD) – ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT (CASKET AND URN)

1. FDL waits for members of the Funeral Party and any additional groups, i.e., Patriot Guard, Law Enforcement or Veteran’s Service Organizations, to arrive at and positioned around the Shelter before initiating MFH.
2. Once Funeral Party and any additional groups are in-place, FDL initiates ceremony.
 - a. If FD is standing at PARADE REST, FDL commands “DETAIL, ATTENTION”.
3. With FD standing at ATTENTION, FDL either steps forward to center of Shelter or remains in place facing NOK and Funeral Party, stating,

“Family and Friends,

Welcome to Saratoga National Cemetery. The (insert Service Branch) and the Saratoga National Cemetery Honor Guard will now render military funeral honors to our fallen Veteran. Military Honors will consist of three rifle volleys, which can be quite loud, followed by the playing of Taps, folding and presentation of the American Flag, presentation of three Rifle casings, and a Final Salute.

Following the rifle volleys and during the playing of Taps, and if you’re able, we invite active duty members and veterans to stand and salute, and civilians to stand & place your hand over your heart.”

Chapter 4, A, FD – ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - CASKET & URN

4. FDL then executes an ABOUT FACE (see Chapter 6, D, pg 63), facing the RDL, and renders a salute to RDL (**Figure T**), initiating MFH.
 - a. Exception: Prior to rendering MFH with the USMC, coordinate with the USMC Team Leader and RDL initiating MFH only after Flag Holder & Flag Folder either unfold American Flag (Urn) or raise American Flag over casket. Suggested procedure: USMC Honor Guard unfolds or raises American Flag immediately following RDL comments to Funeral Party (paragraph 3. above).

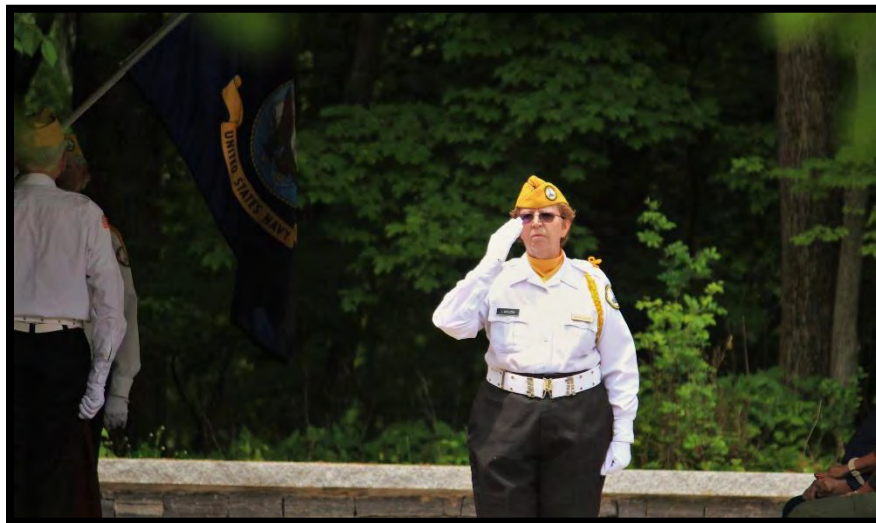


Figure T. FDL Initiates Firing of Rifle Volleys

5. FDL completes the salute, executes an ABOUT FACE, facing inside the Shelter, and stands at ATTENTION. FD remains at ATTENTION.
6. Following the three rifle volleys, FDL commands “PRESENT ARMS”. FD remains at PRESENT ARMS for the playing of Taps.

Chapter 4, A, FD – ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - CASKET & URN

7. Upon completion of Taps, FDL commands “ORDER ARMS”. If Funeral Party members remain standing following Taps, FDL requests all be seated.
8. FD remains at ATTENTION for Active Duty Flag Fold and Presentation to NOK.
9. Once Active Duty steps away from Shelter, FDL steps forward and stops in front of NOK, leans forward or kneels, and presents a packet of three spent rifle casings, stating,

“On behalf of the Saratoga National Cemetery Honor Guard, please accept these shell casings in memory of the three Rifle volleys fired in honor of your loved one’s service to our Nation. The three shells represent duty, honor and valor. We’re very sorry for your loss”.

10. FDL returns to position of ATTENTION, tilts head to the American Flag, salutes (**Figure U**), and returns to ATTENTION.



Figure U. FDL Saluting American Flag in front of NOK

Chapter 4, A, FD – ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - CASKET & URN

11. FDL executes a LEFT FACE and steps forward on left foot to the center of the Shelter, halts, executes a LEFT FACE facing the deceased Veteran, and adjusts position to stand at ATTENTION directly in front of the Casket or Urn.
12. Retire the Service Flag.
 - a. Option A – Silent Command
 - 1) As the FDL steps to the center of the Shelter and halts in front of the Casket or Urn, Service Flag Bearer retrieves Flag from wall bracket, positions Flag against right shoulder and executes LEFT FACE, depicted in **Figure V**.
 - 2) Flag Bearer then silently steps forward on Left foot, crossing in front of Right foot, and steps between the FDL and Casket or Urn, retiring the Service Flag to rear of the Shelter, depicted in **Figure W (see pg 30)**.



Figure V. Service Flag Bearer ready to retire Service Flag

Chapter 4, A, FD – ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - CASKET & URN



Figure W. Service Flag Bearer retiring Service Flag

b. Option B – Voice Command

- 1) From position of ATTENTION in front of Casket or Urn (see paragraph 11), FDL commands, “RETIRE THE (NAME) SERVICE FLAG”.
- 2) Service Flag Bearer retrieves Flag from wall bracket, positions Flag against right shoulder and executes a LEFT FACE (see **Figure V, pg 29**), and steps forward on Left Foot crossing in front of Right foot (**Figure W**), retiring the Service Flag to rear of the Shelter.

c. Remaining FD personnel follow Service Flag Bearer, marching in step, to the rear of the Shelter.

d. FDL remains at ATTENTION until Service Flag Bearer and FD retire from Shelter.

Chapter 4, A, FD – ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - CASKET & URN

13. FDL renders a Final Salute to the Deceased Veteran (**Figure X**), returns to ATTENTION, executes a LEFT FACE, and steps to the rear of the Shelter.

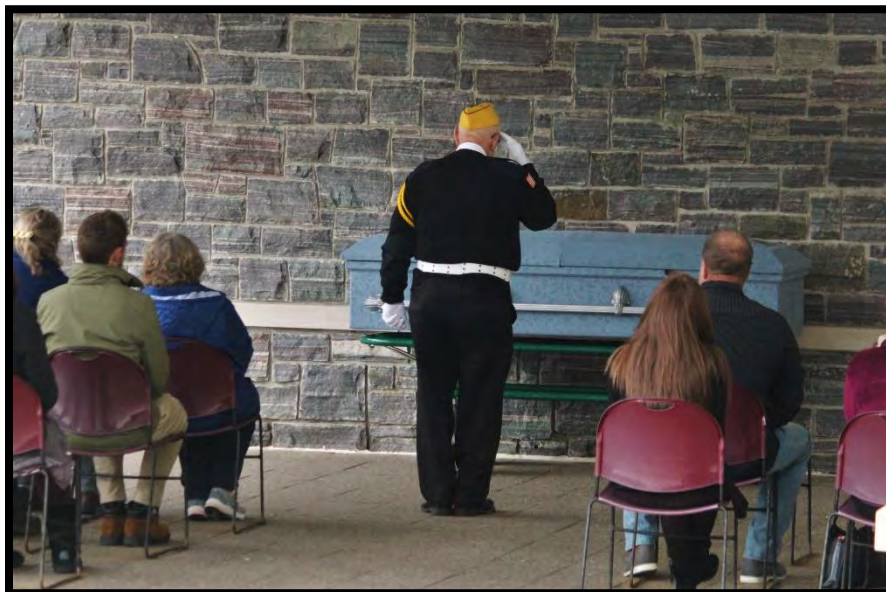


Figure X. Flag Detail Leader Final Salute for Casket and Urn

14. The FDL's departure concludes Military Funeral Honors.

B. FLAG DETAIL (FD) – NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT

B-1. CASKET

1. FDL waits for members of the Funeral Party and any additional groups, i.e., Patriot Guard, Law Enforcement or Veteran’s Service Organizations, to arrive at and positioned around the Shelter before initiating MFH.
2. Once Funeral Party and any additional groups are in-place, FDL initiates ceremony.
 - a. If FD is standing at PARADE REST, FDL commands “DETAIL, ATTENTION”.
3. With FD standing at ATTENTION, FDL may step forward or remain in place facing NOK and Funeral Party, stating,

“Family and Friends,

Welcome to Saratoga National Cemetery. The (insert Service Branch) and the Saratoga National Cemetery Honor Guard will now render military funeral honors to our fallen Veteran. Military Honors will consist of three rifle volleys, which can be quite loud, followed by the playing of Taps, folding and presentation of the American Flag, presentation of three Rifle casings, and a Final Salute.

Following the rifle volleys and during the playing of Taps, and if you’re able, we invite active duty members and veterans to stand and salute, and civilians to stand & place your hand over your heart.”

Chapter 4, FD, B-1, NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - CASKET

4. FDL then executes ABOUT FACE (see Ch 6, D, pg 63), facing the RDL, and renders a salute to RDL (see **Figure T, pg 27**).
5. FDL completes salute to RDL, executes ABOUT FACE and remains at ATTENTION as the RD fires three rifle volleys.
6. Following the three rifle volleys, FDL commands “PRESENT ARMS”. FD remains at PRESENT ARMS for the playing of Taps.
7. Upon completion of Taps, FDL commands “ORDER ARMS”. If Funeral Party members remain standing following Taps, FDL requests all be seated.
8. From position of ATTENTION, Flag Holder & Folder bend over and grab corners of the American Flag. Flag Holder nods or winks and both raise Flag over Casket.
9. Flag Holder & Folder take three small side steps away from Casket, holding Flag horizontal (**Figure Y**).



Figure Y. Flag Holder & Folder – Horizontal Hold

Chapter 4, FD, B-1, NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - CASKET

10. Holder & Folder grasp the corners, and the Holder nods or winks to initiate a 4-Count Flag Display sequence (keep Flag taut for all counts):

- a. Count 1 - Hold Flag horizontal for one count (see **Figure Y, pg 33**).
- b. Count 2 - Tilt Flag to a 45° angle facing Funeral Party (**Figure Z**)



Figure Z. Flag Holder & Folder – 45° Angle Hold

- c. Count 3 - Hold flag at 45° angle for one count
 - d. Count 4 - Return Flag to horizontal hold
11. Flag Folder executes 13 folds (see HGA SOP HG-6).
- a. As the Flag Holder tucks Blue field end into the folded Flag , FDL steps forward and stops one pace to the rear of Flag Folder.

Chapter 4, FD, B-1, NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - CASKET

12. Once Flag Holder completes blue field tuck into fold, Holder returns to ATTENTION. Folder raises folded American Flag to eye level and presents to Flag Holder with pointed end of Flag pointing back to Holder (Figure AA).



Figure AA. Flag Folder Presenting Flag to Flag Holder

13. Flag Holder receives Flag, Folder salutes (**Figure BB**), executes ABOUT FACE, steps back to initial position, executes ABOUT FACE, and stands at ATTENTION facing rear of Shelter.



Figure BB. Flag Folder Presenting Flag to Flag Holder

Chapter 4, FD, B-1, NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - CASKET

14. Flag Holder rotates Folded Flag in horizontal position so pointed end of Flag faces inward, and presents to FDL.

15. Once FDL accepts Flag, Flag Holder salutes Flag (**see Figure BB, pg 35**), executes RIGHT FACE and steps back to initial position, executes ABOUT FACE, and stands at ATTENTION facing rear of Shelter.

16. FDL steps forward and stops in front of NOK, leans forward or kneels, and presents American Flag to NOK, stating,

“On behalf of the President of the United States, the (insert Service Branch) and a grateful Nation, please accept this Flag as a symbol of our appreciation for your loved one’s honorable and faithful service.”

17. FDL then presents a packet of three spent shell casings to NOK, stating,

“On behalf of the Saratoga National Cemetery Honor Guard, please accept these shell casings in memory of the three Rifle volleys fired in honor of your loved one’s service to our Nation. The three shells represent duty, honor and valor. We’re very sorry for your loss”.

18. FDL returns to position of ATTENTION, tilts head to the American Flag, salutes, and returns to ATTENTION.

19. FDL executes a LEFT FACE and steps forward on left foot to the center of the Shelter, halts, executes a LEFT FACE facing the deceased Veteran, and adjusts position to stand directly in front of the Casket.

Chapter 4, FD, B-1, NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - CASKET

20. Retire the Service Flag.

a. Option A – Silent Command

- 1) As the FDL steps to the center of the Shelter and halts in front of the Casket or Urn, Service Flag Bearer retrieves Flag from wall bracket, positions Flag against right shoulder and executes LEFT FACE (see **Figure V, pg 29**).
- 2) Flag Bearer then silently steps forward on Left foot, crossing in front of Right foot, and steps between the FDL and Casket or Urn, retiring the Service Flag to rear of the Shelter, depicted in (see **Figure W, pg 30**).

b. Option B – Voice Command

- 1) From position of ATTENTION in front of Casket or Urn (see paragraph 19), FDL commands, “RETIRE THE (NAME) SERVICE FLAG”.
- 2) Service Flag Bearer retrieves Flag from wall bracket, positions Flag against right shoulder and executes a LEFT FACE (see **Figure V, pg 29**), then steps forward on Left Foot crossing in front of Right Foot (see **Figure W, pg 30**), retiring the Service Flag to rear of the Shelter.

c. Remaining FD personnel follow Service Flag Bearer, marching in step, to the rear of the Shelter.

d. FDL remains at ATTENTION until Service Flag Bearer and FD retire from Shelter.

21. Remaining FD personnel follow Service Flag Bearer, marching in step, to the rear of the Shelter.

Chapter 4, FD, B-1, NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - CASKET

22. FDL renders a Final Salute to the Deceased Veteran (**see Figure X, pg 31**), returns to ATTENTION, executes a LEFT FACE, and steps to the rear of the Shelter.
23. The FDL's departure concludes Military Funeral Honors.

B-2. URN

1. FDL waits for members of the Funeral Party and any additional groups, i.e., Patriot Guard, Law Enforcement or Veteran’s Service Organizations, to arrive at and positioned around the Shelter before initiating MFH.
2. Once Funeral Party and any additional groups are in-place, FDL initiates ceremony.
 - a. If FD is standing at PARADE REST, FDL commands “DETAIL, ATTENTION”.
3. With FD standing at ATTENTION, FDL may step forward or remain in place facing NOK and Funeral Party, stating,

“Family and Friends,

Welcome to Saratoga National Cemetery. The (insert Service Branch) and the Saratoga National Cemetery Honor Guard will now render Military Funeral Honors to our fallen Veteran. Military Honors will consist of three rifle volleys, which can be quite loud, followed by the playing of Taps, folding and presentation of the American Flag, presentation of three spent shell casings, and a Final Salute.

Following the rifle volleys and during the playing of Taps, and if you’re able, we invite active duty members and veterans to stand and salute, and civilians to stand & place your hand over your heart.”
4. FDL then executes an ABOUT FACE, facing the RDL, and renders a salute to RDL (see **Figure T, pg 27**).
5. FDL completes salute to RDL, executes ABOUT FACE and remains at ATTENTION as the RD fires three rifle volleys.

Chapter 4, FD, B-2, NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - URN

6. Following the three rifle volleys, FDL commands “PRESENT ARMS”. FD remains at PRESENT ARMS for the playing of Taps.
7. Upon completion of Taps, FDL commands “ORDER ARMS”. If Funeral Party members remain standing following Taps, FDL requests all be seated.
8. Flag Unfold
 - a. If not holding the folded Flag during MFH:
 - 1) Flag Holder steps to front of table, executes LEFT FACE, retrieves Flag from table, returns to ATTENTION, takes one step backward (away from Table) and executes RIGHT FACE.
 - 2) Flag Folder takes two side steps to left stopping across from Holder.
 - 3) Flag Folder then steps forward toward Flag Holder (Flag Holder remains in-place).
 - b. If holding the folded Flag during MFH:
 - 1) Flag Holder & Folder take three small side steps toward Funeral Party, then step forward toward each other, centered in front of Urn.
 - c. Flag Holder presents folded Flag to Flag Folder, with pointed end of Flag facing Flag Folder. Flag Holder then reaches into tuck and pull out Flag edge (blue field) with grommets (see **Figure CC, pg 41**).

Chapter 4, FD, B-2, NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - URN



Figure CC. Flag Holder & Folder – Prepare to Unfold Flag

- d. Flag Folder unfolds Flag, with both Folder & Holder taking small backward steps as Flag opens, positioning Flag centered on Urn.
- e. Once Flag is fully extended horizontal in the $\frac{1}{4}$ fold position (see **Figure DD, pg 42**), Holder & Folder turn Flag vertical and open to the $\frac{1}{2}$ fold (see **Figure EE, pg 42**).

Chapter 4, FD, B-2, NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - URN



Figure DD. Flag Holder & Folder – 1/4-Fold Position



Figure EE. Flag Holder & Folder – 1/2-Fold Position

Chapter 4, F, B-2, NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - URN

9. Holder & Folder grasp the corners, and the Holder winks or nods to initiate a 5-Count Flag Display sequence (keep Flag taut for all counts):

a. Count 1 - Open the Flag to a horizontal position (**Figure FF**).



Figure FF. Flag Holder & Folder – Horizontal Hold

b. Count 2 - Hold Flag horizontal for one count

c. Count 3 - Holder & Folder tilt Flag to a 45° angle (see **Figure GG, pg 44**)

Chapter 4, FD, B-2, NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - URN



Figure GG. Flag Holder & Folder – 45° Angle Hold

- d. Count 4 - Hold Flag at 45° angle for one count
 - e. Count 5 - Return Flag to horizontal hold
10. Flag Folder performs 13-folds (see HGA SOP HG-6).
- a. As the Flag Holder tucks Blue field end into the folded Flag, FDL steps forward and stops one pace to the rear of Flag Folder.
 - b. Once Flag Holder completes blue field tuck into fold, Holder returns to ATTENTION. Folder raises folded Flag to eye level and presents to Flag Holder with pointed end of Flag pointing back to Holder (see **Figure AA, pg 35**).

Chapter 4, FD, B-2, NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - URN

11. Flag Holder receives Flag, Folder salutes (**see Figure BB, pg 35**), executes ABOUT FACE, steps back to initial position, executes ABOUT FACE, and stands at ATTENTION facing rear of Shelter.
12. Flag Holder rotates Folded Flag in horizontal position so pointed end of Flag faces inward and presents to FDL.
13. Once FDL accepts Flag, Flag Holder salutes (**see Figure BB, pg 35**), executes RIGHT FACE and steps back to initial position, executes ABOUT FACE, and stands at ATTENTION facing rear of Shelter.
14. FDL steps forward and stops in front of NOK, leans forward or kneels, and presents American Flag to NOK, stating,

“On behalf of the President of the United States, the (insert Service Branch) and a grateful Nation, please accept this Flag as a symbol of our appreciation for your loved one’s honorable and faithful service.”
15. FDL then presents a packet of three spent shell casings to NOK, stating,

“On behalf of the Saratoga National Cemetery Honor Guard, please accept these shell casings in memory of the three Rifle volleys fired in honor of your loved one’s service to our Nation. The three shells represent duty, honor and valor. We’re very sorry for your loss”.
16. FDL returns to position of ATTENTION, tilts head to the American Flag, salutes, and returns to ATTENTION (**see Figure U, pg 28**) .

Chapter 4, FD, B-2, NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - URN

17. FDL executes a LEFT FACE and steps forward on left foot to the center of the Shelter, halts, executes a LEFT FACE facing the deceased Veteran, and adjusts position to stand directly in front of the Urn.
18. Retire the Service Flag – Two options:
 - a. Option A – Silent Command
 - 1) As the FDL steps to the center of the Shelter and halts in front of the Casket or Urn, Service Flag Bearer retrieves Flag from wall bracket, positions Flag against right shoulder and executes LEFT FACE (**see Figure V, pg 29**).
 - 2) Flag Bearer then silently steps forward on Left foot, crossing in front of Right foot, and steps between the FDL and Casket or Urn, retiring the Service Flag to rear of the Shelter, depicted in (**see Figure W, pg 30**).
 - b. Option B – Voice Command
 - 1) From position of ATTENTION in front of Casket or Urn (see paragraph 11), FDL commands, “RETIRE THE (NAME) SERVICE FLAG”.
 - 2) Service Flag Bearer retrieves Flag from wall bracket, positions Flag against right shoulder and executes a LEFT FACE (**see Figure V, pg 29**), and steps forward on Left Foot crossing in front of Right foot (**see Figure W, pg 30**), retiring the Service Flag to rear of the Shelter.
19. Remaining FD personnel follow Service Flag Bearer, marching in step, to the rear of the Shelter.

Chapter 4, FD, B-2, NO ACTIVE DUTY PRESENT - URN

20. FDL renders a Final Salute to the Deceased Veteran (see **Figure X, pg 31**), returns to ATTENTION, executes a LEFT FACE, and steps to the rear of the Shelter.
21. The FDL's departure concludes Military Funeral Honors.

C. RIFLE DETAIL (FD) – ALL SERVICES

1. The FDL faces RDL and salutes, initiating Military Funeral Honors.
2. RDL returns salute, then executes movement to face Rifle Detail.
3. If the RD is at PARADE REST (see **Figure M, pg 20**), RDL commands “DETAIL, ATTENTION” (see **Figure K, pg 19**).
4. RDL commands the following firing sequence:
 - a. At the command, “WITH BLANK AMMUNITION, LOAD”, the RD will come to PORT ARMS, execute a Half-Right, and extend the right foot out to the right approximately 10”, providing a steady stance. **Figure HH** depicts RD in PORT ARMS position.



Figure HH. Rifle Detail at PORT ARMS

- b. At the command, “READY”, RD moves the rifle safety to the firing position.

Chapter 4, C – RIFLE DETAIL

- c. On the command, “AIM”, RD brings the rifle to right shoulder or midsection, depending on the Squad’s firing position, muzzle to the front and at a 45° angle from horizontal. **Figures II-1 and II-2** depict RD in AIM positions.



Figure II-1. Rifle Detail in AIM Position - Shoulder Position



Figure II-1. Rifle Detail in AIM Position - Side Position

Chapter 4, C – RIFLE DETAIL

- d. On the command, “FIRE”, RD will squeeze the trigger, then return the rifle to PORT ARMS, awaiting the 2nd & 3rd commands, “AIM” followed by “FIRE”. **Figures JJ-1 & JJ-2** depict RD executing FIRE command.

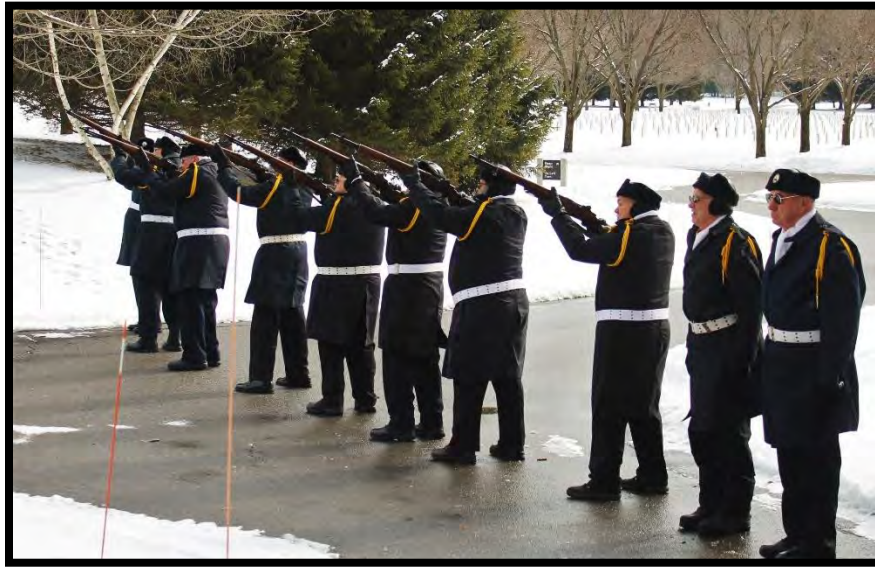


Figure JJ-1. Rifle Detail Executing FIRE Command - Shoulder Position



Figure JJ-2. Rifle Detail Executing FIRE Command - Side Position

Chapter 4, C – RIFLE DETAIL

- e. Following the 3rd FIRE command and volley, RD returns to the position of PORT ARMS (see **Figure HH, pg 48**).
 - f. RDL next commands, “CEASE FIRE”, at which time RD switches rifle from firing position to safety.
5. Following command to CEASE FIRE, RDL commands, “PRESENT ARMS” (see **Figures N1 & N2, pg 21**) for the playing of Taps.
 6. At the conclusion of Taps, RDL commands, “ORDER ARMS”. RD executes a four-movement sequence, beginning with PORT ARMS and ending at ATTENTION. RDL will exercise judgment for RD to remain at ATTENTION or go to PARADE REST for the remainder of MFH.
 7. Upon completion of MFH, noted by the FD retiring the Service Flag to the rear of the Shelter, RDL commands, “ATTENTION” if Detail is at PARADE REST, followed by, “PORT ARMS”, then “LEFT FACE”.
 8. RDL next commands, “FORWARD MARCH”, departing the firing line and proceeding in MARCH STEP to the rear of the Shelter. **Figures KK-1 & KK-2 (pg 52)** depict RD in MARCH STEP.
 9. As RD departs the firing line, Shell Casing Collectors will silently collect the spent casings from pavement and lawn area, and if more than one, march in unison to the rear of Shelter (see **Figure KK-2, pg 52**).

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Figure KK-1. Rifle Detail in MARCH STEP



Figure KK-2. Rifle Detail in MARCH STEP as Shell Casing Collectors retrieving spent casings from pavement and lawn area.

10.RD continues in MARCH STEP to the bus or transport vehicle parking area.

11. RDL commands, “DETAIL HALT”, “RIGHT FACE”, then commands, “FALL OUT”, which completes the RD portion of MFH.

D. BUGLER – ALL SERVICES

1. Upon FDL initiating MFH with salute to RDL, Bugler prepares Bugle insert for playing of Taps by turning power button on.
2. Bugler stands at ATTENTION (see **Figures P1 & P2, pg 23**) for rifle volleys.
3. Immediately following the 3rd volley, Bugler pushes the “Play” button, brings trumpet to simulated play position, and holds position while Taps is played.
4. **Figure LL** depicts Bugler position during playing of Taps.

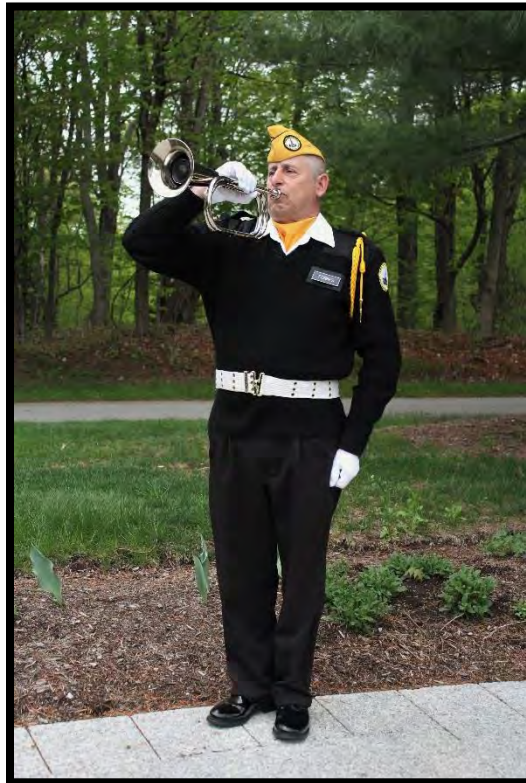


Figure LL. Bugler Position for Playing Taps

5. Following Taps, Bugler returns to position of ATTENTION (see **Figures P1 and P2, pg 23**).

Chapter 4, D – BUGLER

6. Upon completion of MFH, noted by the FD retiring the Service Flag to the rear of the Shelter, Bugler waits for RDL to command, “FORWARD MARCH” to RD.
7. Bugler marches toward rear of Shelter in the CARRY POSITION (see **Figure O, pg 23**) until completely out of sight from the Funeral Party.

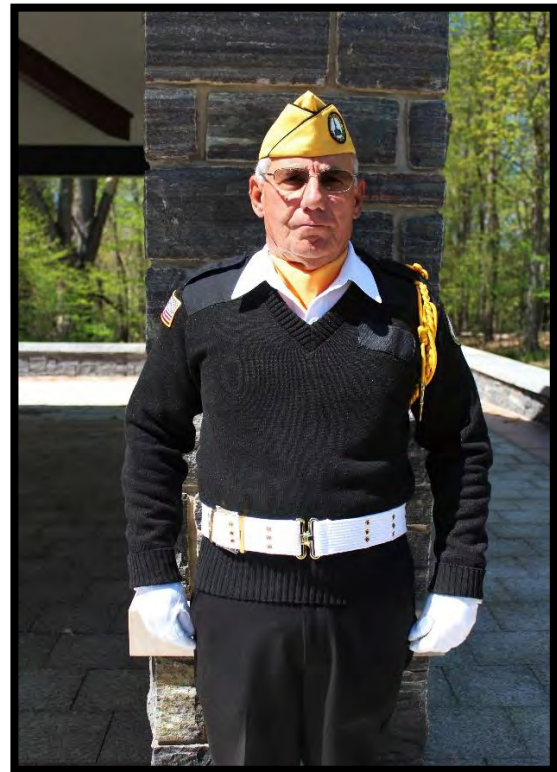
CHAPTER 5: POST-CEREMONY PROCEDURES & CHECKLIST

1. Squad Leader or designee ensures:
 - a. All members have signed in on the Honor Guard Association Form prior to departure.
 - b. Rifles fired during MFH are thoroughly inspected to ensure compliance with operational and safety protocols, and placed in safe.
 - c. Bugle is returned to storage case.
 - 1) Bugler will notate any operational concerns in “Bugle Log”, and if a discrepancy is discovered, inform the Squad Leader.
 - 2) Either the Squad Leader or Bugler will contact the Association’s Bugle POC via email, phone or text.
 - d. Designated Bus Driver cleans bus interior and returns bus to designated parking space, key returned to garage and driver signs out in Vehicle Log.
 - e. Squad Room is swept, trash emptied, all personal items removed, and chairs stacked.
2. Squad Leader or designee completes Sign-In roster, confirms safe is locked, locks door and returns Squad Room key, roster and radio to Cemetery administrative office.

CHAPTER 6: HGA UNIFORMS AND MOVEMENTS (Ref A)

A. UNIFORM WEAR & APPEARANCE

1. SHIRT: Long sleeve with headgear, ascot, braid, pistol belt over web belt, white gloves (black gloves for Rifle Detail), and name tag centered on right pocket flap
2. SWEATER: Headgear, ascot, braid, pistol belt, and white gloves for Flag Detail (black gloves for Rifle Detail)



3. OVERCOAT: Winter headgear, scarf, ascot, braid on left shoulder, pistol belt, black gloves (Rifle Detail) or white gloves (Flag Detail), earmuffs.

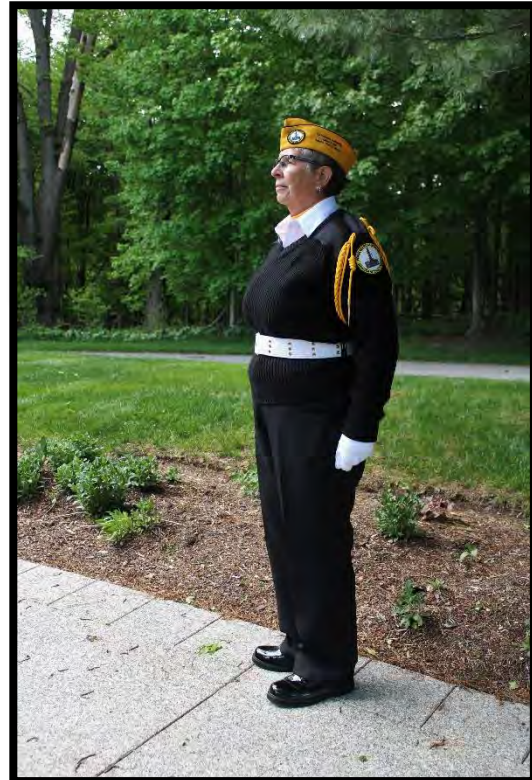


4. RAINCOAT: Yellow headgear, ascot, white gloves for Flag Detail (black gloves for Rifle Detail)



B. POSITION OF ATTENTION

1. Upon command, bring both feet together with heels touching and toes pointing outward at 45° angle.
2. Bring arms straight down to sides, cup hands (simulate holding a roll of quarters) and press cupped fingers against legs or coat, depending on uniform of the day.
3. Head is erect and facing straight ahead.
4. Remain in-place with no unnecessary movement or conversation.
5. If required to look to side, do not turn head. Execute full body in-place movement to the extent needed to continue looking straight ahead.



C. POSITION OF PARADE REST

1. From position of ATTENTION, move left foot sideways so feet are shoulder width apart, toes pointing outward. Right foot remains in-place.
2. Bring arms to front and place left hand over right, with arms & fingers extended.
3. Left fingers cross over right fingers, and right thumb encloses left thumb.
4. Remain in-place with no unnecessary movement or conversation.



D. PRESENT ARMS & ORDER ARMS

1. Start from position of ATTENTION. Toes point out at 45° angle. Hands cupped (simulate holding a roll of quarters) and knuckles against legs or overcoat.



2. Begin three-count salute:

Count 1 - Bring hand up along gig line



Count 2 - Continue hand up gig line



Count 3 - Tips of fingers touch edge of eyebrow, hat or glasses



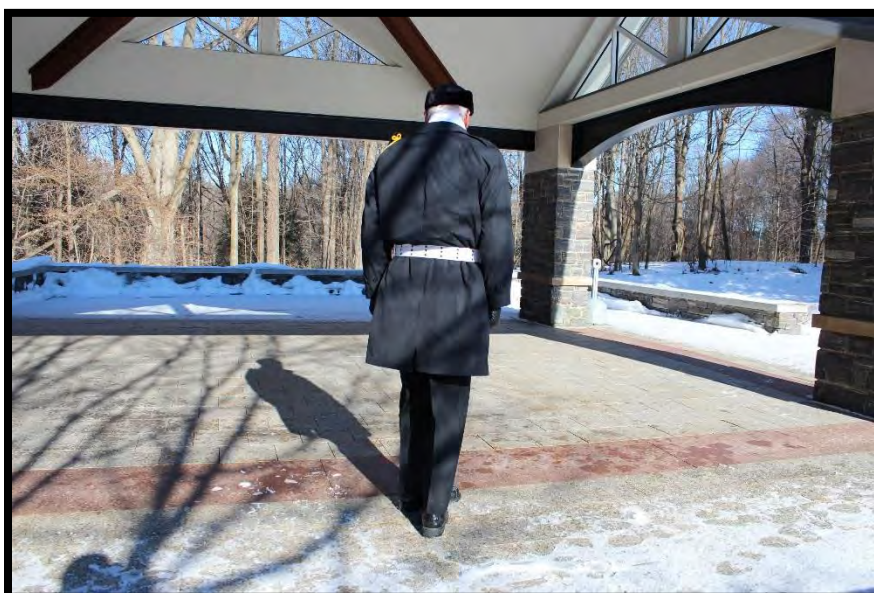
3. Reverse 3-count sequence for ORDER ARMS.

E. ABOUT FACE:

1. Three-step movement rotating 180° to the rear. Arms remain at sides.
2. Start from position of ATTENTION (below). Toes point out at 45° angle.



Step 1: Cross left foot in front of right, placing left foot in front of right toe, creating a “T”



Step 2: Rotate right foot clockwise all the way around to the right...180° ...and touch right heel against left heel. Right foot is now in position



Step 3: Rotate left foot to the right, joining both heels, and toes pointing out at 45° angle, ending in position of ATTENTION. Arms remain at sides for entire movement.



F. TRANSPORT FOLDED AMERICAN FLAG & URN

1. Folded Flag is always on right when receiving and transporting.
2. Pointed end always faces the Flag Holder.
3. Left hand placed flat on top with fingers and thumb closed together.



RELATED STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES:

1. HGA SOP HG 4 – DRESS AND APPEARANCE
2. HGA SOP HG 5 (Future) - RIFLE HANDLING, TRANSPORT, CLEANING, INSPECTION, & STORAGE
3. HGA SOP HG 6 (Future) – FOLDING THE AMERICAN FLAG



Approved on **September 23, 2019.**

Alan Poole, Commander
Saratoga National Cemetery Honor Guard Association

Last page