

SARATOGA NATIONAL CEMETERY HONOR GUARD ASSOCIATION

Bullet points of the meeting held on Friday, September 22, 2023, between Scott Lamb and Squad Leaders, Commander, and Vice Commander of the Association.

Scott Lamb requested this meeting to discuss 7 “observations” shared with him by funeral directors and his staff. Present at the meeting were the Art Dutcher-Commander, Don Boone - Vice Commander, Marty Allen – Monday Squad Leader, Frank Merrill – Tuesday Squad Leader, Pat Festa – Wednesday Squad Leader, Ted Mosher – Thursday Squad Leader, Gary Squires - Friday Squad Leader, Dick Noonan – Wednesday Squad Leader starting 01/01/24, and Mark Joly – recording minutes.

1. Rifle Safety.

- a. The recommended way to carry a rifle is at PORT ARMS or in the CRADLE CARRY position.
- b. Make multiple trips to and from the squad room rather than carry two rifles by their muzzle.
- c. Rifles being held by the muzzle must be always pointed upward and in a safe direction.
- d. Rifles should never be carried by their sling.
- e. Review procedures and SOPs already in place for rifle safety with new members and current members of each squad.

2. Parking Assistance from Squads.

- a. Communication between the Cemetery Representatives and the Squad on duty is key.
- b. Use the radio to determine if parking assistance is needed if not already provided when the Cemetery Representative radios they are leaving the PIC.
- c. All Squad Leaders committed to parking assistance when squad numbers allow.

3. Rifle Team in position in time.
 - a. Increased communication via radio will help prevent the late arrival of the Rifle Team to the firing line.
 - b. Cemetery Representatives should repeat their departure from the PIC if no response is heard from the squad.
4. Clergy go first.
 - a. Scott changed the order when he first arrived as Director to give the squads a break from extreme weather.
 - b. Military Funeral Honors will go first unless clergy indicates the need to go first.
 - c. If known, the Cemetery Representative will notify the Flag Detail Leader that the clergy wants to go first.
 - d. Flag Detail Leader should talk to the Cemetery Representative if necessary to clarify with the clergy that Military Funeral Honors go first. (Primarily when the clergy is upfront at the very beginning)
5. Lengthy introduction to funeral guests.
 - a. Cemetery Representatives will take over the introduction starting October 1, 2023.
 - b. Upon hearing "We will now commence with Military Funeral Honors", the Flag Detail Leader will turn and salute the Rifle Detail Leader to commence the rifle volleys.
 - c. Guests will no longer be invited to stand during Taps.
6. MFH – when to call PRESENT ARMS for rifles and/or Taps.
 - a. All squads will call PRESENT ARMS **only** for Taps.
 - b. There will be **no salute or PRESENT ARMS** when the flag is presented to the NOK. All should be at ATTENTION.
 - c. Scott will talk to any squad that is resistant to these modifications. He needs all squads to be consistent. Individual squad variances from standard are not authorized.
 - d. Any reference to God should be left out when presenting the flag and or brass to the NOK.

7. Rifle Team departure and policing of brass.

- a. Rifle Team should remain at the firing line until the service flag is retired.
- b. If extreme weather occurs, the Rifle Detail Leader should issue **quiet commands** to march the team off when leaving after Taps.
- c. Policing brass should be **unnoticeable** to the guests.
- d. Policing the brass should wait until the Flag Detail Leader has left the shelter.
- e. The person policing the brass may choose to wait until, when present, the Patriot Guard has presented the plaque and saluted.