

Masonic Military Tribute

This ceremony is designed to honor Military Masons in a Lodge room prior to the meal on a stated meeting night. As this is done prior to the stated meeting time, a Lodge cannot be opened, but a description of the ceremony should be spread upon the minutes for documentation purposes.

It is highly encouraged that the Masonic veterans being honored invite their families and their military friends to observe the high regard Masons have for those who served.

Materials needed (Optional):

1. folded casket flag on the altar next to the Bible. (If the flag folding ceremony is to be used, the flag on the altar should not be folded into the tricornered shape. If not, place the tricornered flag on the altar beside the Bible.)
2. Lapel pins if you are going to present them. (Available from Grand Lodge, or any appropriate pin may be substituted).
3. Cards and pens so that each Mason's name, rank, and branch can be written. Have each Military Mason fill out the card and present it to the WM or MC prior to the ceremony if pins are to be given out.

Ceremony

WM or MC:

General remarks. (Given by the WM or the designated Master of Ceremonies for the evening.) Conclude welcome and general remarks with: "Before we begin tonight's ceremony, let us pause to invoke the aid of Deity. Please rise. Brother Chaplain, lead our devotions."

Chaplain:

"Great Architect of the Universe, today we come before you with grateful hearts for the men and women who have served in our nation's military. Whatever their portion, in war or peace, they have displayed the character of selflessness and shown a steadfast allegiance to the greater good. Be with us now as we honor their sacrifices and celebrate the liberties they have safeguarded. Amen."

"So mote it be."

WM or MC:

Flags presented. (This can be as simple as pledges to the U.S. and Texas flags, or more elaborate, such as inviting a Commandery, the Knights of St. Andrew, or the National Sojourners to present the flags. The playing of the National Anthem is encouraged if you are using music in the ceremony.)

WM or MC:

"Masonry has been involved in every branch of military service and in every American war and conflict. What follows is a very brief reminder of some our Brothers' services, beginning with the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, Brother George Washington, and the Father of the United States Navy, Brother John Paul Jones."

"Texas Masons are extremely proud of the role individual Masons played in the Texas Revolution and annually hold observances at Gonzales, the Alamo in San Antonio, at Goliad and San Jacinto. While this ceremony is focused on the role of Masons in the American Military, we would be remiss not to mention the names of our Texas Heroes who were Masons: Brothers Davy Crockett, William Barrett Travis, Jim Bowie, James Butler

Bonham, Almaron Dickenson, James Walker Fannin, Juan Seguin, Thomas Jefferson Rusk, Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, and Sam Houston.”

Two special instances of the bonds of Masonic Brotherhood may be recounted from the American Civil War:

“During the Battle of Galveston in January 1863, Major Philip C. Tucker, the Worshipful Master of Harmony Lodge No. 6 in Galveston, received a request for Masonic burial services from officers under Commander Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright, Jr., commander of the U. S. Navy vessel Harriet Lane, who had been killed in action that day. Major Tucker not only gave permission, but Masons from the U. S. Navy and Confederate States Army participated, thus exhibiting the most exalted service of one brother to another in this most terrible Brother Against Brother war.”

“Around six months later, during the Battle of Gettysburg, Union General Winfield Scott Hancock and Confederate General Lewis Addison Armistead commanded opposing forces, even though they were personal friends and members of the Masonic Fraternity. During Pickett’s Charge on Day 3 of the battle, General Hancock’s men defended the center of the Union line, which was the precise target of the Confederate assault. Toward the climax of the battle, Brother Hancock was seriously wounded but refused to be removed from the field. Brother Armistead led his men gallantly, penetrating Hancock’s line, but was mortally wounded soon after he had breached its defenses. Upon learning that Hancock had also fallen, the distraught Armistead gave his personal effects to a Union officer, asking him to deliver them with his compliments, and condolences for his indisposition, to Hancock. This story is depicted in the “Friend to Friend” sculpture on the Gettysburg battlefield today, with the inscription, “Their unique bonds of friendship enabled them to remain a brotherhood undivided, even as they fought in a divided nation....”

“These are by no means the only instances of brotherhood in war and remind us that the eternal bonds of Masonry transcend the individual crisis of the moment.”

“General John Joseph Pershing and Lieutenant General John Archer Lejeune were among our most distinguished Brothers who served in World War I.”

“In World War II, Brothers Douglas MacArthur, Ernest Joseph King and, and the most decorated veteran from that war, Texas Mason Audie Murphey, served with distinction.”

“The list of Masons who have served in all branches of the military continued through Korea, Vietnam, the Middle East, and around the globe, and continues to this day.”

WM or MC:

(Roll Call). “This evening we honor the Military Masons among us. The roll of the service branches will be called in the order of the date of their establishment. The Masonic Brothers present will stand as your branch is called.” (It is highly encouraged to play the music for each branch as they are called. If you are not using music, be sure to give ample time for the veterans to get up and down as each branch is introduced.)

Army and Army National Guard

Navy

Marines

Coast Guard

Air Force and Air National Guard

Space Force

State Guard

Flag folding Ceremony (Optional):

You will need at least two Brothers who know how to fold the flag properly.

WM or MC:

“Our Fraternity’s history is rich with Brothers who served with distinction in our nation’s Armed Forces. We will now have the folding of the United States flag, which is accomplished in 13 folds, representing the thirteen original states. Accompanying each fold, the name and distinction of a representative Brother will be read. Everyone will please rise.”

Fold 1 – “General George Washington Commander-in-Chief, Continental Army, American Revolution First President of the United States of America”

Fold 2 – “Captain John Paul Jones Scottish Emigrant, Preeminent Commander of Naval Forces, American Revolution Father of the United States Navy”

Fold 3 – “Major General Andrew Jackson Commander, United States Army, South, War of 1812 Seventh President of the United States of America”

Fold 4 – “Major General Winfield Scott Hancock and Brigadier General Lewis Addison Armistead, American Civil War Divided in war but united in Freemasonry”

Fold 5 – “Major Philip C. Tucker Confederate States Army, American Civil War”

Fold 6 – “Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. 1st Regiment, U. S. Volunteer Cavalry (also known as "The Rough Riders"), Spanish American War 26th President of the United States of America”

Fold 7 – “General of the Armies John Joseph Pershing Commander, American Expeditionary Forces, World War I”

Fold 8 – “Lieutenant General John Archer Lejeune Commander, 2nd Infantry Division, U. S. Army, World War I First Marine to command a U. S. Army Division 13th Commandant, United States Marines Corps”

Fold 9 – “Fleet Admiral Ernest Joseph King Commander of All United States Naval Forces, World War II”

Fold 10 – “Lieutenant Audie Leon Murphy 3rd Infantry Division, U. S. Army, World War II Recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor Most decorated American soldier in World War II”

Fold 11 – “General Matthew Bunker Ridgway Commander, United Nations Forces, Korean War”

Fold 12 – “Lieutenant Colonel Virgil Ivan "Gus" Grissom Combat Veteran and Test Pilot, United States Air Force Second NASA Astronaut to fly in space, Mercury Space Program Killed in the Apollo 1 explosion, Cape Kennedy, 27 January 1967”

Fold 13 – “All Vietnam Veterans, Veterans of Middle Eastern conflicts and elsewhere, all men and women serving still, and especially all Military Masons, whenever and wherever dispersed, who gave their last full measure of devotion.”

The folded flag is placed on the altar beside the Bible.

WM or MC:

“The uppermost stars remind us of our national motto: ‘In God we trust.’ Its triangular shape resembles the tricornered hat and represents the soldiers who served under General George Washington, the sailors and marines who served under Commander John Paul Jones, and those who followed after in order to preserve the rights, privileges, and freedoms we enjoy today.”

Pin Ceremony (Optional):

WM or MC: "As a token of your service and of our esteem, we would like to present you with the Texas Freemasons Veterans pin. Please join me at the altar as your name is called." (Read the name, final rank, and branch of service. Once pinned, each veteran should return to his seat.)

WM or MC:

"For those who passed through the brotherhood of our Armed Forces and have joined the Brotherhood of Freemasonry, we hope the connections you form will be as binding and long lasting. May you be equally proud of your service to our country and to this Fraternity, and may both bonds of brotherhood sustain you in times of adversity and uplift you in times of prosperity.

"Will ALL Veterans present please stand. We conclude tonight's ceremony with the sincerest THANK YOU for your service, and we thank you for honoring us with your presence tonight.

"Brother Chaplain please dismiss us in prayer."

Chaplain:

"Great Architect of the Universe, what an honor it is to be in the presence of those who have served in our armed forces and facilitated our ability to meet as free men and Freemasons. As we leave here tonight, we turn our attention to those who continue to serve. Watch over them and grant them protection. And now, as we leave here tonight, we ask your Grace that we may all return safely to our homes. In your Holy Name we pray. Amen."

"So mote it be."

Notes

Order pins from Grand Lodge as soon as possible.

Practice Flag folding ceremony.

The presiding officer (WM or MC) think through the opening remarks.

Additional audio and visual effects may be added to enhance the ceremony as denoted.

This is a suggested ceremony. Anything that will enhance the dignity of Masonry may be added or substituted at the will and pleasure of the WM.