



Services

**ESCORTING DECEASED AIR FORCE
MILITARY PERSONNEL**

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This pamphlet provides instruction and guidance for military escorts of deceased active duty Air Force personnel.

1. Pamphlet Objective. This pamphlet provides essential information and basic instruction and guidelines to help military personnel and other Air Force representatives perform required escort duties. Review the pamphlet thoroughly and keep it readily available for easy reference while performing escort duties.

2. Essential Information.

2.1. Primary Mortuary Officer (to be contacted in case of emergency).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone:

Commercial Duty: _____

Commercial Home: _____

2.2. Deceased Name and Rank: _____

2.3. Next of Kin.

2.3.1. Primary Next of Kin:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Relationship: _____

2.3.2. Secondary Next of Kin:

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

2.4. Receiving Funeral Director or Government Cemetery.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

2.5. Travel Schedule.

- Flight Number or Train: _____
- Boarding Time: _____
- Departure Time: _____
- En Route Transfer Location(s) and Time(s) arranged by the installation transportation office:

- Time of Arrival at Destination: _____

2.6. Checklist of Items Provided by the Mortuary Officer.

- Copies of travel orders
- Common carrier tickets
- Flag(s)
- DD Form 1375, **Request for Payment of Funeral and/or Interment Expenses**
- VA Form 40-1330, **Application for Headstone or Marker**
- AF Form 1947, **Escort Report**

2.7. Installation designated to provide military funeral honors.

Installation Name _____

Location: _____

Special Instructions: _____

3. Escort Role and Responsibilities.

3.1. As a military escort, you are an official representative of the US Air Force under circumstances that demand consistently respectful behavior, neat appearance, and an understanding of grief responses on the part of the next of kin. You immediately assume a role in one of the most psychologically sensitive human conditions known. Your awareness of and ability to successfully cope with these emotional interactions will be of long-term benefit to the families served.

3.2. Your conduct should always reflect credit upon the Air Force which you represent. The functions of administering funeral service and religious counseling are the professional responsibilities of the funeral director and clergy, respectively. Further, it is not your responsibility to offer or volunteer

information relating to the circumstances of the death, the recovery and/or identification of the remains, antemortem or postmortem diagnostic findings, or the professional preparations of the remains for viewing and/or burial.

3.2.1. Do not inconvenience the family. Arrange for all personal needs (such as meals, lodging, and transportation). Do not solicit or accept invitations or favors from the family and friends of the deceased or merchants in the area.

3.2.2. Refrain from discussing the nature of your assignment with anyone while en route to or from your destination or during your stay at the destination other than necessary communication with the family and the family's funeral director relating to your assigned escort duties.

3.2.3. Less than acceptable conduct, the use of inaccurate information, and the lack of compassionate understanding may cause both harm and embarrassment to the family of the deceased and to the Air Force. It is extremely important that you be alert to your responsibilities at all times.

3.3. The prescribed uniform will be worn according to AFI 36-2903, *Dress and Personal Appearance of Air Force Personnel*, at all times during the escort assignment. The prescribed uniform for escort duty is the service dress uniform with flight cap. *NOTE:* Mourning bands are not worn by escorts.

4. Prescribed Duties.

4.1. Before departure to destination, secure travel orders, common carrier tickets, flag(s), and all appropriate papers as needed to accomplish your duties. Receive a thorough briefing from the mortuary officer regarding your escort responsibilities, including a review of the essential information listed in paragraph 2.

4.2. Accompany the remains from the funeral home or port mortuary facility, usually with the funeral director, to the common carrier. Stay with the remains until properly assigned to the carrier. Make sure the remains are safeguarded, out of public view, and under cover.

4.2.1. Should an unexpected scheduling change occur, telephone (collect) the primary mortuary officer who will, in turn, notify the receiving funeral director of such changes.

4.2.2. If security measures at the common carrier terminal or scheduling changes prevent you from staying with the remains, the local agent will take responsibility for the remains.

4.3. Make sure the transportation schedule is followed when all conditions are favorable. While escorting cremated remains, your responsibilities remain the same except that the container (urn) is kept in your possession and safeguarded at all times.

4.4. You will be met at the common carrier terminal by the receiving funeral director, or his or her representative, who will transfer the remains to the funeral home or, if so arranged, to the designated government cemetery.

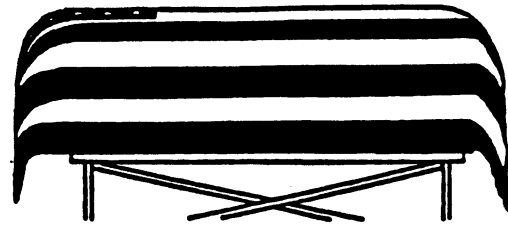
4.4.1. Following transfer of the remains from the common carrier or terminal area to the funeral director's hearse, drape the flag over the outer shipping container or the casket from which the outer shipping cover has been removed. Drape the flag lengthwise over the shipping container or casket with the union at the head and over the left shoulder of the deceased (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Methods of Displaying the Flag With the Casket..

Procedures for displaying the flag on the casket are as follows:

A. CLOSED CASKET.

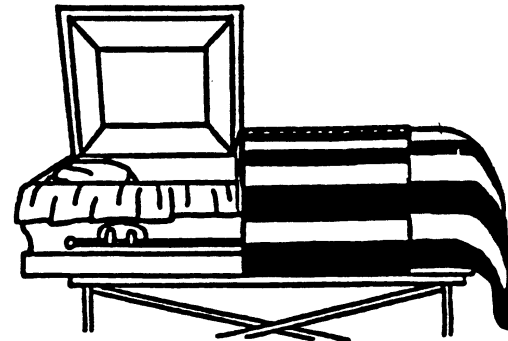
Center the flag on the casket with the blue field at the head and over the left shoulder of the deceased as shown at right.



A. CLOSED CASKET.

B. OPEN HALF-COUCH CASKET.

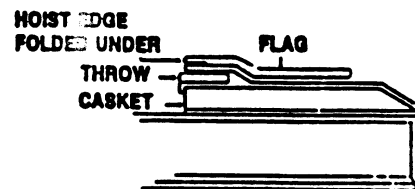
Fold the flag in a simple "S" fold and place it on lower panel of the casket as shown at right.



B. OPEN HALF-COUCH CASKET.

C. SIMPLE "S" FOLD INSTRUCTIONS:

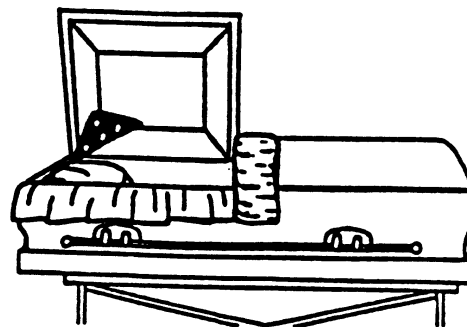
1. Position casket throw on lower panel of casket.
2. Fold flag toward foot of casket to a point just past the slit that separates the head and foot panels.
3. Fold flag toward head of casket to a point even with the first fold at the slit between panels.
4. Fold hoist edge under; fold should only equal width of hoist edge. Hoist edge should not show.
5. Align stripes of all folds and make sure flag is centered on casket.



C. SIMPLE "S" FOLD.

D. "COCKED HAT" FLAG DISPLAY.

When a floral arrangement or other object is placed on the lower panel of casket, display the flag in the cocked hat design and place it in the head panel.



D. "COCKED HAT" FLAG DISPLAY.

- 4.4.2. Deliver all appropriate papers to the funeral director or government cemetery representative.
- 4.4.3. Determine through the funeral director whether or not the family wishes you to be present for the funeral service. At the request of the family, a stopover period of 72 hours is authorized. You may be requested by the funeral director or government cemetery representative to participate in some part of the graveside service. If so, find out exactly what is expected.
- 4.4.4. If circumstances of an emergency or unusual nature (i.e., damaged casket or soiled casket interior) arise, you should telephone (collect) the primary mortuary officer.
- 4.4.5. Viewing the remains is the prerogative of the survivors. Opening the casket and making such viewing possible is the funeral director's responsibility.
- 4.5. On return to home or duty station, complete AF Form 1947 and deliver or mail it to the primary mortuary officer. Include any difficulties encountered and the Air Force function in connection with transportation, funeral, military honors, or any other matter directly or indirectly related to Air Force Mortuary Affairs responsibilities.

5. The Family of the Deceased Member.

5.1. Possible Grief Responses of Family Members. The attitudes of the family members of the deceased toward their death loss varies. Full and complete recognition and acceptance of such a final separation is seldom immediate, and during the period following death, the military escort may witness several different emotional responses.

5.1.1. As the escort, you need to realize that grief responses expressed by the bereaved, such as withdrawal, rejection, anger, or hostility, are normal reactions to death and are not being directed toward specific individuals.

5.1.2. As a representative of the US Air Force, you may symbolize associated circumstances relating to the loss and therefore, you may become a temporary object of one or more grief emotions. You are expected and required to act in the best interest of the family and of the Air Force at all times. In your special role, this may be best effected by being a patient and understanding listener, rather than a poorly qualified counselor.

5.1.3. Do not impose on the privacy of the family's grief, but maintain a state of convenient availability should your presence be required or requested.

5.2. Communicating with Family Members.

5.2.1. Do not attempt to answer specific questions on subjects such as insurance, gratuities, arrears in pay, awards, or decorations. If asked, advise the next of kin that he or she will be contacted soon by a Casualty Assistance Officer from the Air Force installation nearest his or her home who should be able to give definite and complete information.

5.2.2. If questions are raised concerning the status of disposition of personal effects and property, advise the family you will pass the questions on to the primary mortuary officer who will, in turn, contact them on these matters.

6. Use of the Interment Flag.

6.1. Flag Recipients . (The entitlement to receive an interment flag is specified by public law) The authorized flag recipients are as follows:

6.1.1. The person (primary next of kin) entitled to direct disposition of the remains.

6.1.2. The father and mother (if not the primary next of kin). If legally separated or divorced, each parent will receive a flag.

NOTE:

The primary mortuary officer will furnish you with the required number of flags. A maximum of three flags are authorized.

6.2. Display of Flag. On arrival at the common carrier terminal at final destination, drape the flag over the shipping container, or if removed, the closed casket. Position the flag so the union (blue/star field) is at the head and over left shoulder of the deceased (see Figure 1).

6.2.1. If you have two flags, replace the above flag with the second flag on arrival at the funeral home or government cemetery. The second flag will drape the casket until the conclusion of the committal service. Retain the first flag for presentation with the second flag at the end of the committal service.

6.2.2. If you have three flags, rotate each flag to make sure that each has draped the casket at some time. The sentimental value of the flag is increased because it has draped the casket of the deceased.

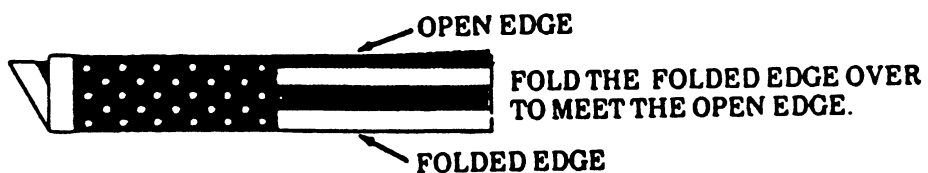
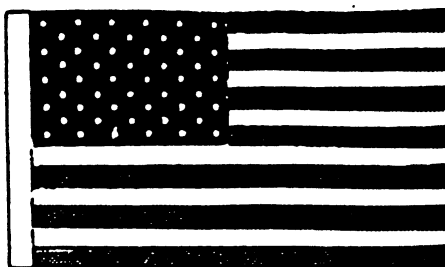
6.2.3. The flag may drape a closed casket or half-opened casket. See Figure 1 for proper display procedures.

6.3. Flag Procedure at the Graveside.

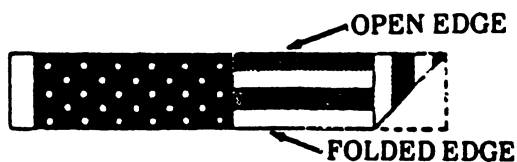
6.3.1. When the casket has been carried to the grave and positioned on the lowering device, the noncommissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) brings the bugler and firing party to Order Arms. The Honor Guard elements of firing party, bugler, and color guard are brought to Parade Rest. The pallbearers then lift the interment flag from the casket and hold it tautly, waist high, over the grave.

6.3.2. At the conclusion of Taps, the pallbearers fold the flag in the prescribed manner (Figure.2). The pallbearer at the head of the casket, on the side where the family is seated, is the last pallbearer to have possession of the newly folded flag. After ensuring the flag fold is tight and smooth, the pallbearer hands the flag to the designated person who is to present the flag to the next of kin. The flag may be presented by you, the chaplain or clergy, the funeral ceremonial team officer in charge (OIC), or the NCOIC.

Figure 2. Folding the United States Flag.



START A TRIANGULAR FOLD BY BRINGING THE STRIPED CORNER OF THE FOLDED EDGE TO THE OPEN EDGE



FOLD THE OUTER POINT INWARD PARALLEL WITH THE OPEN EDGE TO FORM A SECOND TRIANGLE.



CONTINUE FOLDING UNTIL THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE FLAG IS FOLDED INTO A TRIANGLE WITH ONLY THE BLUE FIELD AND MARGIN SHOWING.



TUCK THE REMAINING MARGIN INTO THE POCKET FORMED BY THE FOLDS AT THE BLUE FIELD EDGE OF THE FLAG.



THE PROPERLY FOLDED FLAG SHOULD RESEMBLE A COCKED HAT.



6.3.3. The person who presents the flag to the next of kin should make some statement on behalf of our government such as, “this flag is offered by a grateful nation in memory of the faithful service performed by your loved one.”

NOTE:

In funerals where more than one flag is authorized for presentation, there should be a chair or small table in the vicinity of the head of the grave to accommodate the additional, prefolded flags. The flag draping the casket during the service is the first to be presented, and is presented to the primary next of kin, unless otherwise requested. The additional flags are presented to the other authorized recipient(s).

WILLIAM P. HALLIN, Lieutenant General, USAF
DCS/Installations & Logistics