

OREGON FIRE SERVICE HONOR GUARD

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Detail Leader Informational Packet



Detail Leader -- Flag Fold Team

Flag Fold

Folding our national flag is an ultimate tribute and honor therefore it MUST be practiced as much as possible before the ceremony. Under ideal conditions there would be enough honor guard members that this detail would not have any other responsibilities so they can concentrate on rendering the perfect folding honors.

Things to think about as the detail leader:

Always refer to the Flag fold training manual for proper etiquette and folding guidelines. That is what it is there for.

- Who is providing the flag? Funeral home, Family, Fire department, us?
- Is the flag properly dressed and ready to go?
- Are we a dedicated flag team or will we have to perform other duties? Get the team together and go over “bench marks “to be sure all members are there when needed.
- Is the flag over a casket? An open gravesite? Is it pre folded and displayed on a table and needs to be unfolded and presented because there is an urn?
- Is there a Catholic flag over the casket during the service instead of the national flag?
- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!!!
- What is our entrance and exit plan? Have we walked it more than once and checked for any changes, obstructions, flowers, wheel chairs, cords, podiums, kneelers...
- Team- is it a multi agency team, or all one team (remember One Honor Guard Motto)
- Is there going to be a gun salute, and/or taps before we fold?
- What are that “bench marks”? Is everyone on the same page?
- Who does the flag go to? Family member? Chief? Have you met them in person? Do they know they are getting the flag? What are you going to say to them when/if you present it? Are there going to be other things presented to the family after the flag presentation?
- Debrief with members as a “team” after end of service to insure all concerns are addressed and thank them for their service and dedication.
- KEEP YOUR BEARINGS if and when something goes unplanned.

Detail Leader -- Posting of the Colors

Color Guard Movements

The color bearers carry the colors and display the colors. A Color Guard is a team of at least 4 members but can be more. The minimum team is made up of a National Color Bearer, a National Guard, a State Color Bearer and a State Guard. If there are less than 4 members only the National Color can be posted.

The national color bearer should always be the tallest in the detail and **the national Colors ALWAYS leads the way and never goes backward (retreat).**

If there is no detail leader (a 5th member) the national color bearer is in charge and calls the commands and leads the way. The national guard can go in front of the national colors but it is always the first flag on the move. The color guards are there to protect the colors and are always assigned to guard a color.

They shall remain that colors guard for the duration of the detail, always in position to guard that color when on the march or posted. The position of carry for the guard's weapon is, if an axe, to be held at port arms so that during colors movements the axe heads do not hit each other. If the weapon is a pike pole, it is to be held the same as a flag staff, with the hook facing toward the guard. The color bearer always returns to their color guard after any movement is completed solo, without a facing movement in the same direction they left the color team.

Things to think about as the detail leader:

Always refer to the Colors posting training manual for proper etiquette and carrying guidelines. That is what it is there for.

- Who is calling the audience to “please stand for the posting of the colors”?
- How many team members do you have? 4,5,6?
- Who is carrying what? Try and match heights of team.
- Who is calling the commands? “Attention”, “Carry”, “Colors”, “Forward March” “Present arms”, “Order arms”
- Is the venue inside or outside? Do you have weighted bases (hose bundles) or are you posting guards for the entire event?
- How are you entering and exiting the venue? Left, middle, single file, 4 abreast? Wheel? Left About?
- National flag ALWAYS moves first, whether walking for practice or real.
- Flags should not wobble or bobble while in motion.
- The Eagle always faces forward, and when posted needs to be facing out towards the crowd. (if no eagle, the spear's flat side should face out)
- Are you presenting the colors for a pledge or anthem?
- Are your axes a mirror image of each other? They usually can't see each other.
- KEEP YOUR BEARINGS if and when something goes unplanned.

Detail Leader -- Casket Watch/ Movements

Casket or Urn watch-- Casket moving

It is a humbling and ceremonious honor to guard the casket or urn of a fallen comrade before, during and sometimes after their funeral or viewing. It provides reassurance and comfort to the family and affected departments, that their loved one is protected and never alone.

Things to think about as the detail leader:

Always refer to the Casket watch movements training manual for proper etiquette and carrying guidelines. That is what it is there for.

- When is the casket or urn arriving?? BE READY!! Pre Plan!
- Is it going to be an open casket? Prepare yourself and team prior to opening.
- Are you just a team for the watch or are you also moving the casket or urn in place?
- Who is opening and closing the watch? When? Usually this person is the Detail leader with the teams that are designated to open and close watch.
- How are you entering for the exchanges? Side, up the middle?
- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!
- How long are your rotations? 5,10,15 minutes? WHO is keeping time? Do you have an emergency relief ready? Consider the environment, inside outside, hot, cold, ect.
- Casket watch happens on time without waiting for breaks in ceremony, (make sure the officiant knows that, so they are not waiting for the exchange of guards.)
- What will you do if you are on watch and a child try's to climb into the casket??
- Take advice and direction from funeral director about lifting and moving on truck.
- All Caskets are HEAVY! Safety first! Pre plan route, terrain, steps or obstacles.
- ALWAYS KEEP THE CASKET FLAT AND LEVEL! The contents may shift at any time!!
- Be aware of cultural or religious preferences. Will there be a pall, National flag or if the family wants, our blue fire service casket flag, non veteran (this must be pre arranged)
- Which end of the casket is the head, feet? look for landmarks; info vial-feet, ask funeral director. Make sure the flag's star field is over the deceased Left shoulder.
- PRACTICE your movements with tables or backboards prior to arrival. Use quiet commands such as "step" "right step", "left step" MAKING SURE EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT THE COMMANDS MEAN. Walk your entire route multiple times. Adjust for flowers, kneelers, or other obstructions.
- Are you placing the casket on a truck and pushing it, or are you carrying it to the gravesite over slippery grass and uneven terrain?
- KEEP YOUR BEARINGS if and when something goes unplanned.

Detail Leader -- Honor Corridor

Honor Corridor

This can be one of the most challenging tasks as a detail leader. Honor corridors usually consist of anywhere from 10 to 100's of people. Trying to coordinate and get everyone on the same page at the same time is quite the task. Most of the people participating are not experienced Honor Guards and have little to no knowledge of how to stand at attention or salute properly. This is all up to the Detail Leader to explain and show them how to practice and execute the movements to a satisfactory level. Usually in a very short amount of time. Good Luck!!

Things to think about as the detail leader:

There is no manual to refer to for honor corridor. This position is usually chosen based on past experience and how loud they can project their voice.

- Who is going to make up your team? Usually these people have many other parts in the ceremony as a whole and will come to you for practice at the very end. Or they are the uniform personnel from the affected and neighboring departments who look to you for guidance and direction.
- Will there be a honor corridor in and out?
- Are you going to do a rolling salute or hold the salute the entire time?
- WHO ARE YOU SALUTING?? You should only be saluting the casket or urn as it passes and the immediate family. Where does that line of people start and stop? Make sure you have a designated person that knows when to start and stop the salute.
- Try and have the chief's and affected department closest to the front of the corridor, so the family can see them.
- WHEN are you going to have all these people meet in their designated spots? will they have to move during the service? Will there be a specific order that tells them when to move? Are there going to be verbal commands and will they all hear them or will it need to be echoed? THIS WILL TAKE TIME FOR THEM TO MOVE INTO POSITION!
- They will need reserved spots for the service if they are to move from their seats more than once. And most people want to sit with their families, facilitate this.
- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE, as much as you can.
- During practice, explain and show specific movements, hand salutes, how to stand at attention and rest, what they should look like. Correct gently without judgement.
- How is the Corridor going to be dismissed? Will it fold in on itself? Will there be a command for dismissal?
- Make sure to thank them for their time and effort DURING practice because you may never get a chance after the service is over.
- KEEP YOUR BEARINGS if and when something goes unplanned.

Detail Leader -- Bell Ceremony

Bell ceremony- ringer and reader

We all know what the bell ceremony is about. And your heart aches everytime you hear the hollow sounding of a bell. It represents a tradition that is deep and strong in the Fire Service family. The sounding of a bell, a special signal of five rings, three times each represented the end of their duties and that they were returning to quarters.

Things to think about as the detail leader:

There is no training manual for this detail, although it is mostly self explanatory, it is still filled with emotion and can be challenging for those involved.

- Who has the script? Is the name spelled correctly? Do you have the right pronunciation?? Is the Rank correct? Chief, Firefighter, Captain?
- Who is your team? Usually two people sometimes with a back up reader. Who is reading, who is ringing?
- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE
- Which way are you entering and exiting the stage? Are there stairs?
- Make sure the microphone is on and working. Will you need to adjust it? Practice reading the script so you can hear yourself and have the right cadence with punctuation and if the audio guy needs to adjust anything. Don't rush through it.
- Practice ringing the bell five rings three times each. Use a steady ring, don't over emphasize each ring. Using our small bells, they can get tinny sounding real quick. Make sure you dampen the sound at the end of the five rings, except for the last one. Let it ring out.
- Make sure the base is not moving across the table each time you strike the bell. Use black non skid matting if possible.
- Sometimes a member or Chief wants to read the script, this is ok, you will have to practice this before hand. How and when are they to come up to the stage and at a certain point the reader needs to take over to give the commands to call the audience to rise to attention and hand salute. You may also need to finish reading if they can not finish. This needs to be discussed with them prior to the event.
- KEEP YOUR BEARINGS if and when something goes unplanned.

Detail Leader -- Memorial Staff

Memorial Staff bearer, Guard, and Script reader

The Memorial Staff is a LODD item and should always be handled with the proper ceremony and honor by Honor Guard members in uniform. It must always have at least one guard when it is being presented. If it is to be left on display, it should be in a position of honor. If there is available Honor Guard personnel, a simple watch can be utilized but is not required. When the Staff is to be retired at the end of the display period, it should again be with the proper respect and honor, but a travel uniform may be adequate at times. The Staff has it's own special base that is very large and heavy. It must be carried by two people when placing it for ceremonial purposes.

Things to think about as the detail leader:

There is a manual in progress, this is a new item for our team and are still working on the best ways to properly handle it. We will keep adding to it.

- The Staff is very top heavy and sometimes awkward to carry. Please practice carefully.
- Placing the staff in the base is also difficult. It is very wide and you can not step on it. You need to have a wide stance when you approach and use your legs to place it properly without bending and injuring your back.
- Proper carrying of the staff is with the hook of the pike head forward, and when it is placed must be turned out as so. The ribbons sway as you walk and if it is windy may obscure your vision.
- You must have at least one Guard (Axe, pike pole, rifle, pulaski) escort the bearer.
- Where are you placing the base? Are you pre placing it or using two other members to carry it in when the staff is being brought in? Remember it takes up a lot of floor space and should not be in the way of other speakers or walkways. But remember people WILL come up to see it and touch it and take pictures with it when they find the names of their loved ones. It draws people in and that can bring some emotions out.
- Who is going to read the script? You? A Chief, Chaplain, Dignitary? This must be pre planned. Get them a copy of it ahead of time. Explain to them how the staff will enter after they start reading the script.
- Make sure to know the correct way to place a new ribbon. The oldest ribbon is found just below the hook of the pike (James Reed 1881) and the new one is to be placed directly beside it on the right.
- How to ceremonially dip the staff is still being explored, because it is so top heavy, it is tough for one person to hold it in that position for longer than a few seconds.
- How to ceremonially carry ribbons to family member is also being explored, we will work through that as we can. (we have not had many ribbons to place fortunately)
- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!! Try different ways of handling the Staff.
- Wear your gripper gloves, so the wooden pole is not so slippery.
- KEEP YOUR BEARINGS if and when something goes unplanned.