



RHUMB LINES

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Honoring Their Service

"For grieving families gathered at funeral services for a veteran, a most treasured memory is the deceased's commitment to country, so it's absolutely imperative that honor guard teams are present to provide the traditional funeral honors."

– **Sandy Dubois, Funeral Honors program manager, Commander, Navy Installations Command**

Rendering military funeral honors is our nation's ultimate demonstration of gratitude to a Sailor and their family. The positive image of the military and national pride about current service in Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom has generated more interest in funeral honors from veteran groups and family members. Funeral honors is a benefit mandated by law, but the program relies on volunteers to accomplish the mission in honoring those who have served.

Increasing Demand for Military Funeral Honors

- The demand for military funeral honors is on the rise with funerals supported by the Navy increasing 16% from FY06 to FY07. This increase comes at a time that our reserve component resource pool is less available due to individual augmentations in the current conflicts.
- Because the Navy was unable to provide support to 120 funerals last year, Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) created a Task Force on funeral honors, used Lean Six Sigma to improve the process and began a course for training those who will be participating in funerals.
- To support our obligation, CNIC has increased resources for families requesting funeral honors, as well as training opportunities for honor guard participants. CNIC is expanding the field from which volunteers are drawn beyond the traditional Reserve teams to support funeral services.

Funeral Honors...Honoring Our Fallen

The Navy's performance is witnessed by more than 3,000 family members, friends and shipmates at gravesites daily, making this one of our single most visible forms of community outreach. The Navy has only one chance to be there and get it right. Training for participants is critical not only to the family's expectations, but also to the Navy's traditions, standards and reputation.

- Funeral Honors is a sacred Navy tradition in which an honor guard detail serves at the burial of eligible veterans. At least one member of the detail is a representative of the parent Service of the deceased veteran.
- [DoD Instruction 1300.15](#) designates the provision of military funeral honors as a "total force mission." This calls upon Officer and Enlisted, Active and Reserve, Afloat and Ashore Sailors to participate.
- On May 9, the Navy graduated its first class of participants in the Navy-wide Funeral Honors Train-the-Trainer program hosted by the Navy's Ceremonial Guard at Naval Support Facility Anacostia in Washington, D.C. The new program is a Navy effort to standardize funeral procedures and ensure that all fallen shipmates are properly honored.
- Commands wishing to contribute to this unique outreach with the American public should contact the state coordinator via www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil.

Key Messages

- Rendering funeral honors is important to our Navy, our nation and the families of our shipmates, and is mandated by law.
- The Navy seeks to honor the last wishes of those who served their country.
- Volunteers of all ranks are a key component to the funeral honors, ensuring this total force mission and visible community outreach event is accomplished with pride and dignity.

Facts & Figures

- Funeral Honors teams of 2-15 personnel respond to civilian funeral director requests for services 24/7/365 with as little as one-hour notice. Reserve component teams from Navy Operational Support Centers travel up to 300 miles to support one funeral.
- 15-person funeral honor details were dispatched for 206 active-duty Sailor funerals in the past 10 months.
- The Navy performed 36,904 funeral honor ceremonies in FY07 and 33,139 year to date FY08.
- Navy National Program Manager, Sandy DuBois, (202) 433-9809.