

**BY ORDER OF THE
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE**

AIR FORCE PAMPHLET 34-504

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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. This publication applies to all Air Force military and civilian personnel, Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC), and Air National Guard (ANG) units and members. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) using the AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*; route AF Form 847s from the field through the appropriate functional's chain of command. Ensure all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*, and disposed of in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) located at <https://www.my.af.mil/afrims/afrims/afrims/rims.cfm>

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This document has been changed from AFPAM 34-259 to AFPAM 34-504. This publication updates Essential Information, adds the Dignified Arrival and updates authorized flag recipients.

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 Office/Cell: _____
Commercial Home/Cell: _____

2.2. Alternate Mortuary Officer (to be contacted in case of emergency).

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Commercial Office/Cell: _____
Commercial Home/Cell: _____

2.3. Mortuary Technician (to be contacted in case of emergency).

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Commercial Office/Cell: _____
Commercial Home/Cell: _____

2.4. Deceased Name and Rank: _____

2.5. Person Authorized to Direct Disposition (PADD), Primary Next of Kin (PNOK), and the Person Eligible to Receive Effects (PERE) Contact Information.

2.5.1. PADD:

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Relationship: _____

2.5.2. PNOK:

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Relationship: _____

2.5.3. PERE:

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Relationship: _____

2.6. Receiving Funeral Director or Government Cemetery.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____

2.7. Escort Travel Schedule.

Departure Flight: _____
 Boarding Time: _____
 Departure Time: _____
 En Route Transfer/Connection Location(s): _____
 Departure Flight: _____
 Boarding Time: _____
 Departure Time: _____
 Time of Arrival at Destination: _____

2.8. Checklist of Items Provided by the Mortuary Officer.

Copies of travel orders
 Common carrier tickets/E-tickets if transportation to Receiving Funeral Home is by air
 DD Form 1375, *Request for Payment of Funeral and/or Interment Expenses Envelope for Receiving Funeral Home to return the signed DD Form 1375*
 VA Form 40-1330, *Application for Headstone or Marker*
 AF Form 1947, *Escort Report*
 Personal Effects requested by PERE and 2 copies of DD Form 1076
 Cremation Permit from the Coroner, Medical Examiner, or Department of Vital Statistics for fallen who's remains will be cremated at Receiving Funeral Home.

2.9. Installation providing Dignified Arrival.

Installation Name: _____
 Location: _____
 Special Instructions: _____

2.10. Installation designated to provide military funeral honors.

Installation Name: _____
 Location: _____
 Special Instructions: _____

3. Escort Roles 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 and avoid accepting 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 airline representatives, 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. Transportation of Remains Over Land.

4.1.1. Before departure to destination, secure travel orders and all appropriate documentation, 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](#).

4.1.2. Accompany the remains from the contract funeral home or port mortuary facility, in the hearse with the funeral director. It is permissible to follow behind the hearse in a government owned vehicle or rental car, to the receiving funeral home.

4.2. Transportation of Remains by Commercial Air or MilAir/Contract MilAir (for Deaths occurring in a Combat Theater of Operation).

4.2.1. Before departure to destination, secure travel orders, common carrier tickets, and all appropriate documentation, 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](#).

4.2.2. 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.

4.2.2.1. Should an unexpected scheduling change occur, telephone the primary mortuary officer, alternate mortuary officer, or mortuary technician, who will, in turn, notify the receiving funeral director of such changes.

4.2.2.2. 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. In this event, request access to visually verify the correct remains is loaded on the aircraft prior to boarding.

4.2.3. Upon arrival at destination airport you will be met by a 7-person Honor Guard Detail, funeral director, or his or her representative. Six personnel from the Honor Guard detail will transfer the casket from the aircraft to the next mode of transportation. During this movement, the escort and the 7th Honor Guard Member will render a salute.

4.2.3.1. 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 4.1](#)).

Methods of Displaying the Flag With the Casket.

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

Figure 4.1. Closed Casket.

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

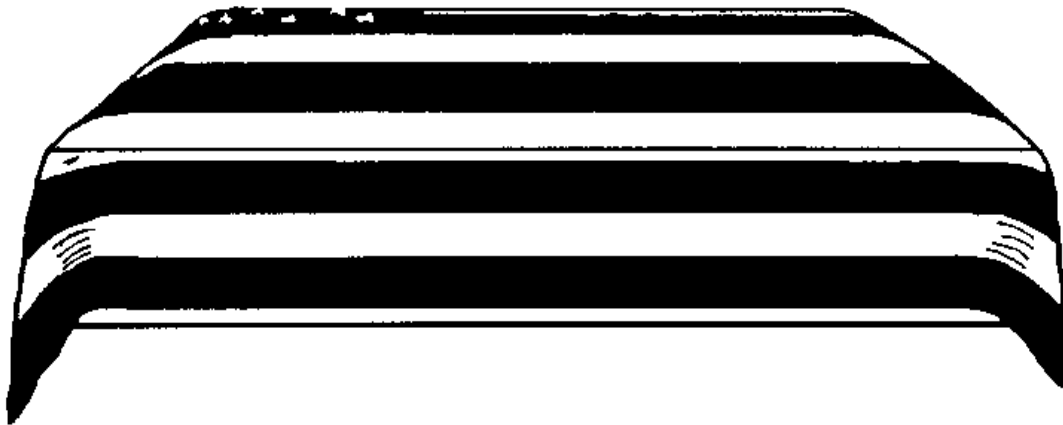


Figure 4.2. Open Half Couch Casket.

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

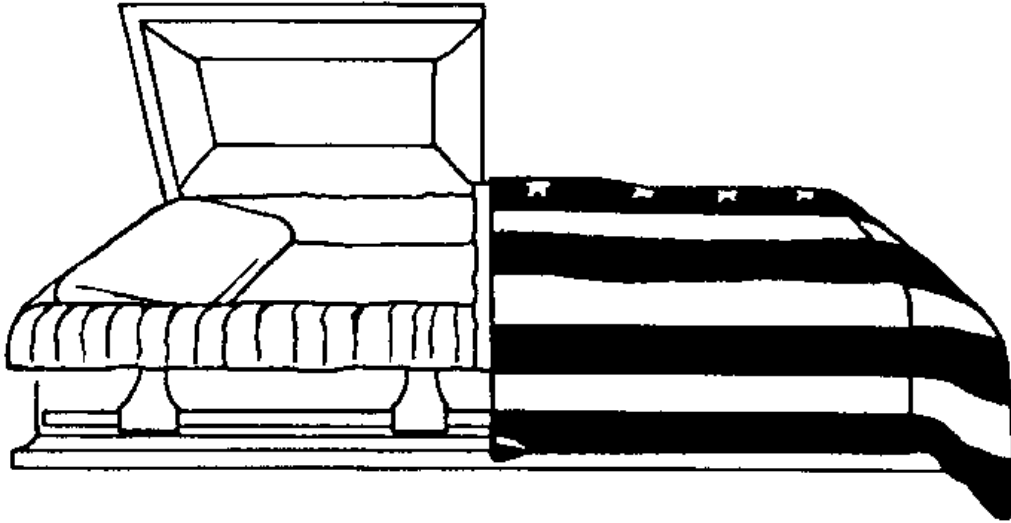


Figure 4.3. Simple "S" Fold Instructions.

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.

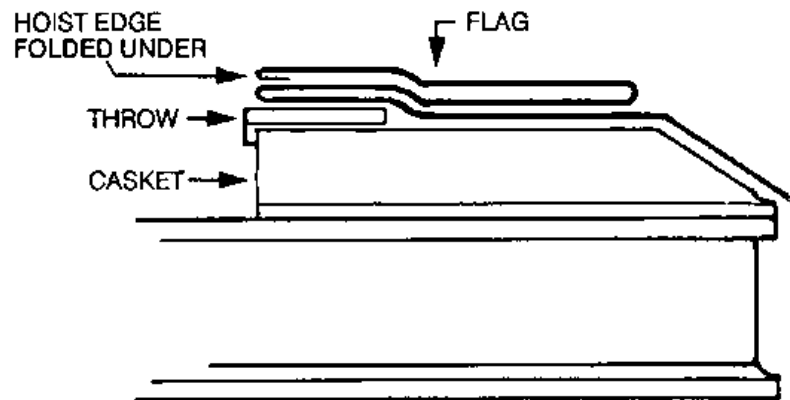
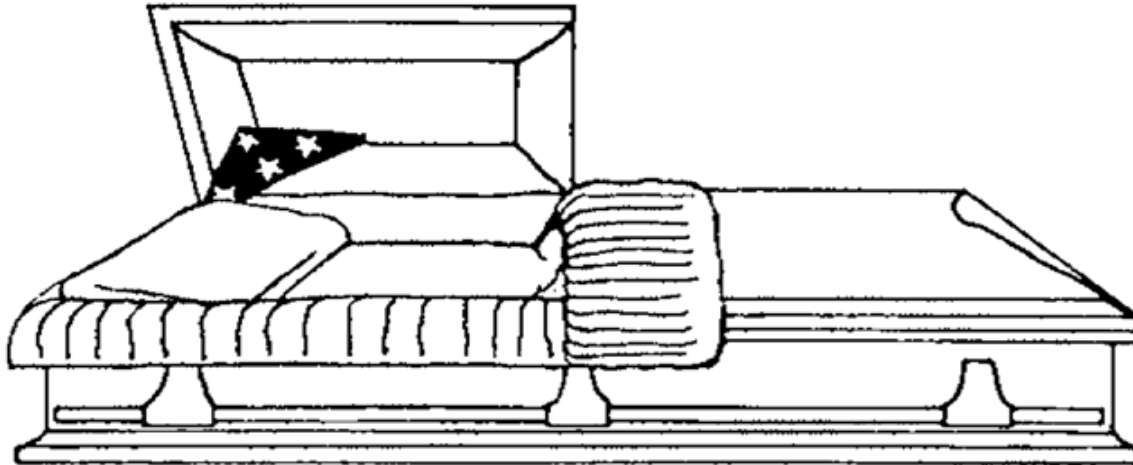


Figure 4.4. "Cocked Hat" Flag Display.

1. When 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 as shown below.



4.3. Deliver all appropriate papers to the funeral director or government cemetery representative.

4.4. Determine through the mortuary officer 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.

4.5. If circumstances of an emergency or unusual nature (i.e., delay or cancellation in any flight, damaged casket or soiled casket interior) arise, you should immediately notify the primary mortuary officer, alternate mortuary officer, or mortuary technician, as listed in 2.1-2.3.

4.6. Viewing the remains is the prerogative of the survivors. Opening the casket and making such viewing possible is the funeral director's responsibility. Should the funeral director identify any concerns, ensure the funeral director makes immediate contact with the mortuary officer, alternate mortuary officer, or mortuary technician for corrective measures. Every attempt shall be made to mitigate unexpected circumstances without family involvement.

4.7. On return to home or duty station, complete AF Form 1947 and deliver or mail it to the primary mortuary officer. Include any observations or 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 attitude of the family toward the loss of a loved one varies. Full and complete recognition and acceptance of the death 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 affected 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. Spouse.

6.1.2. Children.

6.1.3. The parents of the fallen Airman. If married, the parents will receive one flag together. If divorced, each parent will receive a flag.

6.1.4. PADD if not already covered in [6.1.1](#), [6.1.2](#) or [6.1.3](#).

NOTE: The mortuary officer where the death occurred will provide the flag to drape the casket. The installation providing Military Funeral Honors will furnish the additional required number of flags.

6.2. Display of Flag. Position the flag so the union (blue/star field) is at the head and over left shoulder of the deceased (see [Figure 4.1](#)).

6.2.1. Transportation Over Land. The flag will be draped over the casket and displayed throughout the movement from the contract funeral home or port mortuary facility to the receiving funeral home or national cemetery.

6.2.2. Transportation by Commercial Air or MilAir/Contract MilAir (for deaths occurring in a Combat Theater of Operation). On arrival at the common carrier terminal at final destination, drape the flag over the shipping container, or if removed from the air tray, the closed casket.

6.3. The flag may drape a closed casket or half-opened casket. See [Figures 4.1 – 4.2](#) for proper display procedures.

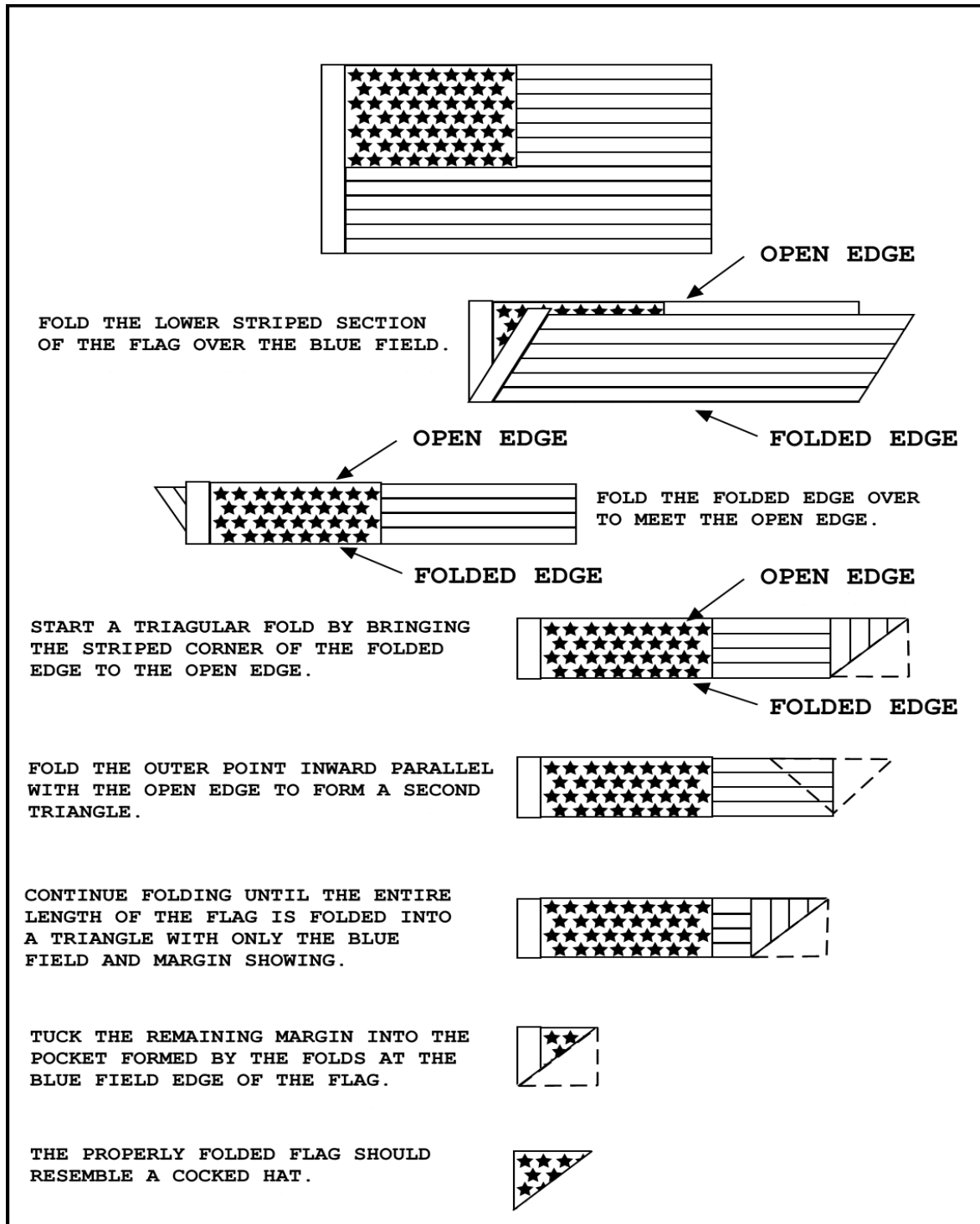
6.4. Flag Procedure at the Graveside.

6.4.1. 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.

6.4.2. At the conclusion of Taps, the pallbearers fold the flag in the prescribed manner (see [Figure 6.1](#)). 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.

6.4.3. The person who presents the flag to the authorized recipient(s) as listed in [paragraphs 6.1.1](#) through [6.1.4](#) 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.”

Figure 6.1. Folding the United States Flag.



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, pre-folded 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).

6.5. Prescribed and Adopted Forms.

Prescribed Forms:

AF Form 1947, *Escort Report*

Adopted Forms:

AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

VA Form 40-1330, *Application for Headstone or Marker*

DD Form 1375, *Request for Payment of Funeral and/or Interment Expenses*

DARRELL D. JONES

Lieutenant General, USAF

DCS, Manpower, Personnel and Services

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*, 1 March 2008

AFI 36-2903, *Dress and Personal Appearance of Air Force Personnel*, 2 August 06

Abbreviations and Acronyms

NCOIC—Noncommissioned Officer in Charge

OIC—Officer in Charge

PADD—Person Authorized to Direct Disposition

PERE—Person Eligible to Receive Effects

PNOK—Primary Next of Kin

Terms

Person Authorized to Direct Disposition (PADD)—In accordance with Federal law the PAD is the person authorized to direct disposition of the remains.

Primary Next-of-Kin (PNOK)—The person most closely related to the deceased individual.