

Good Afternoon Base Honor Guard POCs,

As most of you know by now the 7 - Person Retiree Funeral Sequence phase in training period is almost over. As of 1 November, all Air Force Base Honor Guard programs must be performing the 7 - Person MFH sequence and previous approval of the 10 and 5 person MFH sequences will be rescinded. The video and written guidance are accessible via the following two websites: <http://www.honorguard.af.mil/bhg> , <https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil/ASPs/docman/DOCMain.asp?Tab=0&FolderID=OO-DP-AE-12-35-17-4&Filter=OO-DP-AE-12>. I have attached a copy of the policy letter from ALS directing this change and it can also be found on either of the above links. Hard copy DVD's of the training video will be distributed NLT 9 November 2007. Once the initial distribution is complete and the project is closed out by AFTV, all remaining programs that did not submit POC information and physical addresses to their MAJCOM HG Program Manager will have to order the DVD through the DoD imagery website (there will be some cost for duplication and shipping). Once the project is in a closed status, detailed instructions on how to order the video will be sent out via email and attached to our website.

Over the past few months the USAF Honor Guard's BHG training office has received countless emails and phone calls in regards to this change. I would now like to highlight the main questions and concerns about the video, written guidance and implementation of this sequence:

Q: Why are we not performing a 21 gun salute in the new sequence and what do we tell the family if and when they ask?

A: The Air Force does not and has not ever performed a 21 gun salute. This form of Honors is reserved for the President, past Presidents and visiting foreign heads of state. This salute is performed by the Army and executed by firing howitzer cannons 21 separate times. Our tradition of firing three volleys can be traced back to the Civil War when opposing sides would mutually agree to cease fire to clear the dead from the battle field. Three distinct volleys would then be fired into the air (so not to be confused with the random shots that would be heard during the cease fire) to signify the field was clear of their wounded and dead. After the 3 volley exchange re-engagement of hostilities would commence.

Q: Why doesn't the video train, in detail, the manuals for all the different positions?

A: The video was created with the sole intent of being used as a 7 person sequence training aid. The actual manuals that go into Body Bearers, Firing Party, and Colors are broken down clearly in the USAF Honor Guard's BHG Trng Guide. Each individual BHG program is responsible for using this guide for the initial training of their personnel. We provide all the procedural guidance and offer intermediate level courses to standardize and sharpen our Base Honor Guard counterparts' performance. Although the video isn't intended for the initial training of brand new honor guard members, wide angle and close up views were used throughout the entire video sequence. These views clearly show all manuals throughout the sequence multiple times and may be used as an aid in perfecting your team.

Q: Why do we not execute the 3-step stop after the flank in the new sequence?

A: Subsequent to the NPB initially acting as the NCOIC when the ceremony begins, once they resume the role of NPB the family has already gathered and the ceremony is ready to begin. This fact alone warrants the removal of the 3-step stop after the flank. There is no need to halt and then call "STEP" immediately thereafter. The only exception to this change will be in the event of the departed having been cremated. Then and only then will the bearer team perform the 3-step stop and Fold and NPB will follow the previous guidance for retrieving the urn.

Q: If there is an obstruction at the head end of the mock up, will the bearer team then execute a "FACE ME" and how will the remaining bearers zipper in and splinter off to their designated positions?

A: There are two characteristics of an honor guard member that play a huge part in this answer, focused and flexible. The NPB and fellow bearers should recognize the obstruction prior to the ceremony start time and agree on an alternate route. The NPB will command "FACE ME", the team will execute the movement and zipper in like normal and the NPB will still step to the foot end of the mock up and assume the role of NCOIC as demonstrated in the video. The main point to be mindful of here is that the positions of Carry, Hand Off and either Mark or Cross Mark must be grouped together once the team zippers in and is in line formation. This is to present a professional image so the team members are all marching together to the weapons.

Q: Can a uniformed Air Force member, other than the NCOIC, present the flag to the Next of Kin (NOK) and how do you execute this sequence?

A: Yes, any Air Force member (in full service dress) can present the flag to the NOK. Whoever is to present the flag must be in uniform and be trained on the appropriate message of condolence. At the conclusion of Taps, the NCOIC will execute the appropriate facing movement (left face, right face or 3-count about face) to position themselves in front of the member presenting the flag. They will then hand the flag to the flag presenter and render a three second hand salute, repositioning to the foot end of the mock up when the salute is dropped. The member will present the flag to the NOK and offer the message of condolence and the funeral team will depart the area as demonstrated in the video.

Any questions regarding the procedural guidance and training should be directed to the Base Honor Guard training office at BHG.training@bolling.af.mil.

Any questions relating to policy should be directed to the Air Staff (A1S) at the Pentagon COMM: 703-604-4937 or 703-604-4928.