



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Honor Guard Operational

Handbook

(470 FW 4)

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INTRODUCTION

The primary duty of the Honor Guard is to render final honors for fallen comrades. The Honor Guard remembers and renders honors to Service employees and provides comfort and support to survivors of those who have fallen. Other duties include representing the Service at special functions deemed appropriate by the Director.

The Honor Guard is a specially trained, uniquely decorated, and highly disciplined unit that represents the positive image of the Service. This requires physical ability and appearance standards that exceed those already in place. The Honor Guard must be ready and able to represent the Service by exhibiting the most polished appearance and performing with the finest discipline at a moment's notice.

Honor Guards follow long-standing traditions of military burials. These traditions have been adopted by many agencies to honor their dead. The traditional Honor Guard renders final military honors, comforts family members, and reassures them that their loved one is remembered. Final military honors give family and friends an opportunity to reflect on the time the loved one spent in sacrifice for their service and bring closure to the loss. The dedication of the Honor Guard stresses service as a way of life strong in tradition, which is shared with the lost loved one.

Death and funerals are two subjects people normally will not talk about. The military, however, accepts both as inevitable. Since the first armies went to war and died on the field of battle, the military has taken care of its dead with a ceremonial funeral. Although most people have never attended a military funeral, they may have seen one in a movie or on television. The military funeral is usually high in emotional intensity and is looked upon with pride and reverence as a fine tradition. From beginning to end, the military funeral is a ceremony saturated with symbolism and purpose.

Whenever a squad (a group of eight soldiers) lost a member, they normally performed the burial detail because of their close association with the deceased. If the seven remaining squad members all acted as pallbearers carrying the casket, the casket became unbalanced and hard to handle. As a result, the squad leader (or next highest in rank if he/she was the deceased) acted as an escort for the detail. He/she also said a few comforting words if a member of the clergy was not available. In ceremonies performed now, an officer usually performs this honored task. With one person acting as escort, the six remaining members act as pallbearers. Six people are still used as pallbearers, representing the comrades-in-arms who were left behind.

The rifle salute can be traced to the Napoleonic wars. During those days, when wars had specific rules and guidelines, the practice was to stop the war long enough for each side to clear the battlefield of the dead and wounded. When they were finished, each side fired three volleys to signal that its dead and wounded had been taken care of. All personal salutes may be traced to the prevailing use in earlier days to ensure that the person saluting placed himself in an unarmed position symbolizing respect and trust. International practice compelled opposing sides to match their salute (i.e., number of rounds fired "gun for gun"). In 1875 the United States recognized 21 guns as the

international salute—the highest national honor. Hence, the rifle salute became known as the 21 gun salute. The seven-person firing party also represents the remaining squad members and renders the rifle salute by firing three volleys—one of the most remembered moments of a military funeral. Three volleys fired at a military funeral signify that the fallen comrade-in-arms has been taken care of.

Other facets of the military funeral, such as the flag that drapes the casket, are rooted in both religion and history. When the flag is draped over the casket, it signifies a state of mourning and honorable service. When the pallbearers lift the flag from the casket and hold it there, it is to recognize the passing of life.

Our country holds the distinction of being the only one to have a dictated method of folding the flag. The way the flag is folded is full of symbolism derived from our country's proud heritage. The flag is folded to signify the "retiring of the colors," a ceremony performed at the end of each duty day or ceremony. The triangular shape of the fold is to honor our forefathers, who wore triangular style hats during the Revolutionary War. When the folding is completed, the field of blue, known as the Union, is to the outside. The union represents our country's history of courage—the Union never hides (i.e., inside the flag's stripes).

Another act filled with historical symbolism is a bugler playing Taps. Taps is traced back to 1862 as the revision of an existing Civil War bugle call to extinguish lights sounded to end the soldier's day. In July 1862, the words "go to sleep, go to sleep..." were put to the tune the night it was first played. When soldiers heard the call at night, they knew that all was well, safe, and secure. Taps was first used at a military funeral the same year in place of the rifle salute for tactical reasons. In 1891, the U.S. Army Infantry Drill Regulations mandated the use of Taps at military funerals. One of the most recognized and remembered parts of a military funeral, the playing of Taps has always been the military's way to signify the end of the day and that it is time to rest. At a military funeral, it signifies that the fallen comrade has been laid to rest.

Although there is much symbolism in a military funeral, many aspects of the ceremony are considered to be more purposeful than symbolic. The Color Guard, for example, displays the colors and performs acts that are representative of both the United States (with the U.S. flag) and the parent service (with the Service flag).

In addition to the rifle salute, two other salutes play an important role in the ceremony. The pallbearer who finished folding the flag renders the first salute. This slow, solemn salute is given after the somberly folded flag has been given to the presenting officer. This is considered the final salute to the service member. The pallbearer rendering the salute is actually saluting the folded flag and not the presenting officer. The presenting officer renders the second salute after the flag has been passed on to a family member. This salute is for that family member in recognition of his or her sacrifice to and in support of the military way of life and the loved one's service.

Although either a member of the clergy or the person who escorted the deceased from the place of death to the final resting spot may present the flag, an officer usually performs the task. This officer not only serves as a representative of the parent service, but also ensures that the ceremony is carried out properly and with dignity. This task can be the hardest of all to perform. While the other elements of the ceremonial team have a solemn task to perform, they do not have to come face-to-face with the grieving family as the presenting officer does.

Chapter 1: POLICY AND AUTHORITY

The Director authorizes the Service Honor Guard (SHG) as the sole official ceremonial unit of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to render final honors to deceased Service personnel. The Honor Guard may also represent the Service in any function as approved by the Director. The Service Honor Guard policy can be found in the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual, *Chapter 470 FW 4*.

Chapter 2: CHAIN OF COMMAND

1. Chief, Division of Refuge Law Enforcement (DRLE) (Chief)

The Chief, DRLE, National Wildlife Refuge System, is responsible for the oversight, administrative support, and coordination of the Service Honor Guard (SHG). The Chief:

- Serves as the central point of contact for the SHG Commander;
- Determines the events and type of response for the SHG in accordance with policy and the needs of the Director;
- Notifies the SHG when services will be needed;
- Appoints an Honor Guard Commander (Commander), Deputy Commander, and Logistics Officer from the ranks of the SHG according to policy;
- Oversees the SHG budget; and
- In coordination with the SHG Commander, develops and maintains the *SHG Operational Handbook* and the *SHG Training Manual*.

If the Chief is not available, the Branch Chief, Law Enforcement Operations serves as the Chief and will assume his/her responsibilities.

2. Service Honor Guard Commander (Commander)

The Commander is a member of the SHG appointed by the Chief. The Commander:

- Works closely with the Chief to ensure that all the duties of the Chief are administered as needed,
- May be delegated any duties of the Chief,
- Serves as the point of contact for SHG members and ensures that they are properly trained and prepared for service,
- Assigns an Officer-in-Charge (OIC) from the ranks of the SHG for each assignment and works with that person to ensure the appropriate resources are made available to accomplish the mission.

3. Service Honor Guard Deputy Commander (Deputy Commander)

The Deputy Commander is a member of the SHG appointed by the Chief. The Deputy Commander:

- Works closely with the Commander to ensure that all SHG members are properly trained and accounted for,
- Will assist the Commander in identifying needs (training, equipment, supplies, etc.) for the SHG,
- Will assume the duties of the Commander if he/she is not available, and
- May be delegated duties by the Chief or the Commander.

4. Officer-in-Charge (OIC)

The Commander appoints an OIC from the members of the SHG for each event to coordinate the SHG attendance and activities. The OIC is responsible for SHG activities

during the funerals, memorial services, and other SHG functions to which he/she is appointed. The OIC:

- Coordinates with the Chief and the Commander about the details of the individual ceremonies and events to ensure that arrangements are made for the appropriate resources (personnel, ceremonial props, etc.),
- Meets with event organizers as needed,
- Ensures adequate rehearsal times and locations prior to the event,
- Ensures compliance with SHG policy at the assigned event,
- Ensures that the SHG fulfills all appointments and commitments for the assigned event,
- Serves as the liaison to other law enforcement agencies during joint operations,
- Coordinates with Service personnel and works with the family members of the deceased according to applicable policy and direction by the Chief, and
- May delegate responsibilities to others within the SHG to ensure successful completion of the assignment.

5. Logistics Officer (LO)

The LO is a member of the SHG appointed by the Chief. The LO:

- Coordinates travel arrangements, including lodging, transportation, and facility reservations;
- Prepares acquisition requests for needed equipment and maintains records of issued property and gear;
- Works with the Commander and Deputy Commander to notify SHG members about deployments and training; and
- Will also assist the Commander and Deputy Commander with other activities as needed.

6. Training Officers (TO)

TOs are members of the SHG appointed by the Commander/Deputy Commander. TOs ensure the fair and equitable training of SHG members in accordance with SHG policy, the *SHG Operational Handbook*, and the *SHG Training Manual*.

Chapter 3: MEMBERSHIP

1. Active

The SHG is comprised of uniformed law enforcement officers of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Regional Law Enforcement Chiefs (Office of Refuge Law Enforcement) nominate officers from their Regions and present those nominations to the DRLE Chief. The DRLE Chief, in coordination with the Commander, selects officers for the SHG. SHG ceremonies and training are a Service mission priority as established by the Director. The officer and the officer's home station must make at least a 3-year commitment to the SHG.

A. Basic Training

All new SHG members must complete a minimum of 80 hours of basic SHG training prior to performing with the SHG during ceremonies and events. If, during basic SHG training, a trainee fails to progress to a satisfactory level, the TO, in conjunction with the Commander, may recommend dismissal of the trainee from the team. Dismissal must be approved by the Chief-DRLE. Once a trainee completes the SHG basic training program, he/she will be considered an active member of the SHG team.

B. Biannual Training

To maintain proficiency, the SHG officers must meet and train at least twice a year. Each training session must be a minimum of 40 hours and total at least 80 hours per year.

C. Other Training

SHG members may participate in training in conjunction with other agencies as approved by the Chief.

After successfully completing 3 years of service, a member may continue serving actively on the SHG, request to be placed in reserve status, or leave the SHG in good standing (retire).

2. Reserve

An SHG member who has served at least 3 years in good standing may keep their SHG badge and uniform and be considered a reserve member. A reserve member must attend at least one 40-hour SHG training annually and be available to assist in the rendering of honors for any Service employee who dies in the line of duty. With supervisor approval, a reserve SHG member may be called upon by the Chief or Commander to assist the SHG at any other time as needed.

3. Retired

An SHG member who leaves the SHG after serving at least 3 years in good standing may keep their SHG uniform and will receive their SHG badge and device in recognition of their service to the Department.

4. Suspension or Dismissal

Any SHG member who does not comply with the standards in 470 FW 4 or this handbook may be suspended or dismissed from the team. The Service expects SHG members to uphold the highest standards of conduct and present themselves in a professional manner at all times. The Chief will determine whether a suspension of an officer is warranted and how long it will last. The Chief may also dismiss a member from the SHG team for cause.

Chapter 4: UNIFORM AND APPEARANCE STANDARDS

1. Service Honor Guard Uniform

The SHG uniform is unique and distinct from other Service uniforms. The Chief determines the design and standards for how to wear the SHG uniform. The uniform consists of brown dress slacks with gold striping, brown honor guard dress jacket with gold fringe, gold braid, a Class A uniform issue brown felt Stetson hat with black leather hat band and chin strap, black leather duty belt with suicide strap, holster, magazine pouch/ handcuff case, black leather dress boots, and white ceremonial gloves.

A. Service Honor Guard Badge

The SHG badge design is unique and distinct from other Service badges. The Chief determines the design of the SHG badge. Each SHG member must be issued an SHG jacket badge and an SHG hat badge.

B. Service Honor Guard Device

The SHG device is unique and distinct and worn only by SHG members. The Chief approves the design of the SHG device.

C. Pins

The SHG uniform must also include a nametag, U.S. flag pin, and two U.S. collar brass pins.

*See Figures 4-1A through D below for a description and demonstration of the proper way to wear the SHG uniform.

Figures 4-1A through D



4-1 (B)



GOLD BUCKLE ON HAT BAND WILL BE CENTERED ON LEFT SIDE OF OFFICER'S HAT

CHIN STRAP BEHIND OFFICER'S HEAD AND BUCKLE CENTERED

GOLD BRAID WORN ON OFFICER'S LEFT SIDE SHOULDER

HANDCUFF CASE CENTERED ON OFFICER'S SUPPORT HIP

MALE OFFICERS WILL BE CLEAN SHAVEN AND HAIR MAY NOT TOUCH COLLAR

4-1 (C)

FIREARM WILL BE WORN ON OFFICER'S STRONG SIDE

MAGAZINE POUCH WILL BE WORN HORIZONTALLY ON OFFICER'S STRONG SIDE IN FRONT OF HOLSTER

SUICIDE STRAP WILL BE WORN FROM SUPPORT SIDE SHOULDER, UNDER EPAULET, TO STRONG SIDE DUTY BELT WITH KEEPERS IN FRONT OF AND BEHIND HOLSTER



4-1 (D)



HONOR GUARD BADGE SHALL BE ON LEFT BREAST

NAME TAG WILL BE CENTERED ¼ INCH ABOVE RIGHT BREAST POCKET; SHG DEVICE WILL BE CENTERED ¼ INCH ABOVE NAME TAG; U.S. FLAG PIN WILL BE CENTERED ¼ INCH ABOVE SHG DEVICE.



U.S. COLLAR BRASS WILL BE PLACED ½ INCH FROM COLLAR OPENING AND CENTERED VERTICALLY ON COLLAR

2. Training Uniform

The SHG training uniform is unique and distinct from other Service training uniforms. The SHG training uniform presents an organized and professional presence for the SHG. The Chief approves the design and how to wear the SHG training uniform. The uniform must consist of tan 5.11 pants, black SHG training polo shirt, black leather dress boots, coyote brown 5.11 belt, leather holster, and leather cuff/magazine case.

*See Figures 4-2A and B below for a description and demonstration of the proper way to wear the SHG training uniform.

Figures 4-2A and B

<p>4-2 (A)</p>		<p>Proper Wear of the SHG Training Uniform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Holster worn on strong side hip-Service duty badge in badge holder worn on strong side in front of holster-Magazine pouch/cuff case worn on support side-Any undershirt must be black	
<p>4-2 (B)</p>		<p>Female Ceremonial Grooming Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Hair must be no longer than the top of the shoulders when standing in a normal posture, or worn up so as to not touch the collar	

3. Other Uniforms

Depending on the situation and due to varying traditions, the SHG may at times use specialized uniforms, such as a drummer's or bag piper's uniform.

4. Grooming Standards

Men's hair may not touch the collar or extend over the top of the ear. Sideburns must be neatly trimmed, no wider than one inch, and must not extend below the middle of the ear. No facial hair is allowed (*see Figure 4-1(B)*). Except for wedding bands, no visible jewelry is allowed. Medical accessories are allowed. Tattoos or elective body modifications (e.g., piercings) visible while wearing the SHG uniform will disqualify the individual from membership. Women's hair must be no longer than the top of the shoulders when standing with the head in a normal posture, or worn up (*see Figure 4-*

2(B)). Items women wear to hold the hair in place must be concealed as much as possible and blend with the hair color. Coloration not normally found in human hair, and coloration employed to produce unnatural hair patterns through contrasting hair colors, is prohibited. Any form of haircut or hairstyle that produces patterns, designs, or contrasting lengths visible while wearing the SHG uniform is prohibited. Fingernails must not be over ¼ inch long (beyond fingertips) on women and must be closely trimmed on men.

5. Fitness Standards

SHG members must maintain a level of fitness in accordance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wellness Program for Law Enforcement Officers found in 223 *FW 8*. SHG members must achieve a total fitness assessment score of 9 or less. Calculate the total fitness assessment score by adding each assessment level from the following assessment categories: pushups, sit-ups, and 1.5 mile run/3 mile walk/fire pack test or field test (passing a fire fitness test = level 1).

Chapter 5: DEPLOYMENTS

1. Death of a Service Law Enforcement Officer in the Line of Duty

It is the policy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to provide ceremonial honors for active-duty Service Law Enforcement Officers who die in the line of duty. All SHG members must be assigned to the event. The Chief/Commander may seek assistance from other agencies as necessary to perform full honors. Following is a list of honors that will be offered for a Service Law Enforcement Officer who dies in the line of duty:

A. Honor Watch

At least two uniformed officers must accompany the deceased at all times, beginning as soon as possible after death until the burial is complete. This includes posting officers at the head and foot of the casket during viewing and services, and relieving them as necessary to have a continual presence. The honor watch must be performed for any officer killed in the line of duty.

B. Color Guard

This involves the posting/presenting of flags (colors) of the United States of America, the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and any other applicable flags.

C. Pallbearers

As many as eight team members may be used to carry the casket. For the health and safety of the team members and to maintain the dignity of the ceremony, using fewer than six pallbearers is prohibited.

D. Law Enforcement (LE) Motorcade

The motorcade consists of law enforcement vehicles escorting the deceased.

E. Rifle Salute

The firing of a three-round rifle volley near the conclusion of the graveside service.

F. Taps

Bugle call signifying our fallen comrade has been laid to rest.

G. 6-Person Flag Fold

Six officers fold the flag of the United States of America in the traditional triangular presentation.

H. Presenting the Flag

The DRLE Chief or his/her designee presents the folded flag to the spouse or next of kin.

I. Flyover/Missing Man Formation

Formation of two to five aircraft in which one aircraft leaves the formation during the flyover to signify a fallen officer (pending availability).

J. Riderless Horse

An SHG officer may lead a horse saddled in full tack with black riding boots facing backward in the stirrups to signify the final ride of the fallen comrade (pending availability).

K. “Out of Service” Radio Call

A final attempt to contact the officer on the radio, followed by a radio announcement indicating the fallen officer has ended his or her tour of duty.

L. Pipers

The playing of various ceremonial tunes on the bagpipes (pending availability).

M. Other

Other ceremonial activities may be performed or coordinated by the SHG. Some examples include wreath laying, religious flags, drummers, etc.

Officers must wear a black mourning band across their badges from the time of death until sunset of the day of the funeral service, or as otherwise directed by the Chief.

2. Death of a Service Law Enforcement Officer Not in the Line of Duty

It is the policy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to provide ceremonial honors for deceased active-duty Service Law Enforcement Officers who do not die in the line of duty. The SHG must be assigned to the event. The Chief/Commander must designate the officers assigned to the event. The SHG may seek assistance from other agencies to perform honors. Following is a list of honors that will be offered for a Service Law Enforcement Officer who dies, but not in the line of duty (subject to the discretion of the Chief/Commander):

- Honor Watch
- LE Motorcade
- 3-Person Flag Fold
- Other
- Color Guard
- Rifle Salute
- Presenting the Flag
- Pallbearers
- Taps
- Pipers

*See definitions of honors in [Chapter 5.1](#).

Officers must wear the mourning band from sunrise to sunset on the day of the funeral service, or as otherwise directed by the Chief.

3. Death of a Service Firefighter or Wildlife Inspector in the Line of Duty

Following is a list of honors that will be offered (subject to the discretion of the Chief/Commander):

- Color Guard
- Rifle Salute
- Pipers
- Pallbearers
- 3-Person Flag Fold
- Other
- Taps
- Presenting the Flag

*See definitions of honors in [Chapter 5.1](#).

4. Death of a Retired Service Law Enforcement Officer

Following is a list of honors that will be offered (subject to the discretion of the Chief/Commander):

- Color Guard
- Rifle Salute
- Presenting the Flag
- Pallbearers
- Taps
- Pipers
- LE Motorcade
- 3-Person Flag Fold
- Other

*See definitions of honors in [Chapter 5.1](#).

Officers must wear the mourning band from sunrise to sunset on the day of the funeral service, or as otherwise directed by the Chief.

5. Death of a Service Employee

Following is a list of honors that will be offered (subject to the discretion of the Chief/Commander):

- Color Guard
- Other

*See definitions of honors in [Chapter 5.1](#).

6. Death of a Federal Wildlife Canine in the Line of Duty

The Service considers a Federal Wildlife Canine to be a commissioned law enforcement officer, and he/she will receive all line-of-duty death honors. The DRLE Chief or his/her designee will present the folded flag to the fallen canine's handler.

7. Peace Officers' Memorial Day

May 15th of each year is designated as Peace Officers' Memorial Day. SHG members may represent the Service by attending Police Week ceremonies in Washington, D.C.

8. Other Ceremonies and Events

The SHG is available to function in a ceremonial capacity when called upon by the Director.

9. Emergency Requests

The SHG represents the Service at the discretion of the Director. Pending the Director's approval, the SHG may be mobilized by contacting the Chief or the Serious Incident Reporting number in the Chief's office (1-888-519-3606). The SHG Commander/Deputy Commander will be verbally advised as soon as possible to begin the deployment. The SHG chain of command will make arrangements with the appropriate resources needed

for the service or ceremony. The SHG chain of command will notify team members of the deployment as needed and coordinate directly with event organizers to fulfill the mission.

10. Travel Status

SHG members will be in travel status and authorized to receive per diem from the time they leave their duty station to the time they return.

11. Purchase Authority

The Chief authorizes and oversees a DRLE SHG purchase credit card for the SHG Logistics Officer (LO) and any other member designated by the SHG command staff. They may use the SHG purchase card, as directed by the Chief, for deployment purchases that include, but are not limited to, supplies and any other incidental expenses incurred during a deployment. The Chief may authorize other forms of payment, and the DRLE office will reimburse such expenses as necessary and as authorized by the Chief.

12. SHG Team Member Availability

SHG officers must advise the Commander of their availability (e.g., informing him/her about annual leave, training, or other details) on an ongoing basis. This is necessary for emergency calls and scheduling purposes. Officers may use email or any other effective method to keep the Commander informed.

All SHG members must be available for callout (unless they have advised the Commander otherwise as described above) and will provide the Commander with current contact information.