
HONORING GOLD STAR PARENTS

Note: The presiding officer shall announce the following to the audience:

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Ritual provides that when honoring Gold Star parents we shall refrain from applauding.

There are times when mere words seem far from being adequate. This is such an occasion because we are gathered to recall persons who have made the supreme sacrifice -- and to honor their parents. Thus our deeds speak better than words.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is founded upon the true comradeship of persons bound by experiences, interests and everlasting patriotism. It is the sort of comradeship that lives through succeeding generations and far back into memory because we know that neither time nor events can separate those who have joined in the common defense of our flag and country.

That is the way we feel about the persons who are absent. We do not consider them gone. In reality they are very close to us. They are definitely a part of our thinking and actions. We feel that they have molded the future of our nation. They give us strong incentive to carry on our crusade for lasting peace and better purposes in life.

The highest tribute this organization can render those persons -- the most profound respect all of us can demonstrate -- is to apply to our own lives the strong faith and undaunted courage which were theirs.

To the parents of those comrades we pledge the sincere friendship of this Post and its Auxiliary.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

For National and Department Conventions and for Posts of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and Their Auxiliaries

The place of assembly should be arranged as for regular session of the order, altar draped in black -- open Bible thereon and small staffed Flag of the United States placed upon the altar. A small table draped in black between the altar and the commander's station is used as a shrine.

A floral Maltese Cross adds much to the appearance of the memorial altar. This cross may be made in one piece or in sections.

Titles used in the following are for National memorial services. In applying to Departments or Posts "Commander-in-Chief" refers to "Commander" and "Chief of Staff" refers to "Officer of the Day," etc.

Representatives of the Auxiliary left of Commander.

Commander takes their station and calls the session to order with one rap of the gavel.

Commander-in-Chief: Comrades, Members of the Auxiliary and friends, we meet at this time to commemorate our comrades of the United States Armed Forces who have answered the last call.

The VFW Ritual provides that the audience shall refrain from applauding. The Chief of Staff will see that there is no disturbance during the ceremonies.

Chief of Staff: Commander-in-Chief, your order will be obeyed.

Commander-in-Chief: I request that the National Chaplain preside.

National Chaplain: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, I am at your service and shall endeavor to perform this solemn duty in the spirit of faith, hope and charity.

(National Chaplain takes station of the Commander-in-Chief.)

(A Post may, if feasible, conduct a MEMORIAL ROLL CALL at this point. The Commander steps in front of their station, the officer of the day on their right, the Post historian on their left. The Commander calls the roll of all deceased Post members. After each name the Commander pauses while the Officer of the Day announces the member's service organization, with Post historian giving place and date of death.)

National Chaplain: Will all please be seated. We will now have the lighting of the POW/MIA candle and the Armed Forces Vigil candle by the Commander-in-Chief and National President of the Auxiliary.

(The Commander-in-Chief and National President of the Auxiliary will light the two appropriate candles on the altar escorted by the Sergeant-at-Arms, and return to their seats.) (National Chaplain delivers a prayer for the POW/MIA'S and a "Prayer of Gratitude" for those serving in harm's way.)

PRAYER

National Chaplain: O God Almighty, Creator and Ruler of the Universe, some of our comrades and companions are prisoners of war and missing in action. Comfort them, we pray, in their isolation from their homes and loves ones; supply their needs and protect them from want and deprivation; strengthen and sustain them that they may face discouragement with courage and hardship with resolution. Grant that they may find patience to endure, and peace in the knowledge of Your continuing presence.

O God, we ask that You will strengthen and protect all our members of the Armed Forces of the United States of America. In the day of battle may they be courageous and strong, resourceful and capable, resolute and victorious. In the time of peace may they serve with dignity and honor, as effective emissaries of good will for this Nation. May their devotion and loyalty to You and to their homeland inspire them in moments of challenge, and comfort them in tribulation and long separations from loves ones.

And finally, we ask they may return safely to serve You and our Country in the days and years to come. Amen.

National Chaplain: Comrades and friends, we will join in singing "Nearer, My God, To Thee."

Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be
Nearer, my God, to Thee!
Nearer, my God, to Thee!
Nearer to Thee!
Though like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams, I'd be
Nearer, my God, to Thee!
Nearer, my God, to Thee!
Nearer to Thee!

National Chaplain: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, to whom should the true soldier look for help in the battles of life?

Commander-in-Chief: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

National Chaplain: Comrade Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief, what assurance have we of a prolonged stay among the scenes and activities of earth?

Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief: "For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers; our days on earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding."

National Chaplain: Comrade Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief, have you a message of condolence for those bereaved?

Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief: I have. The Book of Life tells us that "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust."

National Chaplain: What message has the Chaplain of the Auxiliary?

Chaplain of Auxiliary: I have a message of hope that should inspire our comrades at this solemn moment and all through life. The message is from the Captain of our Salvation. He says: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

National Chaplain: Comrades, we are thankful for these inspiring thoughts. Let us learn the lesson of the hour which is that we, too, are nearing the end of life's pilgrimage and sooner or later these services may be held in our memory.

Let us so live that when our summons comes we may depart with a good conscience, in the comfort of a sincere religion, belief in God, and perfect charity toward all mankind. Let us pray.

(Chaplain delivers extemporaneous prayer following which a soloist may sing "Sleep Soldier Boy," or any other appropriate song.)

National Chaplain: Comrades, in commemorating the virtues of our departed heroes who served their country in time of need we now offer our symbolic tributes.

I place upon our sacred shrine these red flowers, which symbolize the zeal of our departed comrades in upholding brotherhood, truth and justice.

(Places flowers.)

National Chaplain: Comrade Past Commander-in-Chief, what tribute have you to offer?

Past Commander-in-Chief: These white flowers I place as a token of the purity of affection we have for our departed comrades.

(Places flowers.)

National Chaplain: Comrade Commander-in-Chief, have you a tribute to offer upon this sacred shrine?

Commander-in-Chief: The blue of our national standard symbolizes truth and fidelity. Therefore, I place these blue flowers from nature's bosom in token of our sincere respect for all departed comrades.

(Places flowers.)

National Chaplain: Members of the Auxiliary, will you offer a tribute to the memory of our departed comrades?

National President of Auxiliary: I place upon our sacred shrine this wreath as a symbol of eternity. Its color bespeaks life everlasting. Thus do we say that the deeds of military service members on land, on sea and in the air, are immortalized in the hearts of a grateful people.

(Places evergreen wreath.)

National Chaplain: Let us rise and sing "America".

AMERICA

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing.

Land where my fathers died,
Land of the Pilgrim's pride,
From every mountain side,
Let freedom ring.

Our father's God, to Thee,
Author of Liberty,
To Thee we sing;

Long may our land be bright,
With freedom's holy light,
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King.

(If there is a speaker, they will now be introduced and deliver a brief inspirational message.

The Chaplain will offer the benediction, either extemporaneous or from the Prayers for Various Occasions, followed by a period of silence and the playing of taps.)

MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE

For Post holding Memorial Day ceremonial at veteran's grave or monument. The ceremony may follow a brief address by Commander or other speaker, commemorating veteran dead of all wars and emphasizing VFW pledge to honor the dead by helping the living. The talk should be extemporaneous or based on latest materials made available by National Headquarters. The reading of General Logan's "General Order No. 11" would be appropriate.

HEADQUARTERS GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC Washington, D.C., May 5, 1868

GENERAL ORDER NO. 11

1. The 30th day of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet church yard in the land. In this observance no form of ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit.

We are organized, comrades, as our regulations tell us, for the purpose, among other things, "of preserving and strengthening those kind and fraternal feelings which have bound together the military service members who united to suppress the late rebellion." What can aid more to assure this result than by cherishing tenderly the memory of our heroic dead, who made their breasts a barricade between our country and its foes? Their soldier lives were the reveille of freedom to a race in chains, and their deaths the

tattoo of rebellious tyranny in arms. We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance. All that the consecrated wealth and taste of the nation can add to their adornment and security, is but a fitting tribute to the memory of her slain defenders. Let no wanton foot tread rudely on such hallowed grounds. Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no vandalism of avarice or neglect, no ravages of time testify to the present or to the coming generations, that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided Republic.

If other eyes grow dull, and other hands slack, and other hearts cold in the solemn trust, ours shall keep it well as long as the light and warmth of life remains to us.

Let us, then, at the time appointed gather around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with the choicest flowers of springtime; let us raise above them the dear old flag they saved from dishonor; let us in this solemn presence renew our pledges to aid and assist those whom they have left among us, a sacred charge upon a nation's gratitude—the soldier's and sailor's widow and orphan.

2. It is the purpose of the Commander-in-Chief to inaugurate this observance with the hope that it will be kept up from year to year, while a survivor of the war remains to honor the memory of their departed comrades. He/she earnestly desires the public press to call attention to this order, and lend its friendly aid in bringing it to the notice of comrades in all parts of the country in time for simultaneous compliance therewith.
3. Department Commanders will use every effort to make this order effective.

By Order of
JOHN A. LOGAN,
Commander-in-Chief

Attest:

N. P. Chipman, Adjutant General

After these preliminaries the following action is in order:

Commander stands at head of grave or appropriate spot before monument. At their right are Senior Vice Commander, national flag bearer and guard. To their left are Junior Vice Commander, Post standard bearer and guard. Members of the color detail stand facing either side of the grave or monument. Post Chaplain stands at foot of the grave or appropriate spot before the monument, with officer of the day to their right and Auxiliary President or Post Adjutant at their left. The bugler stands behind the Commander.

Other Post officers and members assemble around the grave, or monument, if feasible, while Commander declares slowly and impressively:

Commander: As long as two comrades survive—so long will the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States render tribute to our heroic dead.

Commander: Comrades, attention! On this day, forever consecrated to our heroic dead, we are assembled once again to express sincere reverence. This grave (monument) represents the resting places of many departed comrades who served in all wars. Wherever the body of a comrade lies there the ground is hallowed. Our presence here is in solemn commemoration of all these men and women -- an expression of our tribute to their devotion to duty, to their courage and patriotism. By their services on land, on sea and in the air they have made us their debtors -- for the flag of our nation still flies over a land of free people.

(Pause. Then orders):

Commander: Parade, rest! Comrade Chaplain, you will ask the divine blessing.

Chaplain: *Almighty God.* In the depth of our silent reverence we realize the truth of the inspired words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He *who believes* in Me, though he *may die*, he *shall live*."

As comrade after comrade departs we march on with our ranks grown thinner. Help us to be faithful to *You* and to one another. Look in mercy on the surviving spouses and children of our departed comrades, and with *Your* own tenderness, console and comfort those who are bereaved.

Heavenly Father, bless our country with freedom, peace and righteousness. Through *Your* favor may we meet at last before *Your* throne in Heaven. We praise *Your* Great Name forever and forever. Amen.

(All respond Amen.)

Commander: Attention! officers and members of _____ Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we will now pay our respects to our departed comrade (these comrades). In so doing we offer solemn tribute to all comrades wherever they may rest. Comrade Senior Vice Commander!

(Senior Vice Commander steps to right side of grave, holding small wreath.)

Senior Vice Commander: On behalf of Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I place this symbol of our remembrance.

(Places wreath. Returns to former position.)

Commander: Comrade Junior Vice Commander!

(Junior Vice Commander steps to left side of grave, holding white flowers.)

Junior Vice Commander: I place this symbol of purity on this comrade's grave. May each future generation emulate the unselfish courage of all men and women who fought for freedom.

(Places flowers. Returns to former position.)

Commander: Comrade Officer of the Day!

(Officer of day steps to right side of grave, holding red flowers.)

Officer of Day: In memory of the heroic dead who have fallen

in defense of the United States of America I place this tribute
of our devotion and everlasting remembrance.

(Places flowers. Returns to position.)

(If the Auxiliary takes part the Commander says):

Commander: President of the Veterans of Foreign Wars
Auxiliary!

(President steps to foot of grave, holding blue flowers.)

Auxiliary President: On behalf of the Veterans of Foreign
Wars Auxiliary, I place this emblem of eternity. Its color
bespeaks life everlasting. Thus do we immortalize the brave
deeds of our military service members who have given their
lives on land, on sea and in the air.

(Places flowers on grave. Returns to position. If Auxiliary does not
participate Post Adjutant should substitute.)

(Commander then places small Flag of the United States in marker
or at head of grave, or appropriate place on monument.)

Commander: On behalf of our glorious republic for whose
integrity our comrades enlisted and served, I place this
emblem of the nation. The flag of our country was theirs to
defend. Its glorious colors shall wave over them in death as in
life—for everyone to behold.

(Commander resumes station. Then addressing grave, or monument,
declares):

Commander: To you comrades who have departed we render
a silent salute.

(Then orders):

Commander: Comrades, Present Arms!

(All hold salute to grave or monument while Commander counts ten
silently. Then Commander says aloud, slowly, impressively and
directing their words to the grave or monument):

Commander: Comrades in the Silent Land beyond, wherever your mortal remains may rest, these solemn services we hold in tribute to you.

(Bugler sounds Taps. This may be followed by gradually softening tattoo on drums or echo Taps from muted bugle or second bugler stationed at a distance. Commander ends salute with command, Order Arms! This ends the ceremony. VFW members march away in military order to be dismissed.)

DEDICATING A MEMORIAL

The following ceremony may be used by VFW unit dedicating honor roll or plaque or tablet bearing the names of men and women who have served in the United States armed forces.

Following preliminary addresses, music, etc., and at time for dedication, the Post Commander marches their participating members to the honor roll, which should be veiled. The Flag of the United States and Post standard, flanked by color guard, should lead. Officers and comrades follow in order of rank. The formation should be in column of twos.

Commander halts the column when it reaches the roll of honor. Comrades are distributed half on each side of center aisle leading to the roll of honor. Each group faces the other, with Post officers in front ranks. Post Commander—and/or speaker—stand before the memorial, facing the audience.

Color bearers, flanked by color guards, stand at attention to the right and left of the roll of honor. Other comrades at parade rest.

The Flag of the United States is placed to the audience's left, and the Post colors to the audience's right.

When all is quiet the Commander, or speaker, facing the audience, says:

Commander: This is a solemn, important occasion—one we shall long remember with pride for the small part we are contributing.

(Suggested speech.)

We are assembled here to pay tribute to the men (and women) of our community who have served in the United States armed forces—our neighbors who have fought in defense of this country—and for preservation of our way of life.

Those men (and women) are worthy of far greater recognition than mere words or markers. The sacrifices they made and the deeds they performed shall be written in history, and shall remain alive in our memories for generations to come. We express sincerely our pride and gratitude for the tasks they fulfilled.

Before you is the flag of our nation (speaker indicates the flag). That flag is the symbol of all that is sacred to us. Look at it closely for a moment. The Flag of the United States reflects what we are—and what we hope to be. The white stripes symbolize purity of purpose in our freedom of thought, expression and worship.

These are the privileges we guarantee to all who live in our land. They are the rights we defend against all enemies who seek to crush the way of life that you and I cherish.

Also in that flag we see the red stripes of courage—our willingness to die, if necessary, for preservation of American ideals.

Then there is the blue of tranquility upon which the stars of our states are united to hold intact all that is truly ours—the desire for peace, prosperity and happiness throughout our nation.

We emphasize that interpretation of the Flag of the United States which you see carried proudly and guarded so carefully. We emphasize our tribute to the flag because we are assembled here to honor those who have fought under that sacred symbol of our land.

We have come here to dedicate a roll of honor naming the men (and women) of this community who went forth as the

living strength of our flag. They were the United States armed forces on land, sea and in the air. Some of them did not return. They are the honored dead whose resting places are found in many foreign lands and waters around the globe.

These American defenders left our schools, our shops and our farms to take up weapons against the foes. They left their peacetime pursuits with confidence in their hearts and assurances upon their lips. They were aware of the dangers before them, yet they responded without hesitancy to the call of duty.

These are the men and women in whom we entrusted all our faith. They are the ones for whom we toiled and prayed here at home—to help make their effort victorious, so they might return and live with us in lasting peace and security.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars looks upon all these honored ones as comrades. Within our organization are men and women who have served under the Flag of the United States overseas in many wars to preserve American freedoms. The honors we symbolize here express the appreciation of VFW *members* for all comrades-in-arms.

Fighting under the flag of this nation is the privileged duty of every able-bodied American, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States will always honor those who go forth in defense of our nation. They are the true guardians of freedom, justice and equality among all. (Pause)

Commander: Comrades, Attention!

(All comrades respond, facing the roll of honor.)

(Commander about-faces. Senior and Junior Vice Commanders step to the roll of honor, unveil it and return to their places. Or, if the roll of honor is not veiled the Commander stands facing it. In loud voice so all the audience hears, Commander says):

Commander: Before us are the names of (number) men and women from our community who have served in the United States armed forces. We honor them. We extend to them and to their memory our deepest respect.

Comrade Chaplain, you will ask the divine blessing.

(Chaplain steps one pace forward from their front rank position and offers this prayer, slowly and clearly):

Chaplain: Almighty God, guide these men and women we honor through every day and night. Give them unlimited strength and courage to continue their efforts for lasting peace. Make their victory a true service to all humanity. Give them growing faith in *Your* teachings.

Make them *Your* chosen servants, to carry on forever a victorious crusade against all evil forces seeking to destroy that which is just and good in the hearts of men and women. Help them to bring brotherly love to all lands. Bless and comfort those whom they have left bereaved. And, finally, O God, help us to increase our spiritual unity, and our love for all. In reverent humility we ask these blessings. Amen.

(All respond—Amen.)

(Chaplain resumes place in ranks. Officer of day brings color bearers and guards to present arms.)

Commander: Comrades, Present Arms!

(As all salute, the Commander says slowly, in loud voice):

Commander: And now, in the name of _____
Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the
United States, Department of _____, we dedicate this roll of
honor which records, so all may see, the names of these
brave men (and women) who have served in the fighting
forces of our great nation. May their noble deeds live forever.

(Salute ends, or if music is available, all present salute flag and roll of honor during rendition of national anthem. This concludes ceremony. Commander about-faces, closes ranks and marches Post members away led by colors.)

FLAG PRESENTATION CEREMONY

Commander: (Organization leaders, members), Comrades, of (Post Name and Number) Veterans of Foreign Wars: We have the honor today of presenting the National Standard, the Flag of the United States, to this worthy organization, on this occasion. Comrade _____, our presentation chairman, will formally present the Colors, Comrade _____.

Presentation Chairman: (Organization, leaders, members) I bring the heartiest greetings from the officers and members of (Post Name), Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. As one of the highlights of our Community Service and Youth Activities programs, it is a great pleasure to us to be able to present to you this symbol of our great republic. To you (name of organization) we ask only that you always respect and if necessary defend this great and beautiful flag; even at the risk of giving your own lives to our nation's cause.

Officer of the Day, you will with the assistance of (one of receiving organization members), raise the colors and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Officer of the Day: We will now rededicate ourselves and this flag to our Country. Present Arms! (Raises Flag). You will join me in the Pledge of Allegiance. Order Arms!

Commander: Comrade Chaplain, you will ask blessing on this, our National Colors.

Chaplain: O God, Bless our Nation's Emblem; may it ever symbolize freedom and justice for all our people. Help these citizens to always respect those high principles that are noble and right, that they might better understand the high ideals represented by this flag; and, if need be, that they have to trod on foreign soil to defend it, may you abide with them always. Amen.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES

A Post may function as a unit at the funeral of a deceased comrade, soldier, sailor, marine, airman or guardian having an honorable record. VFW participation in the services will be on request of the family of the deceased and upon order of the Post Commander or vote of the Post. Otherwise Post members will attend services as individuals, taking no active part in the ceremonies.

The Post Commander and staff must use own best judgment to make VFW services conform to local circumstances. Changes may have to be made in the following instructions. Most important is to have everything run smoothly. Each comrade participating in the funeral ritual should understand clearly what they are to do at a particular moment. Everyone should be rehearsed so as to avoid delay, confusion or reference to the printed Ritual during ceremonies.

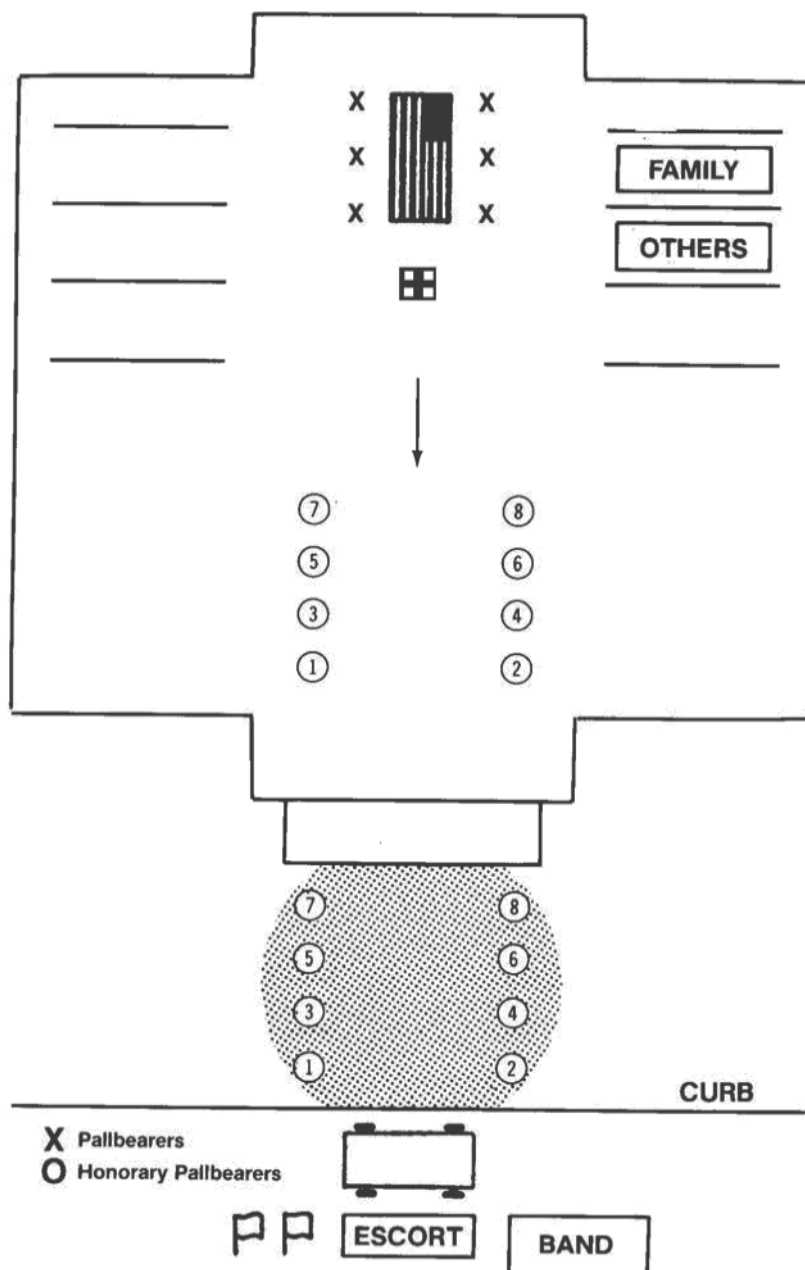
The Post Commander should make complete preliminary arrangements with the family or its representatives regarding the part the VFW is to take in the ceremonies.

When the VFW is asked to use its Ritual at funerals the action is expected to follow closely the military ceremony prescribed by military regulations. That means we use a uniformed color detail with guards and color bearers, the flag- covered casket, uniformed pallbearers or escort, Chaplain, bugler sounding Taps and a firing squad.

The burial flag (5 x 9 1/2 feet, wool bunting, with hemmed heading) will be provided by the government for burial ceremonies for all veterans who served honorably. The flag will be provided by the government agency returning remains to home town, or by local postmaster.

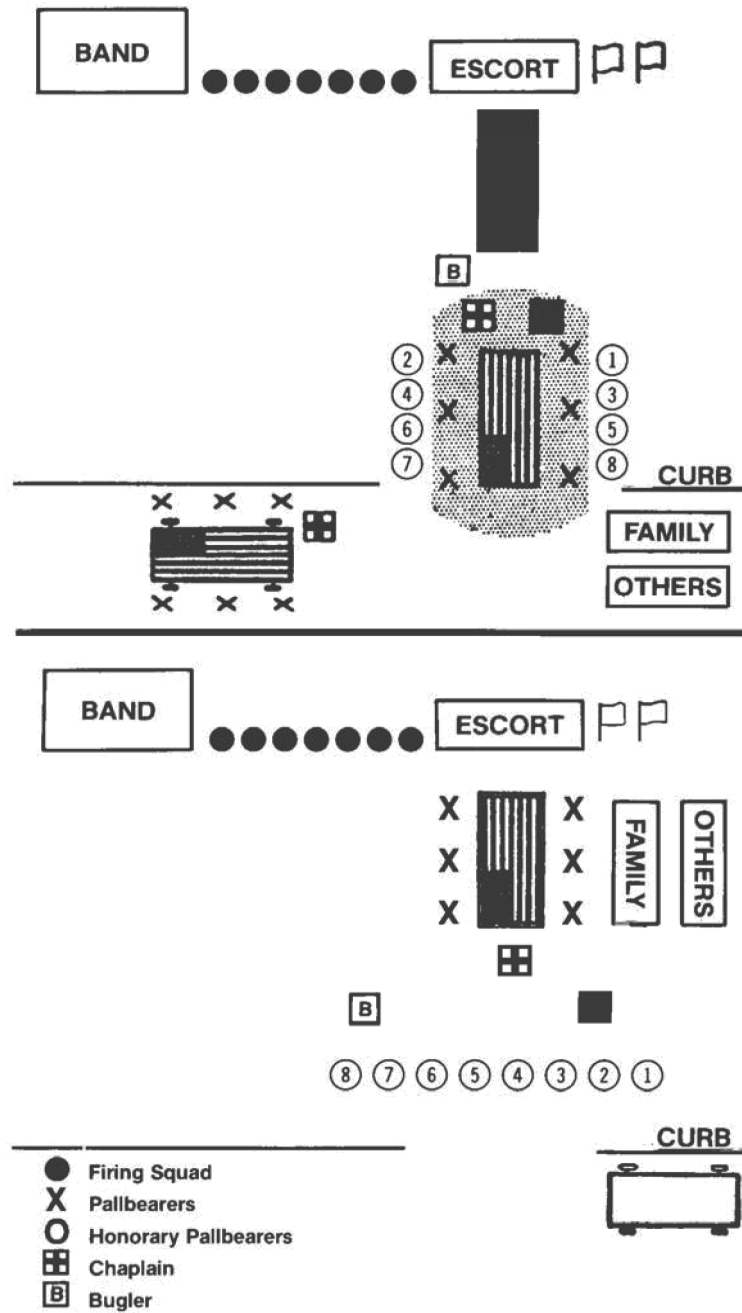
There are three types of military funeral services: (1) with chapel service followed by escort to grave or place of local disposition of remains; (2) without chapel service, but with the funeral procession forming at or near the cemetery entrance; (3) graveside service only "Chapel" means the home, church, funeral parlor and places other than the grave. Honorary pallbearers may be VFW members or others selected by the family.

Plate No. 7



LEAVING FUNERAL CHAPEL. Honorary pallbearers assemble at door of chapel, then take positions as shown in shaded area. (See pages 84 to 113).

Plate No. 8



AT GRAVESIDE. Top illustration shows positions of ceremonial elements as casket is carried to grave. Lower diagram shows casket in place and stations of participants. (See pages 84 to 113).

Following are some funeral service details to remember:

- Military funeral regulations do not take firing squad into chapel.
- All military or VFW details shall, in church, have heads bared except while actually functioning. Members of color detail and firing squad, functioning, do not remove caps. Uniformed pallbearers remain covered while carrying casket. Uniformed members not in formation, but attending services as individuals, stand at attention with cap held to left breast whenever casket is moved by pallbearers and during salutes and Taps.
- The Flag of the United States should never be dipped or lowered. Only Post colors should be dipped while casket is passing and during sounding of Taps. When Post colors are dipped the firing squad and color guard come to present arms.
- Military regulations provide that the Flag of the United States shall cover the casket during military funeral services held in a church or chapel. Comrades making arrangements should determine that this is acceptable to the minister.

Following are individual instructions for personnel taking part in complete military funeral ceremonies, as prescribed by latest army regulations. Check text with Plates 6, 7 and 8 illustrating action at chapel and graveside:

Chaplain. Arrives at the chapel before the arrival of the casket and stands in front of the entrance to the chapel to one side of the body bearers. The Chaplain remains uncovered throughout the entire ceremony except in inclement weather, or if religious rites prescribe head covering.

When the body bearers have removed the casket from the hearse, the Chaplain leads the body bearers and casket into the chapel. Then conducts the chapel service. When the chapel service is completed, the Chaplain precedes the casket out of the chapel. While the casket is being fastened to the caisson, the Chaplain may retire to the vestryroom of the chapel to remove vestments, if so desired. The Chaplain takes their

position preceding the casket and following the colors in funeral procession.

Upon arrival of the procession at the burial lot, the Chaplain waits until the band, escort, and colors have taken their positions at the grave site; when the body bearers lift the casket from the caisson the Chaplain removes their headdress and holds it over their left breast; then precedes the casket to the grave site, marching between the two facing ranks of honorary pallbearers at the entrance to the burial lot.

The Chaplain then takes their position at the head of the grave, Plate 8; when everyone is in position the Chaplain conducts the committal service. At the end of the service, the Chaplain steps two steps backward or to the side to make room for the bugler to sound Taps.

After the funeral service is finished, the Chaplain remains behind to render any assistance required by the family.

Band. The band assembles in front of the chapel prior to the arrival of the casket and stands at ease until the hearse appears. It forms facing the chapel to the right of the entrance on line with colors, escort, and firing party as shown in Plate 6.

When the hearse appears, the band is brought to attention. When the body bearers lift the casket from the hearse and the escort is brought to the position of present arms, the drum major assumes the position of present baton, and the band plays an appropriate air. The band continues playing until the casket is carried into the chapel.

During the chapel service, the band remains in position and stands at ease.

When the body is carried out again at the close of the chapel service, the band is brought to attention, the drum major assumes the position of present arms, and the band plays an appropriate air at the moment that the casket appears at the entrance to the chapel. It continues to play during the time that the casket is carried to the caisson; it stops when the casket is secured.

When the procession moves off, the band leads the line of march, although the civilian funeral director may precede the

band and lead the way to the cemetery.

When the general vicinity of the grave has been reached, the procession again is marched slowly to the grave and the band may resume playing.

The band takes its place facing the grave in line with the escort as indicated in Plate 8.

The band plays an appropriate, solemn air from the time that the body bearers lift the casket from the caisson until it is placed over the grave. The drum major assumes the position of present baton. When the casket is placed over the grave, the band then ceases playing, comes to parade rest, and the members bow their heads.

When the escort is brought to attention prior to the firing of volleys and the sounding of Taps, the band assumes the position of attention at the same command. The leader of the band executes the hand salute and the drum major comes to the position of present baton while volleys are fired and Taps is sounded.

When the services are over, the Commander of the escort commands the band and escort to move off in quick time. At a suitable distance from the grave site, the band plays a lively tune as the ceremonial detachment returns to the dispersal point.

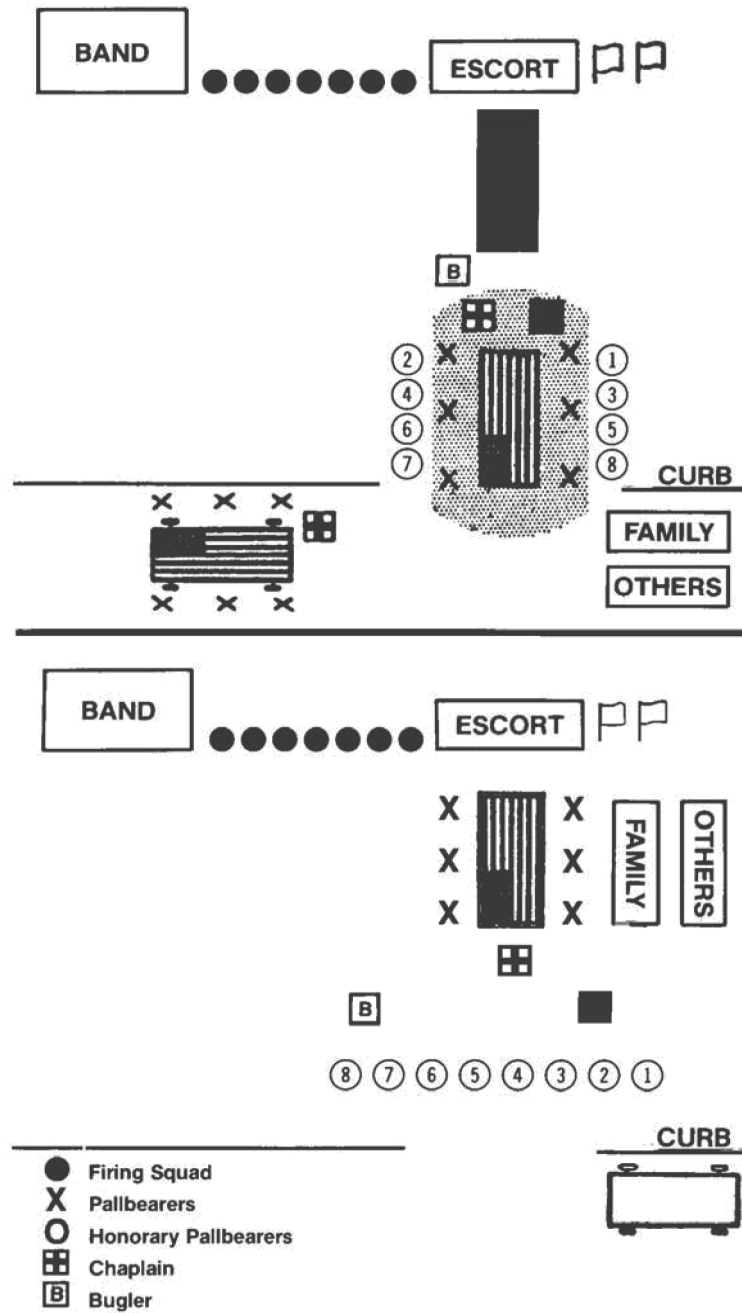
Escort and Firing Party. The escort assembles in front of the chapel prior to the arrival of the casket and stands at ease until the hearse appears. It forms facing the chapel on line with the colors and band as shown in Plate 6.

When the hearse appears, the escort is brought to attention. When all is in readiness for the body bearers to remove the casket from the hearse, the escort is brought to the position of present arms.

When the casket is carried into the chapel the escort is brought to the order and permitted to stand at ease.

When the casket is brought out from the chapel at the end of the chapel service, the escort is called to attention and then brought to the position of present arms. The escort remains in this position while the casket is being secured to the caisson.

Plate No. 8



AT GRAVESIDE. Top illustration shows positions of ceremonial elements as casket is carried to grave. Lower diagram shows casket in place and stations of participants. (See pages 84 to 113).

When the casket is secured to the caisson, the escort is brought to the order. The escort then takes its place in the procession behind the band and marches to the cemetery. At the graveside, the escort takes its position in line with the band, behind and facing the head of the grave as indicated in Plate 8.

The firing party element of the escort is formed in one rank, apart from the escort so that it will not fire over the heads of the family when they take their place beside the grave. The firing party will execute all commands with escort except when specifically indicated otherwise.

At the moment that the body bearers lift the casket from the caisson, the escort is brought to the position of present arms. They remain in this position until the casket is placed over the grave.

When the casket is placed over the grave, the escort is called to order and brought to the position of parade rest; all members of the escort stand in this position with bowed heads until the Chaplain completes the committal service.

When the Chaplain has finished the service, the escort is then called to attention.

Members of the escort are then given the command, 1. Escort less firing party, 2. Present, 3. Arms. At the command Arms, the escort, honorary pallbearers, leader of the band, bugler and privates of the color guard come to the position of present arms. The drum major comes to the position of present baton.

The escort Commander then commands: 1. Firing Party, 2. With Blank Cartridges, 3. Load. At the command Load, each member of the firing party faces half right and carries their right foot 12 inches to the right and to such position as will secure the greatest firmness and steadiness of the body. Each member of the firing party raises their rifle, and drops it into the left hand at the balance, right hand at the small of the stock, muzzle in the air, at an angle of 45 degrees. Then loads their rifle in the manner prescribed in the manual for that weapon.

The escort Commander then gives the command, 1. Ready, Aim, 3. Squad, 4. Fire. At the command Ready, each member of the firing party remains in the position of load. At the

command Aim, each member of the firing party raises their rifle with both hands to a position of 45 degrees from the horizontal, the rifle resting in the palm of their left hand, the butt placed and held firmly against their shoulder. The left hand is well under the rifle, grasping it at or in front of the balance, the right hand grasping the small of the stock. The right elbow is at the height of the shoulder. The right cheek is pressed firmly against the stock as far forward as it can be without straining. The left eye is closed, the right eye looking over the rear sight. The rifle is then unlocked.

At the command Fire, each member of the firing party squeezes the trigger of their rifle quickly. The rifle is then lowered to the position of load and reload. The escort Commander then commands: 1. Aim, 2. Squad, 3. Fire. After the second volley is fired, the escort Commander again gives the command, 1. Aim, 2. Squad, 3. Fire, and the third volley is fired.

After the third volley is fired the firing party shall be brought to present arms and shall so remain in this position until the conclusion of the sounding of Taps. The escort Commander executes the hand salute while Taps is sounded.

After the last note of Taps has been played the escort is brought to the order. At the same command the firing party comes to the order from the position of ready. The firing party then rejoins the escort and the escort moves off behind the band.

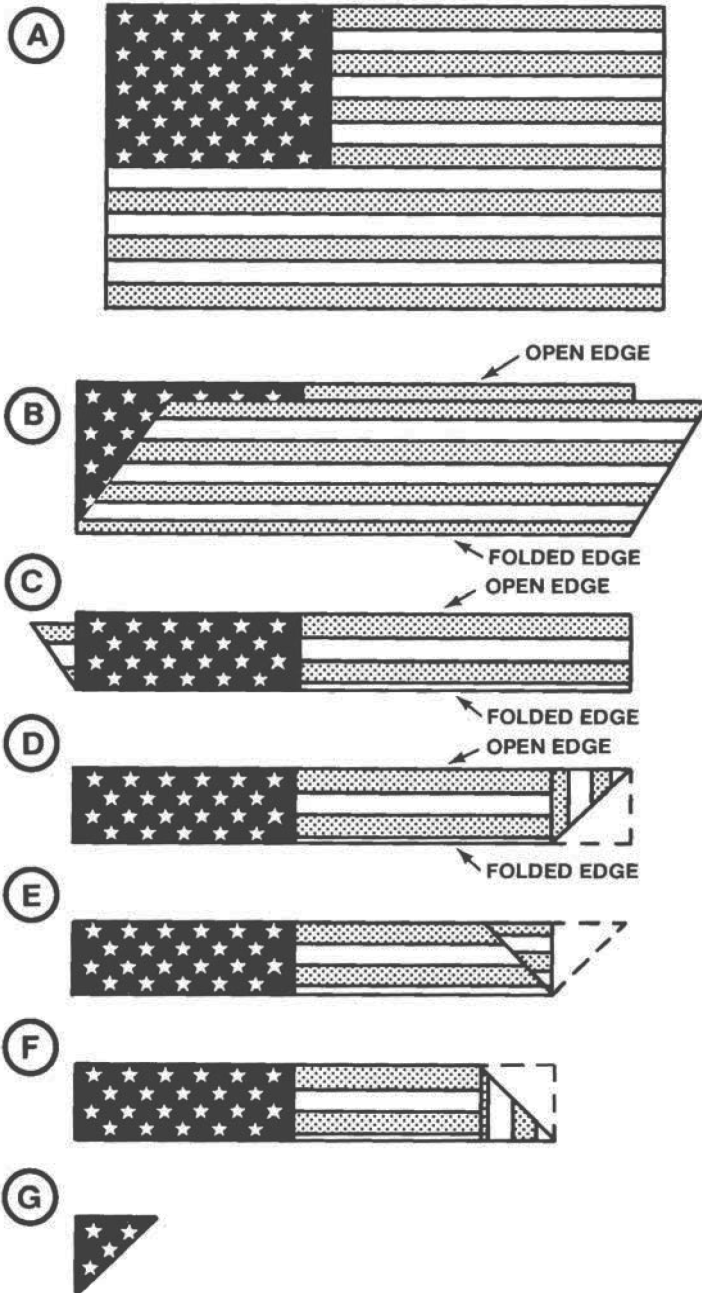
At the first halt, the rifles of the firing party are unloaded and inspected.

Color Guard. The color guard arrives at the chapel and takes its position as indicated in Plate 6 prior to the arrival of the hearse.

When the hearse appears, the color guard is brought to attention and the privates of the color guard come to the position of present arms with the escort.

When the casket is carried into the chapel, the privates of the color guard come to the order and the color guard is permitted to stand at ease.

Plate No. 9



When the casket is brought out from the chapel at the end of the chapel service, the color guard comes to the position of attention with the escort.

The privates of the color guard then come to the position of present arms with the escort and remain in this position until the casket is secured to the caisson.

When the casket is secured to the caisson, the privates of the color guard come to the order with the escort. The color guard takes its position behind the escort and marches to the cemetery.

At the graveside, the color guard takes its position in line with the band behind and facing the head of the grave as indicated in Plate 8.

At the moment that the body bearers lift the casket from the caisson, the privates of the color guard come to the position of present arms with the escort. They remain in this position until the casket is placed over the grave.

When the casket is placed over the grave the privates of the color guard come to the order with the escort. The color guard then comes to the position of parade rest with the escort and stands with bowed heads until the Chaplain completes the committal service.

When the committal service is completed, the color guard comes to the position of attention with the escort. The privates of the color guard then execute present arms with the escort and hold that position until the escort is brought to the order, when they also come to the order.

The color guard then moves off following the band, as the procession leaves the cemetery in quick time.

Body Bearers. The body bearers assemble directly in front of the entrance to the chapel before the hearse arrives.

When the escort is brought to the position of attention they lift the casket from the hearse and, following the Chaplain, carry the casket feet first into the chapel, passing through the aisle formed by the two facing ranks of honorary pallbearers.

If after entering the chapel, a church truck is available, the casket may be placed on the truck and only two body bearers will be required to guide the casket to the front of the chancel. Otherwise, all body bearers carry the casket feet first to the front of the chancel and then take their places in the pews behind those occupied by the honorary pallbearers at the left front of the chapel. (Plate 6.) When the chapel service is over, the body bearers lift the casket and carry it out of the chapel feet first. The body bearers then secure the casket to the caisson.

In the funeral procession, the body bearers march in two files immediately behind the caisson.

When the procession reaches the entrance of the burial lot, and the band, colors, and escort have taken their positions at the grave site, the body bearers lift the casket from the caisson and carry it to the grave site.

At the grave site, the body bearers rest the casket on the lowering device and remove the interment flag from the casket, holding it over the grave waist high. The flag is held tightly so that it does not sag over the casket during the service.

At the conclusion of Taps, the body bearers fold the flag as prescribed in Plate 9. The Officer in charge presents the flag to the next of kin with these words: "On behalf of the government of the United States of America, through the Veterans of Foreign Wars _____ Post _____, I am honored to present you with this flag of our country, under which your _____ (relationship) has so honorably and faithfully served."

The Officer in charge gives hand salute and retires with escort.

Honorary Pallbearers. The honorary pallbearers arrive at the chapel before the hearse arrives. They take positions in front of the entrance to the chapel in two facing ranks.

Upon arrival of the hearse and when the body bearers remove the casket from the hearse, honorary pallbearers execute the hand salute.

When the casket is carried between the two ranks that they have formed, they come to the order, execute the appropriate

facing movement, fall in behind the casket, and enter the chapel, the senior preceding the junior and marching to the right. (Plate 6.)

In the chapel, they take places in the front pews to the left of the chapel as indicated in Plate 6.

When the chapel service is over, honorary pallbearers assemble at door of chapel and then take positions outside of the chapel in two facing ranks, forming an aisle through which the casket is carried by the body bearers preceded by the Chaplain. (See shaded portion of Plate 7.) As the casket is carried past them, they execute the hand salute. They remain in this position until the casket is loaded on the caisson, when they come to the order.

If the funeral procession rides in cars to the cemetery, the honorary pallbearers ride in cars immediately behind the caisson. If they march, they march in two files on either side of the caisson, the senior preceding and marching to the right.

The leading member of each file marches opposite the front wheels of the caisson.

When the entrance to the burial lot is reached, the honorary pallbearers take positions on either side of the entrance. As the body bearers lift the casket from the caisson, the honorary pallbearers execute the hand salute.

When the casket has been carried past them, they come to the order and fall in behind the casket, marching to the grave site in correct precedence of rank, senior to the right and to the front.

At the grave site they stand in line behind the Chaplain at the head of the grave. (Plate 8.) They execute the hand salute during the firing of volleys, the sounding of Taps, and the lowering of the casket into the grave.

After the ceremony is over they march off in two files behind the colors.

Family. The family arrives at the chapel before the casket is received and is seated in pews in right front of the chapel. (Plate 6.)

When the chapel service is over, the family members follow the casket down the aisle until they reach the vestibule of the chapel, where they wait until the casket is carried outside and secured to the caisson.

When the procession is ready to form, members of the family take their places in the procession immediately behind the body bearers.

When the procession arrives at the graveside, the members of the family wait until the band, escort, and colors have taken their positions at the grave, and the casket is carried between the double row of honorary pallbearers.

The members of the family take their positions at the side of the grave opposite earth mound side for the funeral service. (Plate 8.)

When the graveside ceremony is finished, a member of the family receives interment flag from the cemetery representative, the officer in charge of the funeral, or the individual military escort.

The family then leaves the cemetery.

(For further details see latest Army Manual (FM22-5), Drills and Ceremonies, or, Bureau of Navy Personnel, Navy Military Funerals, NAVPERSS15555D.)

CHAPEL SERVICE

The following VFW funeral chapel action at the casket of a departed comrade may be used if the family of the deceased requests that such final rites be performed. Arrangements should be made beforehand with the funeral director and officiating minister.

Before the services begin place a staffed Flag of the United States to the left of the chapel rostrum (left as those assembled face the casket) and the VFW colors to the right of the rostrum.

The casket is covered by a Flag of the United States laid in reverse position—with the blue field over the heart of the deceased.

When the services start, the Junior Vice-Commander, Senior Vice-Commander, Officer of the Day, Commander and Chaplain are seated on the front row.

These five members should be dressed in full uniform.

They wear the VFW cap except during prayer. They have the symbols of the stations they occupy. The Junior Vice-Commander, sprig of evergreen; Senior Vice-Commander, a white flower or flowers; Officer of the Day, a laurel wreath; Commander, a small flag of the United States.

At the moment arranged for the VFW ceremony, preferably following the religious service by the minister, priest or rabbi, the VFW officers rise and march in single file to the rostrum. All movements should be executed in precise, military, orderly manner.

The officers stand facing the assembly, before or near the casket. Those assembled see, left to right, Junior Vice-Commander, Senior Vice-Commander, Officer of the Day, Commander, Chaplain.

Commander: We, the members of _____ Post No. ____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, are here assembled to pay a lasting tribute of respect to our departed comrade. When the call of our country was heard Comrade (deceased) answered; self was forgotten in the cause of the greater good. Bravely they marched away with the abiding faith in their God, their country and their flag.

The red of our country's flag was made redder by their heroism; the white more stainlessly pure by the motives which impelled them; and, in the starry field of our nation's glorious banner, the blue has been glorified by the service they have given for American ideals.

Parade rest. (Detail responds.) The Chaplain will invoke the divine blessing. (Detail hold caps over heart with right hand.)

Chaplain: (May extemporize or repeat): "O God, *Creator of all*, we here extend these final earthly tributes to our beloved comrade. Accept our prayers in behalf of the soul of *Your departed servant*. Welcome them to *Your* house to rest in peace. Look with mercy upon the loved ones bereaved by their passing. Comfort and console them through *Your* own tenderness. These things we ask humbly in *Your* name.

Amen.

(All repeat Amen. Replace caps.)

(A choir, quartet or soloist may sing "Sleep, Soldier Boy" or other appropriate song.)

Commander: One by one, as the years roll on, we are called upon to fulfill these sad duties of respect to our departed comrades.

Attention! Officers of _____ Post _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, you will now perform the last duties of your stations.

Junior Vice-Commander: (Faces the casket, approaches it, stands before blue field of the casket flag in such position that their back is not toward the assembly. They fold back the blue corner of the flag to leave bare a portion of the casket. Then places the evergreen upon the casket and declares so all will hear):

"On behalf of _____ Post _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I present this evergreen tribute as a symbol of our undying love for our comrade."

(Junior Vice-Commander salutes casket and returns to their place in the line.)

Senior Vice-Commander: (Takes same position at the casket. Laying white flowers upon casket and says): "I place these white flowers as a symbol of purity upon this casket, and may each future generation emulate the unselfish devotion to duty even to the last of our comrades."

(Senior Vice-Commander salutes casket and returns to their place in line.)

Officer of the Day: (Takes same position at the casket. Laying wreath upon casket and says):

"We place this wreath as a last token of affection from their comrades-in-arms upon the casket of our departed comrade and crown their mortal dust with this symbol of victory."

(Officer of the Day salutes casket and returns to their place in line.)

Commander: (Takes same position at the casket. Placing small Flag of the United States upon casket and says): "On behalf of our glorious republic, for whose integrity our comrades of the Veterans of Foreign Wars enlisted and served, we place upon their casket this emblem of our country, a country whose arms are always open to shelter the oppressed."

(Commander then replaces folded corner of the casket flag, laying it over the evergreen, flower, wreath and flag symbols. Commander salutes casket and returns to their place in line.)

Chaplain: (Delivers brief address extemporaneously or repeats the following):

We come today to honor the memory of one who offered their life as a service to our Nation's cause and to our God. Proudly we remember their service. Because of men and women like our comrade, we live in a land of freedom, peace and justice. May our ceremonies of today deepen our reverence for our honored comrade and friend.

We believe that our comrade is now in the hands of our Heavenly Father, the Supreme Commander and Judge of all. We lay our comrade's body (ashes) to rest. Let us cherish their virtues and learn to imitate them. Let each of us be loyal and faithful to our remaining missions in life that we too will be able to join in that grand fraternity which is on earth and in heaven, and remains unbroken.

We realize how futile mere words are to express our deep and abiding sympathy in our loss. May we be comforted by the assurance that our comrade, friend and loved one is at rest in God's eternal peace, and abides in a place where all burdens are lifted and there is no more sickness and pain.

Comrades, let us now pledge ourselves anew to provide support and protection for those left behind; to pick up the banner laid down by our comrade, and continue their march to face the challenges that confronts us in this life, and may our God always be our companion and guide.

Commander: This concludes our service.

(They remove the casket flag and fold it in the regulation manner illustrated in the VFW Ritual.)

(If the body is to be cremated immediately following the services, the Commander at conclusion of Chaplain's closing remarks—goes to the head of the casket and the Officer of the Day goes to its foot. They remove the casket flag and fold it in the regulation manner illustrated on page 97 of the VFW Ritual. Commander and Officer of the Day return to their places in line with Commander carrying folded flag.)

Commander: This concludes our service.

(Commander gives orders necessary to return members of the detail to their seats.)

(Commander presents casket flag to the nearest of kin.)

(If the above symbolic ceremony is held in a chapel it should not be repeated in the burial service. In that case, the VFW action at place of interment is described under the headings Committal and Benediction.)

VFW BURIAL RITUAL

Unless the deceased veteran was an active member of the VFW the symbolic flower part of the service, paragraphs numbered 1 to 4, inclusive, page 108, will not be used.

Commander: Attention!

We are here assembled to pay a lasting tribute of respect to our departed comrade.

When the call of our country was heard, Comrade (name of deceased) answered; self was forgotten in the cause of the greater good. Bravely they marched away with an abiding faith in their God, their country and their flag.

The red of our country's flag was made redder still by their heroism; the white, more stainlessly pure by the motives which impelled him; and, in the starry field of our nation's glorious banner, the blue has been glorified by the service they have given for American ideals.

Parade, rest.

The Chaplain will invoke the divine blessing.

PRAYER

Chaplain: Almighty and Merciful God and Father of all, in the midst these monuments of the dead we see Your hand of mercy.

In the depth of our sorrow, we realize the truth (**) that though we die, we shall live again in the shelter of Your love. As comrade after comrade departs this life, we march on with our ranks growing thinner. Help us to be faithful to You and to one another.

We ask that You would look in mercy upon all of us here assembled and with Your compassion and tenderness, console and comfort those bereaved by the hand of death. Give them the "oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

Heavenly Father, bless our Nation with freedom, peace and righteousness, and through Your Sovereign and Holy Spirit's favor, may we all meet at last before Your throne of Grace in Heaven. And to Your Great Name shall be praise forever and ever. Amen.

(** At a Christian burial: "of the inspired words: 'I am the resurrection and life; he that believes in me, though he were dead yet shall be live.'")

(All comrades repeat Amen and assume position of "at ease".) (If a choir, quartet or soloist is present an appropriate hymn will be sung, preferably "Sleep, Soldier Boy," as indicated in paragraph 8, general rules, page 2.)

(Commander will read the following or they may extemporize):

Commander: One by one, as the years roll on, we are called upon to fulfill these sad duties of respect to our departed comrades. The present, full of the cares that beset all nations whether engaged in war or peace, fades away as we look back on the day this comrade left their home to defend their country. Imbued by a spirit of devotion and inspired by an undying love of their native land, they gladly went forth and joined with comrades both young and old to preserve our heritage of freedom.

We trust that the example set by our comrade will prove a glorious beacon to the youth of our country, who may be called to uphold the honor of our flag.

As the years roll on, we, too, shall have finished our fight, shall be laid to rest, and our souls follow the long column to the realms above, as all-enfolding death, hour by hour, shall mark HIS recruits.

Comrades, let us so live that when the Keeper of the Eternal Records shall have called our names for the last time, those we leave behind may say of us, as we say now of this comrade. "Here lies all that is mortal of a true- hearted comrade, and a fearless defender of their country and flag."

Commander: Officers, you will now perform the last duties of your stations.

1. Junior Vice Commander places a sprig of evergreen upon the casket and repeats: "On behalf of _____ Post No. _____, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I present this tribute as a symbol of our undying love for our comrade."
2. Senior Vice Commander, placing white flowers upon the casket, repeats: "I place this symbol of purity upon this casket, and may each future generation emulate the unselfish devotion to duty of the lowliest of our comrades."
3. Officer of the day, placing a laurel wreath upon the casket, repeats: "We place this last token of affection from their comrades in arms upon the casket of our departed comrade and crown their mortal dust with this symbol of victory."
4. Commander, gently holding up one corner of the regulation flag covering the casket, or placing a small Flag of the United States on the casket if there is none on it already, repeats: "On behalf of our glorious republic, for whose integrity our comrade of the Veterans of Foreign Wars enlisted and served, we place upon their casket this emblem of our country, a country whose arms are always open to shelter the oppressed."

(If the casket is to be interred the small flag if used, will be placed at the head of the grave—never to be covered with earth.)

(Address by Chaplain. The Chaplain shall here repeat the following, or may make an address of the same length):

We come today to honor the memory of one who offered their life as a service to our Nation's cause and to our God. Proudly we remember their service. Because of men and women like our comrade, we live in a land of freedom, peace and justice. May our ceremonies of today deepen our reverence for our honored comrade and friend. We believe that our comrade is now in the hands of our Heavenly Father, the Supreme Commander and Judge of all. We lay our comrade's body (ashes) to rest. Let us cherish their virtues and learn to imitate them. Let each of us be loyal and faithful to our remaining missions in life that we too will be able to join in that grand fraternity which is on earth and in heaven, and remains unbroken.

We realize how futile mere words are to express our deep and abiding sympathy in our loss. May we be comforted by the assurance that our comrade, friend and loved one is at rest in God's eternal peace, and abides in a place where all burdens are lifted and there is no more sickness and pain.

Comrades, let us now pledge ourselves anew to provide support and protection for those left behind; to pick up the banner laid down by our comrade, and continue their march to face the challenges that confronts us in this life, and may our God always be our companion and guide.

COMMITTAL

The Chaplain or minister in charge will then recite the following committal service:

The Master *said*: " I am the *Resurrection and the Life. Anyone who believes in Me will live, even after dying.*"

(This paragraph to be used at discretion of Post.)

Dust shall be returned to dust and the spirit to God who gave it.

Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust and the spirit to Spirit, that *watches* over the lives and souls of men and women. Amen.

All Comrades: Amen.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless and keep us. The Lord make His face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us. And may the Lord lift up his countenance upon us and give us His peace. And may the blessings of Heaven be on all our comrades wherever they are dispersed in our world. Amen.

At the grave, the Commander gives the signal to the firing squad, which fires three volleys. See detailed instructions. Commander then commands right hand salute.

The bugles sound Taps; the Post colors only, drooping full, fly over the grave. At last note Commander calls "attention."

Military regulations governing the conduct of a military funeral provide that at conclusion of Taps body bearers shall fold the interment flag and present it to the cemetery representatives or funeral director for transmittal to the next of kin. See last paragraph of instructions to body bearers and Plate 9 for proper instructions for folding the flag.

When the graveside services are concluded the Chaplain remains to render any assistance required by the family. The band, escort and firing party, color guard, body bearers, honorary pallbearers and other VFW comrades leave the scene.

SPECIAL NOTICE

When services are held elsewhere than at the grave (without burial) formations will be maintained as nearly as possible to those of the foregoing burial ritual, and the Commander shall omit the committal service beginning with the words "The Master saith."

A short, appropriate address should be given by the Chaplain followed by the benediction, or an assisting minister may give this address and benediction.

Note: The Commander and their staff must exercise judgment to fit the services in this Ritual to the occasion in all instances, varying only as exceptional circumstances demand. If the prescribed formation cannot be used owing to setting of the casket the Commander will inform their members where to take station before the exercises begin. No man should take a part unless they can render it creditably. Rather appoint a substitute who can do it well. If volley firing is objected to omit that part of the ceremonial. Always conform to the wishes of the relatives in charge. Let no mistake mar the solemnity of this beautiful service.

Every Post should have on hand at all times copies of the VFW memorial song, "Sleep, Soldier Boy," for use at all funerals and on all commemorative occasions. Get copies from National Headquarters, high or low key or for mixed quartet.

CREMATED REMAINS

When remains are cremated and the ashes interred with military honors, the foregoing instructions will govern, with necessary modifications.

Military regulations provide that where the cremated remains are carried by hand one *person* will be detailed to carry the receptacle containing the ashes. Four other *persons* will function as bearers of the Flag of the United States.

When the receptacle containing the ashes is carried from the conveyance into the chapel, from the chapel to the conveyance, or from the conveyance to the grave, the flag bearers follow with the flag folded in proper manner and carried by the leading flag bearer on the right.

When the receptacle has been placed on the stand before the chancel of the chapel, or in the conveyance, the folded flag is placed beside the receptacle. If the caisson is equipped with casket container for the receptacle, the open flag is laid upon the container as prescribed for a casket.

When remains of the deceased are conducted to a crematory and the ashes are to be interred with military honors later, the ceremony consists only of the escort to the crematory. Arms are presented as the remains are borne into the crematory. The firing of volleys and the sounding of Taps are omitted. However, if the funeral ceremony is held at the crematory and no further military honors are anticipated, the volleys may be fired and Taps sounded at discretion of the commanding officer.

CEREMONY FOR DRAPING CHARTER

After motion from floor, or Commander requests ceremony:

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will obtain drape in preparation for draping charter.

(Officer of Day obtains drape, proceeds to the altar and salutes Commander.)

Commander: (Raps gavel twice) Members rise and face charter at attention.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will now drape our charter in memory of our beloved Comrade _____ who has passed on.

(Officer of Day proceeds to charter and drapes charter.)

Commander: (While Officer of Day is draping charter) By so doing, we as members of _____ Post _____ offer solemn tribute to our departed comrade.

(Officer of Day returns to the altar. Salutes Commander. Retires to station.)

Commander: Comrades, Salute—Two.

Commander: Comrade Chaplain (Comrades parade rest.)

Chaplain: (Proceeds to altar. Gives following prayer): Eternal God, let Your mercy rest upon us as we, with grateful affection, remember Comrade____(name)____, who has departed this life. We thank You for their days upon earth and the joy that they brought. May our remembrance of them live

long among us and be to us a source of guidance and strength. Give to those who miss them most deeply, wells of consolation from which to draw comfort, and enable us to be Your ministers of mercy to them in their time of need. Amen.

(Commander raps gavel once to seat members.)

(VFW 62nd National Convention, Resolution 183, mandate provides that—"charters should be draped for 30 days for all deceased comrades.") After the 30 days an Undraping of the Charter ceremony may be performed:

After motion from floor, or Commander requests ceremony:

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will prepare to undrape the charter.

(Officer of Day proceeds to the altar and salutes Commander.)

Commander: (Raps gavel twice) Members rise and face charter at attention.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will now undrape our charter which was draped last month for Comrade _____.

Officer of the Day proceeds to undrape charter)

Commander: Comrades, Salute—Two.

PARADE REGULATIONS

Formations as shown on Plate 10.

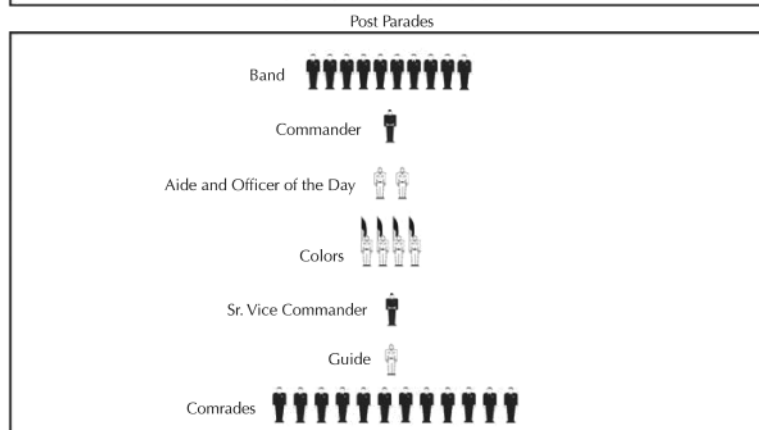
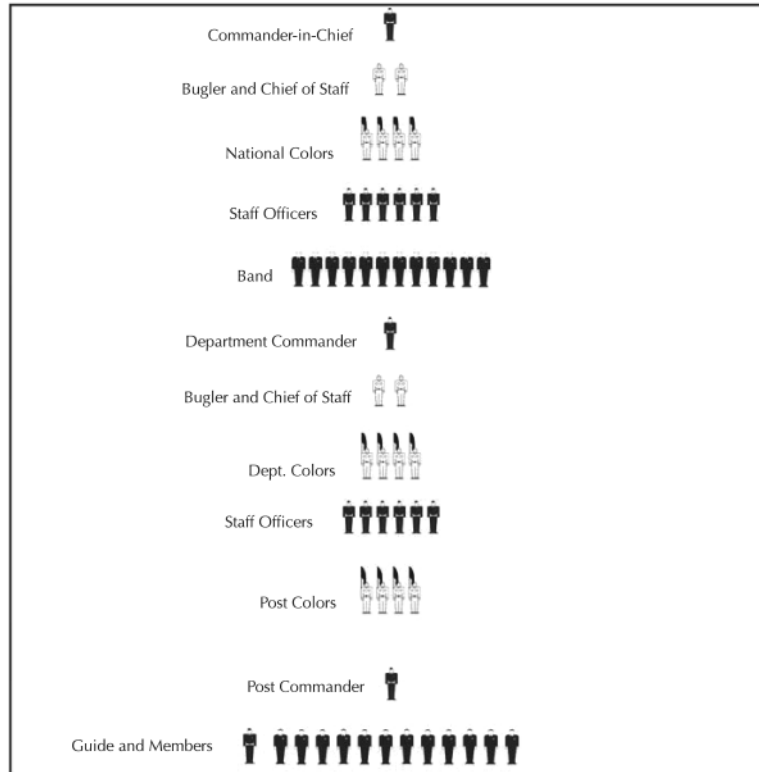
At National Conventions, Department right of line will be in alphabetical order. Post standards and Posts in numerical order in each Department.

At Department Conventions, officers and colors take same stations as for National officers, followed by band, Post Standards and Posts in numerical order, as above.

Armed guards should always flank flags.

The Flag of the United States should always fly to marching right of all other flags or standards; or the Flag of the United States should be centered and several paces in front of all other flags or standards.

Plate No. 10



PARADE INFORMATION: Top illustration shows National and Department lineup. Lower diagram shows Post formation.

If units of the United States Armed Forces participate in a parade they usually precede veterans' organizations and other units, in the order of precedence prescribed by current directives of the Secretary of Defense.

Uniformed marchers precede those in civilian dress.

Post officers command companies and platoons, according to seniority.

Comrades should keep their places in line from beginning of parade to finish, unless physically unable to do so.

HONORING VISITING OFFICERS

Honors prescribed here may be extended by Posts to visiting National or Department officers. If the visitor is present before the meeting opens, they should be detained in an adjacent room by a host comrade or reception committee until the Post is ready to receive them. Then they are brought to the anteroom. If a visiting officer should arrive unannounced while Post is in session, they remain in the anteroom. From this point the procedure is identical in both cases.

The sentinel advises the guard that Comrade _____ is present. The guard goes to altar, salutes the Commander and announces the visitor.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will retire to the anteroom and remain with Comrade _____ until notified to enter.

(Officer of day retires.)

Commander: Comrades, you will take your stations for giving the honors of comradeship.

(Bugler may sound officers' call. All comrades take stations as in "colors," see Plate No. 2, except color bearers who stand at attention on either side of the colors and, next to them, color guards with rifles at order arms.)

Commander: Guard, you will admit the officer of the day and visitor.

(Guard opens door.)

Commander: Attention!

(Officer of the day and visitor advance to altar. Officer of the Day takes station as if colors were at altar.)

Officer of Day: Comrade Commander, I have the honor to present to this Post, Comrade _____ (Gives name and title).

Commander: Comrades, you will give the honors of comradeship—Salute! One!

(All except color bearers come to salute, color guards present arms. Led by the Commander, all repeat in unison):

All: Comrade _____ (title), we greet you in the name of comradeship.

Commander: Ready, Two! Officer of the Day, you will escort Comrade _____ to my right.

(Officer of day does so and resumes their station.)

Commander: Comrades, resume stations!

(Commander introduces the visitor who then or later delivers their message. If the visitor retires before meeting closes, the Commander commands attention and directs officer of the day to accompany the visitor to the anteroom.)

TRIBUTE TO COMRADES -- P.O.W. OR M.I.A.

The Post room will be set theater fashion with the altar or small table at front center to receive the symbolic tributes.

The POW/MIA flag should be properly displayed.

Post officers in order of rank, or comrades representing them, will be seated in front row, right of center aisle. If the Auxiliary is to participate the officers or representatives will be seated in front row, left of center aisle.

The Officer of the Day or other proficient comrade will give the preliminary address and act as Master of Ceremonies during this ritual.

(Suggested opening address)

Officer of the Day: Honored guest, comrades, members of the Auxiliary and friends, the members of __Post # _____ Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, are assembled here to remember comrades who are being held as Prisoners of War or Missing in Action. We must not forget the sacrifices these comrades are still making and the suffering they are still enduring for us and our way of life.

They must remain alive in our minds and hearts until we know they have returned home to their loved ones or have been called to the bosom of Our Heavenly Father. We must continue to give moral support to their families who continue to suffer along with them.

Color Guard! Prepare to post Colors! All rise! Present Arms!

The Colors will enter by way of the center isle and be posted on each side of the altar. The bearers and guards will remain with the Colors during the ceremony.

Officer of the Day: Order Arms! Parade, rest! Uncover!

Chaplain: Almighty God and Everlasting Father, we praise and glorify You. Thank you for the many blessings You have bestowed upon our great Nation.

Father, we ask You to guide our missing comrades through every day and night. Give them unbound strength and courage to continue their efforts to survive and return home to their loved ones. If they perish, Lord, we ask You to welcome them to the place You have prepared for them where they will rest in eternal peace. Amen.

Officer of the Day: Let us all rededicate ourselves to the Flag of our Country by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Attention! Cover! Present Arms! (Officer of the Day will lead in the recitation of the pledge.) Order Arms! You may be seated. Before you is the Flag of the United States, the Flag of our Country for which our imprisoned and missing comrades are still suffering and dying. Look closely upon this beautiful symbol and listen to the words of our officers as they present

their symbolic tributes.

(The Officer of the Day will introduce Post officers in turn. They will come forward and hold the symbol in view of the audience while speaking.)

The symbols are: Commander - laurel wreath; Chaplain - evergreen sprig; Officer of the Day - blue flowers; Senior Vice Commander - white flowers; Junior Vice Commander - red flowers

(When finished speaking, the officer will turn, place the symbol on the altar, salute and return to their seat.

If the Auxiliary is to participate, they will be introduced along with their counterpart of the Post. Each Auxiliary member, instead of the Post officer, will hold a symbol in view of the audience while the Post officer is speaking. Then both will turn, place the symbol, salute and return to their seats.)

Junior Vice Commander: The Flag of the United States reflects our imprisoned and missing comrades. The red stripes reflect their courage and willingness to sacrifice, even their lives if necessary. The red of our country's flag has been made redder by their heroism. Therefore, we place these red flowers to symbolize their courage and gallantry.

Senior Vice Commander: The white stripes symbolize the purity of purpose that our comrades have in serving under this beautiful flag. The white becomes more stainlessly pure by the motives which impel them. We place these white flowers as a reminder of their unselfish devotion to duty.

Officer of the Day: The blue of our flag symbolizes truth and fidelity and represents the desire of our missing comrades for peace and happiness throughout the world. Therefore, we place these blue flowers to symbolize the great love that our comrades have for our flag and our country.

Chaplain: As our Flag symbolizes undying love for our country, this evergreen tribute whose color is a symbol of life everlasting and signifies our undying love for our imprisoned and missing comrades.

Commander: As the Flag of the United States symbolizes victory over oppression for the living, so this laurel wreath symbolizes victory over death for those who have made the supreme sacrifice. Therefore, we place this last token of affection in honor of our missing comrades who have gone to their final reward.

(If the Auxiliary is participating, the OFFICER OF THE DAY will call for the Auxiliary Chaplain to offer the closing benediction. If not, they will call on the Post Chaplain.)

Officer of the Day: All rise! Uncover! Parade, rest!

Chaplain: Almighty God, we praise *You*, we glorify *You* and we thank *You* for sparing us from the grasp of our enemies. Grant us full understandings of the suffering being endured by our comrades who are being held as prisoners of war or are still missing.

We ask *Your* blessings upon them, that whatever comforts they are denied, whatever evil they must endure may *result in* their everlasting happiness.

Especially we *ask Your* support for their loved ones. May *Your* grace be with them always giving them the strength to do their daily tasks and the courage to meet the problems of life.

We pray for those missing comrades who have been called to *Your arms* that whatever justice they have been denied in this life has been granted them a hundredfold. Amen.

Officer of the Day: Color Guard! Prepare to retire the Colors! Comrades attention! Cover! Present Arms!

The National Anthem will be sung, then the Colors will be retired.

Officer of the Day: Order Arms! This concludes our ceremony.