

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS GUIDANCE/AIDE MEMOIRE FOR FAMILIES

Sadly, it is a sombre fact that none of us are getting any younger and due to the wide ranging timespan of our beloved Type 42's in Service (38 years), it follows that we have a wide ranging cross section of ages, and as time progresses we can all be absolutely certain of one thing in Life....Put bluntly, we are all going to die!!.....

Every 'Passing' is of course an extremely sad and traumatic occasion for those left behind, whether it is expected or sudden, and while experiencing sadness, shock, grief, there is the added responsibility of sorting Financial & Legal matters, and of course The Funeral Arrangements, which can be a daunting and overwhelming duty.

As Serving or Ex-Serving Members of the Armed Forces, and specifically The Royal Navy, there are several Funeral 'Honours' to which we are entitled to conduct or can be bestowed, which I will attempt to highlight here. At all times, the Families wishes should be respected and delicacy & sensitivity should be the key words....

In these current times, though, Funerals are becoming perceived as not so much the maudlin grief filled occasions of the past, sorrowful events mourning the departure of a Loved One, although there will be, and should be this aspect, but also a Celebration of the Deceased's Life & Achievements.... A sizeable chunk of our Members' lives will have been spent Serving the Nation, HM The Queen & The Royal Navy.... It is felt that these years will have been memorable, sharing happy and sad times, with Shipmates that become lifelong Oppo's, and mostly with a sense of immense Pride..... It therefore follows that this Public Service should be recognised and celebrated....

Union Flag

Firstly, all who have served in The Armed Forces, however briefly, are entitled to have their coffin draped or 'Dressed' with The Union Flag, (Normally what is called a Repatriation Flag, with the Inglefield Clips and 'tail' removed)..... NB: Officially NOT the White Ensign.... The Funeral Director should be able to supply this, but there are sources available to The Type 42 Association to supply should difficulties be experienced..

Dressing The Coffin

The Deceased's cap (or a cap sourced of the same rank/rate they attained in the RN) may be placed on top of the coffin, and if an Officer or Warrant Officer, also a Royal Naval Sword... At a recent Gunnery Instructor's Funeral, his Pace Stick was placed on top of the coffin..... One wreath or bouquet may be placed on coffin...In order to facilitate these items, the coffin must have a flat lid, not a curved one as these will slide off...Again close liaison & communication should be maintained with the Funeral Director.....

Medals & Awards/Decorations

The Deceased's medals & awards may be carried by a Member of their Family, good friend or maybe a Cadet(?), on a velvet cushion or alternatively also placed atop the coffin..... Again the Funeral Director should be able to supply the cushion...

Close Liaison with Funeral Director/Officiating Clergy

The Next Of Kin will need to liaise closely with the Officiating Clergy & Funeral Director and ensure that these are made aware of a requirement for Funeral Honours.... Both these officials should have experience of such matters, but The Type 42 Association Parade Marshal or Chaplains can advise if required...

Standard Bearers

Standard Bearers of various Associations to which the Deceased belonged can attend the Cortège, and SLOW MARCH ahead of the hearse in an orderly Formation , depending on numbers at The Carry.... Examples of these are The Type 42 Association (who currently have 4 Regional Standards in commission, The National Southern Standard, Northern Standard, Scottish Standard and South Wales & Southwestern Standard), The Royal British Legion, The Royal Naval Association, The South Atlantic Medal Association , other Veteran's Associations and Cadet Forces with which the Deceased may have had connections..... They will NOT attend the Cortège on public roads, but rather on the approach to the Chapel at The Crematorium or the approach to the church.....The Standards will be draped with a Black Funeral Drape (a black bow tied at the top)..... They will then fall in adjacent to the entrance of the Chapel/Church as the coffin is taken from the hearse, and then march in front into the chapel/church and 'peel off' to the side of the Catafalque (in Crematoriums) or trestles (in a church)...Once the coffin is in place they will then Order Standards, and when approaching The Committal proceedings, will Carry Standards & and at an appointed signal from the Clergy, will bring their Standards to the Dip, bowing heads.... Observe a Silence and if attending Go back to The Carry at Bugler's Reveille.... The Standard Bearers will need to make contact with The Funeral Director & The Clergy prior to the Service to discuss the logistical aspects of this Honour....

The Bearer Party

The Bearer Party are the Coffin Bearers, sometimes (incorrectly) called Pall Bearers. In addition to the Coffin Bearers, The Pall Bearers marched outside of them and held the Pall, which was a canopy above the coffin....For Senior Officers, Officers of the same Rank form The Pall Bearers, although there is no requirement for a canopy.

The Bearer Party will comprise of six Bearers and I/C at the head of the coffin. Ideally, should be 3 pairs of equal descending size with the tallest pair at Deceased's head either side... If there are steps to negotiate, there may also be a Bearer at the foot of the coffin to assist....If the coffin is expected to be particularly heavy eight Bearers may be required.....The Funeral Directors will provide Bearers as part of their Service, however, volunteers can be drawn from the Deceased's old Shipmates, Association Members or Family Members or in the case of Serving Personnel, made up from their contemporaries....This is also recognised to be a Funeral 'Honour', and although some may be reluctant to perform this task, for fear of fluffing it or worse dropping the coffin, or too upset to

perform the task, the weight is shared, adrenalin & pride will ensure that they do their best for their Oppo and it is only a maximum of 15 minutes of their lives to pay their ultimate respects!! However, a practise (going through the motions & orders) away from Mourners in a discreet area is the minimum requirement, and ideally detailed training and supervision by a serving or ex Gunner Instructor is essential. Some Funeral Directors insist that Coffin Bearers attend instruction at the Parlour some days prior to the Funeral for Manual Lifting and H&S Compliance!!..... This in most cases will prove to be impractical and it will be up to the i/c to gently press gang Bearers on the day...There will be those who offer their services willingly prior to the day, but due to travelling, work commitments etc it is most unlikely that an opportunity will arise to train beforehand, therefore it is preferred that Bearers are made up of Gunners or at least those with previous experience and made of strong stuff (Both emotionally and physically!!). However, exceptionally, I am able to organise formal training at The State Ceremonial Training Section at HMS COLLINGWOOD with a dummy weighted coffin if absolutely necessary, but again the practical implications of assembling all at the same time probably negates this. If achievable, the service can be arranged.

The Bearers will march up to hearse once in position outside Chapel/Church. The Funeral Director will open back of hearse, unscrew retaining screws and the Bearer Party will 'Launch' coffin, 'Lift' coffin onto their shoulders, and turn so that Deceased is going into Chapel/Church feet first....They then Slow March, stepping off with 'inside foot' to stop the coffin rocking....Halt, Inwards Turn, Lower and 'Launch' coffin onto Catafalque...Additional Trestle Bearers will be required if in church to handle trestles....

Piping Party / Piper/Bugler

If of Scottish descent, a Piper may be considered. The Piper will play and march in front of the Hearse and may play a Lament at the Funeral Service. The Funeral Director will probably have a contact, although this will be at an extra charge.

Another consideration is to Pipe the 'Still' as the Cortège arrives. Service and Ex Service Mourners can form a Guard Of Honour either side of the roadway and come to Attention, then as the Coffin is taken into Chapel/Church. The 'Carry On' can then be piped and Mourners make their way into Service.

The services of a Bugler or Trumpeter can be secured to play The 'Last Post' & 'Reveille', in between which a One Minute Silence is observed...The Funeral Director, Clergy or Veteran's Association may be able to help source Bugler/Trumpeter, perhaps a Cadet, Local Band or The British Legion or RNA may be able to supply? This is normally at a charge, it maybe just expenses or a flat rate. Recent experience was a charge of £50 for an RL Trumpeter. Again close liaison with the Clergy is required for their 'cue'.

Service and Ex-Service Mourners

The dress for Mourners is dependent on the families' wishes. Some Funerals now discourage black sombre attire and prefer bright colourful clothes in order to celebrate the Deceased's life & make the occasion as joyful it is possible for Funeral to be...If however it is the wish that Military Honours be conferred, Service Mourners are to wear full No 1B's with Full Size Medals, and Ex-Service personnel smart Lounge Suit, black tie & Full Size Medals....T42A Association Members Blazers, Grey Trousers, T42A Tie, Blazer badge etc and Full Size Medals.... Only WO1's and above wear mourning bands

Music & Order Of Service

The musical content can be many & varied according to the Families' wishes and the Deceased's tastes and favourites...From a Royal Naval Military Funeral Honours point of view, 'Eternal Father' (The Royal Navy Hymn) is a 'must'....Other Hymns to be considered are 'O God Our Help In Ages Past' 'Jerusalem', and other rousing Hymns, as well as somewhere in the proceedings 'Heart Of Oak', possibly on completion of the Service. The Royal Navy Prayer and Psalm 105(?) are also considerations.

The Order Of Service

The Front Cover may have the Deceased's Name and a photo of them in uniform?

Summary

Above are some considerations that go to bestow Military Honours to an Ex Service person's Funeral and to pay respects and acknowledge their considerable contribution to serving in the Armed Forces. All, some or a mixture of civil and Military protocols are suitable. The idea is not to overwhelm the Family and to be mindful of and to sensitively and delicately be aware of what is obviously a distressing time....However, in my experience, if done properly, Families have been absolutely been bowled over with Pride and immensely appreciative of the input of Military Honours bestowed. Any

?’s contact Bish 1 Paul Miles-Knight or myself, Parade Marshal Dean Deakins.

Burial Of Ashes At Sea

There is also a facility to bury Ashes At Sea run by St Ann’s Church in Portsmouth Dockyard at OSB in The Solent. Every Wednesday a launch goes out with an RN Chaplain and a short service is conducted and the urn committed to the deep....A maximum of 6 mourners and special requirements are necessary for the casket/urn to sink and comply with Marpol regulations....Contact The Verger St Ann’s Church HM Dockyard Portsmouth

Dean Deakins

Parade Marshal

T42A Association