

Military Funerals

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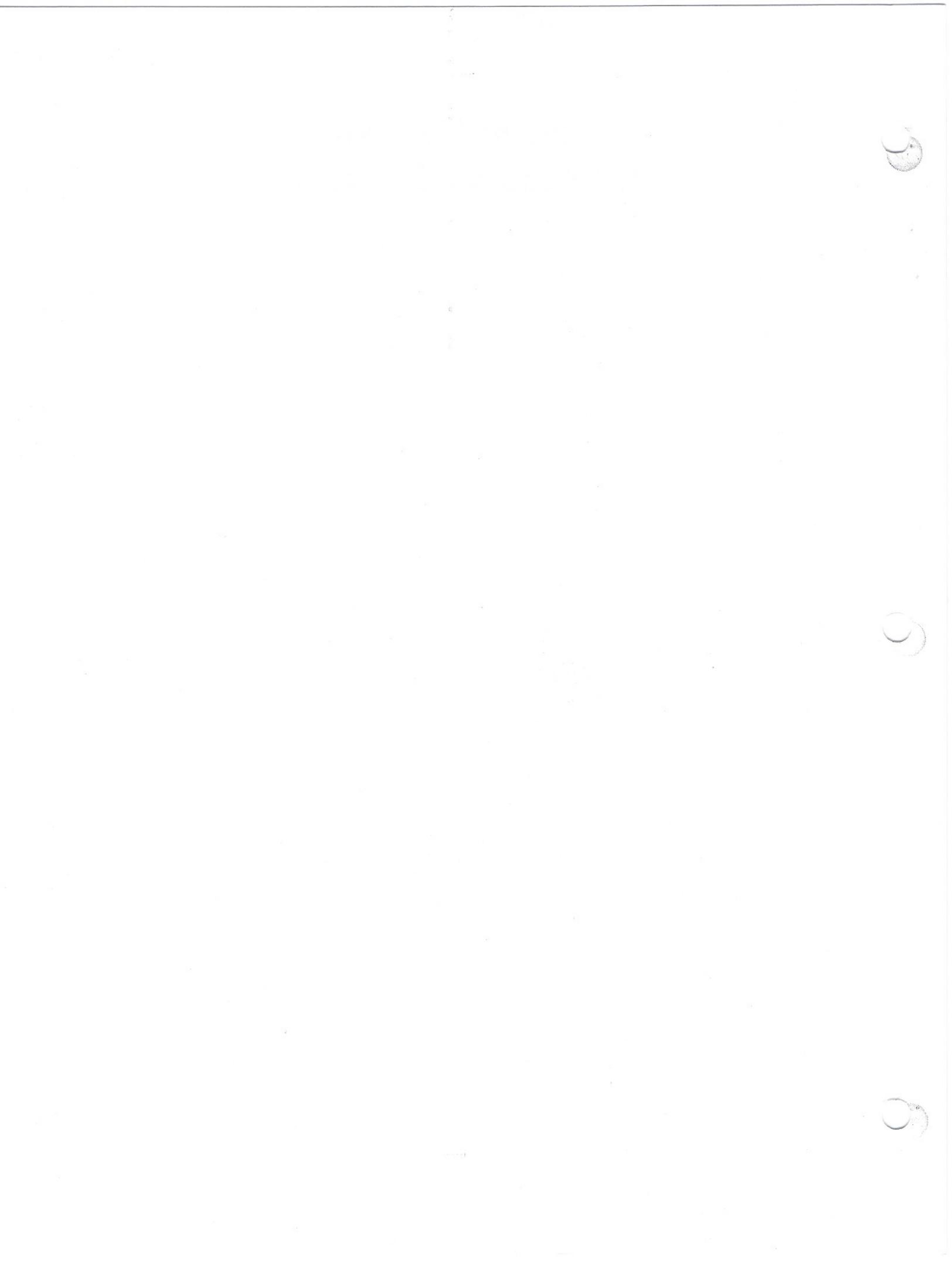
9

Table of Contents For Military Funerals

The Military Funeral

Flag Folding Ceremony

Flag Fold Positions



The Military Funeral

Also see Tab 1, *Civil Air Patrol Unit Honor Guard Program*, Chapter 7 and Attachment 1

The MILITARY FUNERAL CEREMONY is based on customs and traditions that have developed through the years. The ceremony demonstrates the nation's recognition of the debt it owes for the services and sacrifices of the members of the armed forces.

The casket is covered with the American flag. It is usually transported to the cemetery on a caisson, and is carried from the caisson to the grave by six military body bearers. In addition to the body bearers, honorary pallbearers, when designated, march to the cemetery alongside or behind the caisson.

At the cemetery, the casket is placed over the grave and the body bearers hold the flag-pall waist high over the casket. After the chaplain reads the committal service, a firing party fires three volleys. A bugler sounds "Taps," and the military funeral is completed. The body bearers then fold the flag, and it is presented to the next of kin.

These basic elements are the foundation of all military funerals, whether last rites are being conducted for a private or seaman, or final honors are being paid at the grave of an admiral or general.

Military funerals are divided into three classes:

- With chapel service, followed by the march to the grave or place of local disposition with the prescribed escort.
- Without chapel service, the funeral procession forming at the entrance (or at a point within reasonable distance) of the cemetery.
- With graveside services only.

FUNERAL WITH CHAPEL SERVICE

Before the service begins, the funeral escort is formed in line facing the chapel. The band forms on the flank toward the direction of march.

Members of the immediate family, relatives, and friends of the deceased are seated in the chapel before the casket is taken in. Chapel ushers ensure that a sufficient number of front seats on the right side of the chapel facing the altar are reserved for the immediate family. The two front pews on the left are reserved for the honorary pallbearers. If body bearers are used to carry the casket into position inside the chapel, seats are reserved for them at the rear of the chapel.

The conveyance bearing the remains to the chapel should arrive a short time before the hour set for the service. Since the casket normally is covered with the national colors, the escort is called to attention and the escort commander salutes as the conveyance arrives.

When all is in readiness to move the casket into the chapel, the escort commander brings the escort to *present arms*. At the first note of the hymn, the casket is removed from the conveyance by the body bearers and carried between the ranks of the honorary pallbearers, if any, into the chapel. The escort is then brought to order and given *at ease*.

At the conclusion of the chapel service, the body bearers follow the honorary pallbearers, or, if there are none, the body bearers follow the chaplain in a column of twos as they carry the casket to the entrance of the chapel. When honorary pallbearers are present, they form an aisle from the entrance of the chapel to the conveyance caisson or hearse) and uncover or salute as prescribed.

FUNERAL WITHOUT CHAPEL SERVICE

When the funeral is without chapel service, the escort usually forms at or near the entrance to the cemetery. The officer in charge supervises the transfer of the casket from the hearse to the caisson or makes provision for the hearse to be included in the procession from the point of origin to the grave site.

While the casket is being transferred, the escort is brought to *present arms*. The family and friends remain in their cars during the transfer of the casket.

GRAVESIDE SERVICE

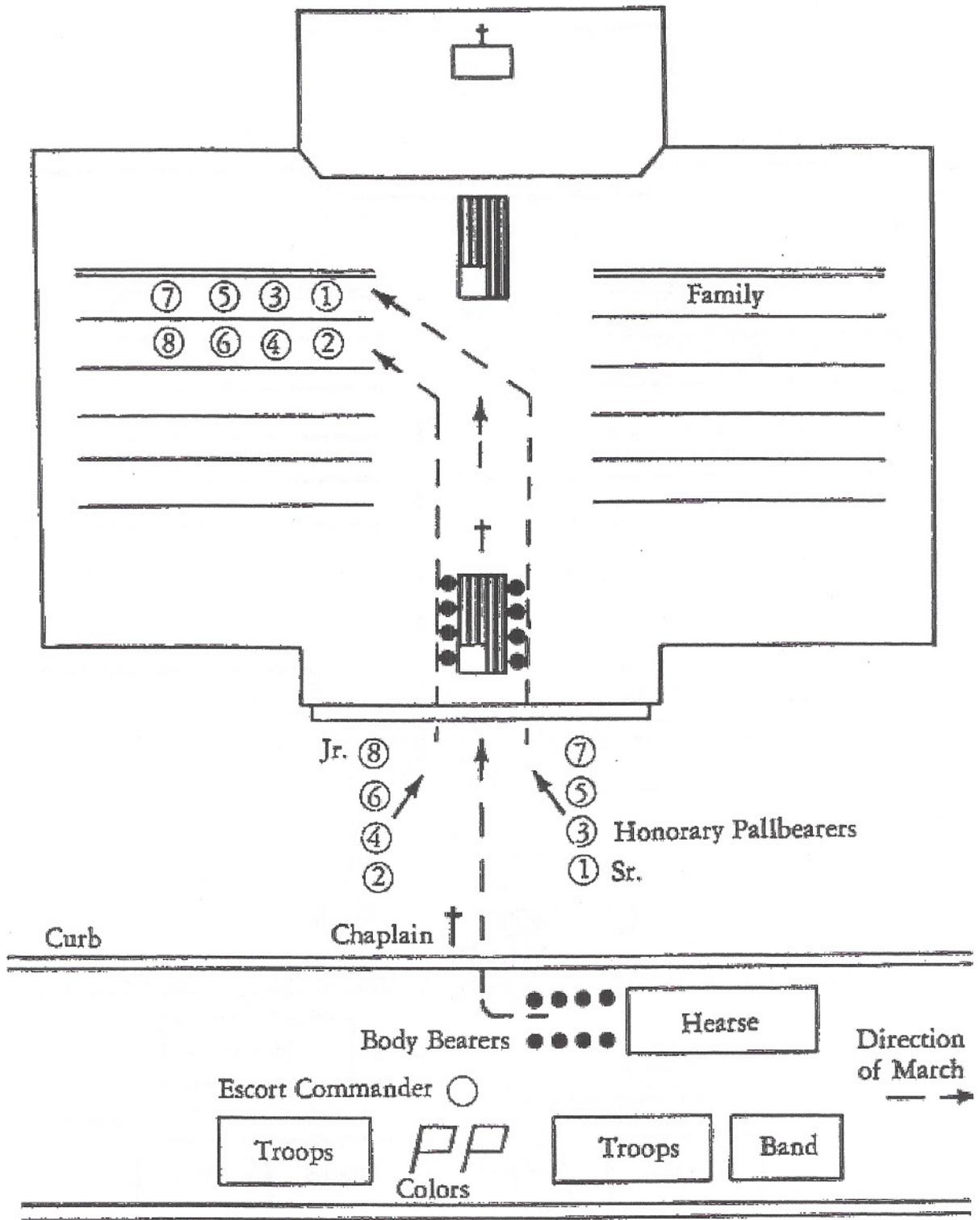
The military elements (chaplain, body bearers, firing squad, and bugler) participating in a graveside service are in position before the arrival of the remains.

The leader of the firing squad gives the appropriate orders for the firing of three volleys, and the bugler sounds "Taps" immediately upon completion of the last volley. The senior body bearer gives the order to march off after the flag has been presented to the next of kin.

CREMATION

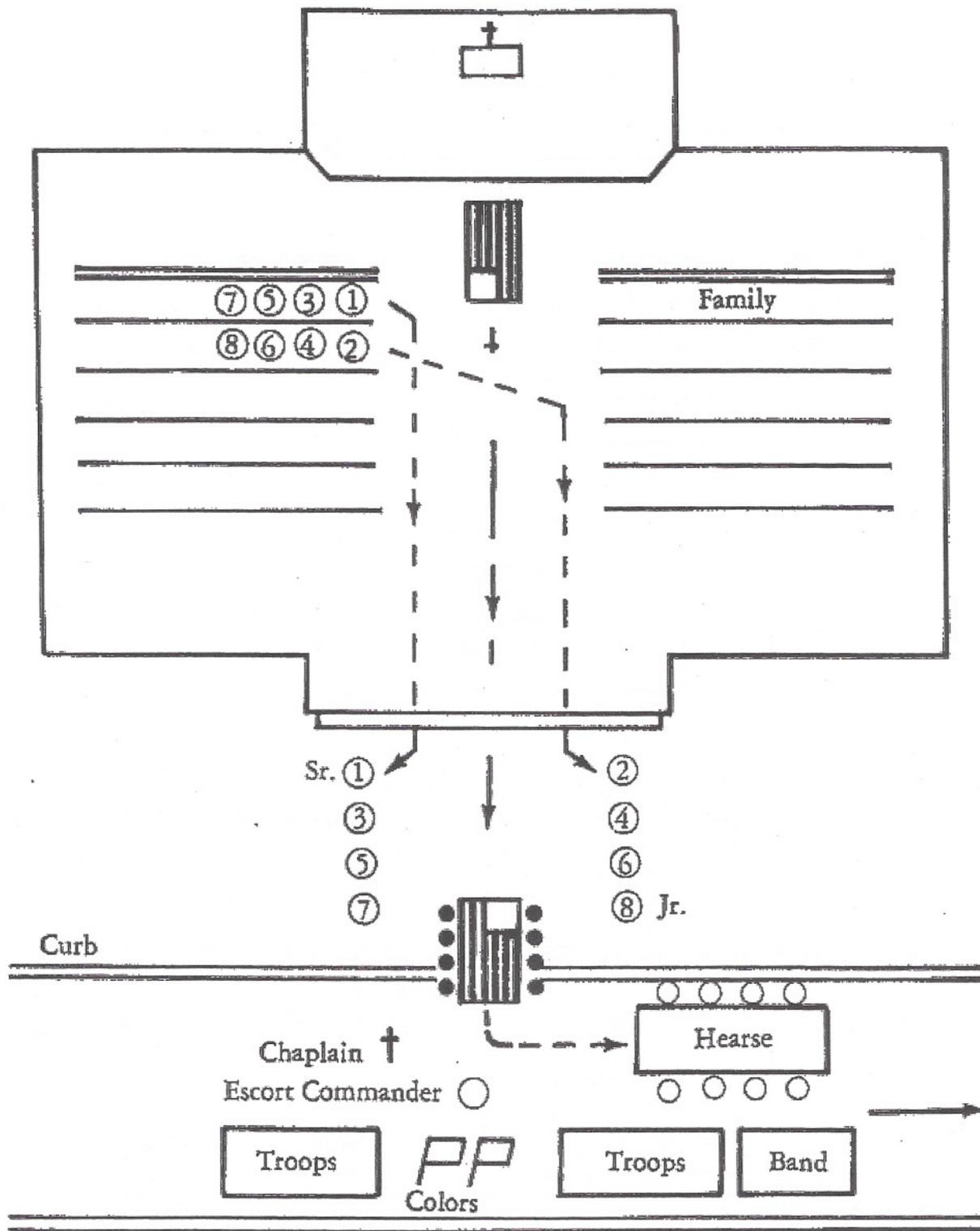
For all phases of the funeral where the receptacle containing the cremated remains is carried by hand, one body bearer will be designated to do so. Four men detailed as flagbearers will follow the receptacle when it is carried from the conveyance into the chapel., from the chapel to the conveyance, or from the conveyance to the grave. The flag is folded and is carried by the leading flagbearer on the right.

When the receptacle has been placed on a 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 a casket container for the receptacle, the open flag is laid upon the container as prescribed for a casket.



Entering the chapel

Honorary pallbearers salute while honors are being rendered; then they fall in behind the casket to enter the chapel.



Leaving the chapel

Honorary pallbearers precede the casket out of the chapel and take positions in reverse of the ones they took before the service, as indicated. They salute while escort renders honors and hold the salute until the band ceases playing; then they take positions on either side of the hearse or caisson. (If riding, they proceed to cars ahead of the chaplain's car.)

CANNON SALUTE

The funeral of a flag or general officer (active or retired) which takes place at or near a military installation will be marked with the number of minute guns to which the officer was entitled. These will be fired at noon on the day of the funeral.

The cannon salute corresponding to the grade of the deceased will be fired immediately after the benediction, followed by three volleys of artillery, guns firing simultaneously, or three volleys of musketry.

AVIATION PARTICIPATION

When there is aviation participation in a military funeral, it is timed so that the airplanes appear over the procession while the remains are being taken to the grave.

When the funeral is that of an aviator, it is customary for the airplanes to fly in a normal tactical formation less one aircraft, indicating the vacancy resulting from the loss of the deceased.

FRATERNAL OR PATRIOTIC ORGANIZATIONS

A fraternal or military organization of which the deceased was a member may take part in the funeral service with the consent of the immediate family of the deceased.

When the ritual is military or semi-military, the rites begin immediately upon the conclusion of the military religious service. If the ritual contains the firing of three volleys and the sounding of "Taps," the military firing bugler plays at the appropriate time.

SPECIAL MILITARY FUNERAL

A special military funeral is held for the following dignitaries:

- Commander in Chief
- Secretary of Defense
- Deputy and former Secretary of Defense
- Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force
- Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Five-Star Generals and Admirals
- Chief of Staff, U.S. Army
- Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force
- Chief of Naval Operations
- Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps
- Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard
- Other personages specifically designated by the Secretary of Defense
- Foreign military personnel when designated by the President

In each service, the commanding officer of the military or naval command or district in which the death occurs is the designated representative of the Secretary of Defense to make the necessary arrangements for the special funeral. Upon request, the Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps or the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard will perform this function for deceased personnel of their services.

When the death of a dignitary occurs in Washington, D.C., the remains are moved to a selected place of repose, attended by a Guard of Honor composed of members of all the armed services. When death occurs outside the city, the remains are transported to Washington for final honors; they are met at the point of arrival by a reception party and escorted to the place of repose.

After three days, the remains are escorted from the place of repose to the Amphitheater, Washington Cathedral, or the church where the funeral service will be held.

When burial is to be outside Washington, the remains are escorted to the point of departure, where honors are accorded.

FOLDING THE FLAG

The flag that covers the casket symbolizes the service of the deceased in the armed forces of the United States. The three volleys fired, according to ancient belief, scare away evil spirits. The playing of "Taps" over the grave marks the beginning of the last sleep and expresses confidence in an ultimate reveille to come.

The flag is folded immediately after the sounding of "Taps." The body bearers hold the flag at the pall over the grave and fold the flag in the accustomed manner. The senior body bearers hands it to the chaplain or the officer in charge, who in turn presents it to the next of kin or a representative of the family.

DUTIES OF PALLBEARERS

Active pallbearers, called body bearers, are six to eight men who carry the casket whenever necessary. At a military funeral, they are service personnel appointed by the command.

Honorary pallbearers are persons who have no duties to perform other than rendering appropriate honors to the deceased. They may be few, or more, in number, usually six or eight. They are appointed by the family of the deceased, usually from among the close friends or honored acquaintances of the deceased, or, at the request of the family, they may be appointed by the commanding officer.

The officer in charge of the funeral arrangements should give detailed information to the active and honorary pallbearers in advance of the funeral, including the uniform to be worn.

RULES TO REMEMBER

1. Mourning Flag: The colors are hoisted to the peak of the flagpole or staff, and then lowered halfway. Before the flag is removed, it is again raised to the peak. Where flags cannot be flown at half-staff, they should carry a black streamer from the spearhead halfway down the flag.
2. A casket is carried foot first, except that of a clergyman, which is carried head first.
3. When the flag is draped over the casket, the blue field is over the left shoulder of the deceased.
4. The cap and sword of the deceased are never displayed on the flag-draped casket, but may be placed under it.
5. The bearer of the personal flag of a deceased general or flag officer marches in front of the hearse or caisson.
6. The national ensign is never dipped at a funeral, but a unit or battalion flag is dipped when appropriate.
7. The word *pall* denotes the flag held at waist level, stretched taut, and kept even at all points while being held.
8. Military funerals are rarely postponed on account of bad weather.
9. The distinction between *grave site* and *graveside* is grave site is the section of the cemetery where the funeral will take place; graveside is the lot in which the burial takes place.
10. At a military funeral, service personnel wear the prescribed uniform with mourning sleeve bands. At a nonmilitary funeral, men wear dark business suits; mourning bands are no longer customary.
11. A chaplain at a military post or base is never given a fee for his services, but a note of appreciation for his help may be written by a member of the family.
12. A fee of \$50 to \$100 for an average funeral is given to a civilian clergyman. The fee is enclosed in a letter of appreciation and handed to him before the services.



FLAG FOLDING CEREMONY

The flag folding ceremony described by the Uniformed Services is a dramatic and uplifting way to honor the flag on special days, like Memorial Day or Veterans Day, and is sometimes used at retirement ceremonies.

Here is a typical sequence of the reading:

(Begin reading as Honor Guard or Flag Detail is coming forward).

The flag folding ceremony represents the same religious principles on which our country was originally founded. The portion of the flag denoting honor is the canton of blue containing the stars representing the states our veterans served in uniform. The canton field of blue dresses from left to right and is inverted when draped as a pall on a casket of a veteran who has served our country in uniform.

In the Armed Forces of the United States, at the ceremony of retreat the flag is lowered, folded in a triangle fold and kept under watch throughout the night as a tribute to our nation's honored dead. The next morning it is brought out and, at the ceremony of reveille, run aloft as a symbol of our belief in the resurrection of the body.

(Wait for the Honor Guard or Flag Detail to unravel and fold the flag into a quarter fold—resume reading when Honor Guard is standing ready.)

The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life.

The second fold is a symbol of our belief in the eternal life.

The third fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks who gave a portion of life for the defense of our country to attain a peace throughout the world.

The fourth fold represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in times of war for His divine guidance.

The fifth fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong."

The sixth fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The seventh fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.

The eighth fold is a tribute to the one who entered in to the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor mother, for whom it flies on mother's day.

The ninth fold is a tribute to womanhood; for it has been through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great have been molded.

The tenth fold is a tribute to father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born.

The eleventh fold, in the eyes of a Hebrew citizen, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon, and glorifies, in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The twelfth fold, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost.

When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost, reminding us of our national motto, "In God we Trust."

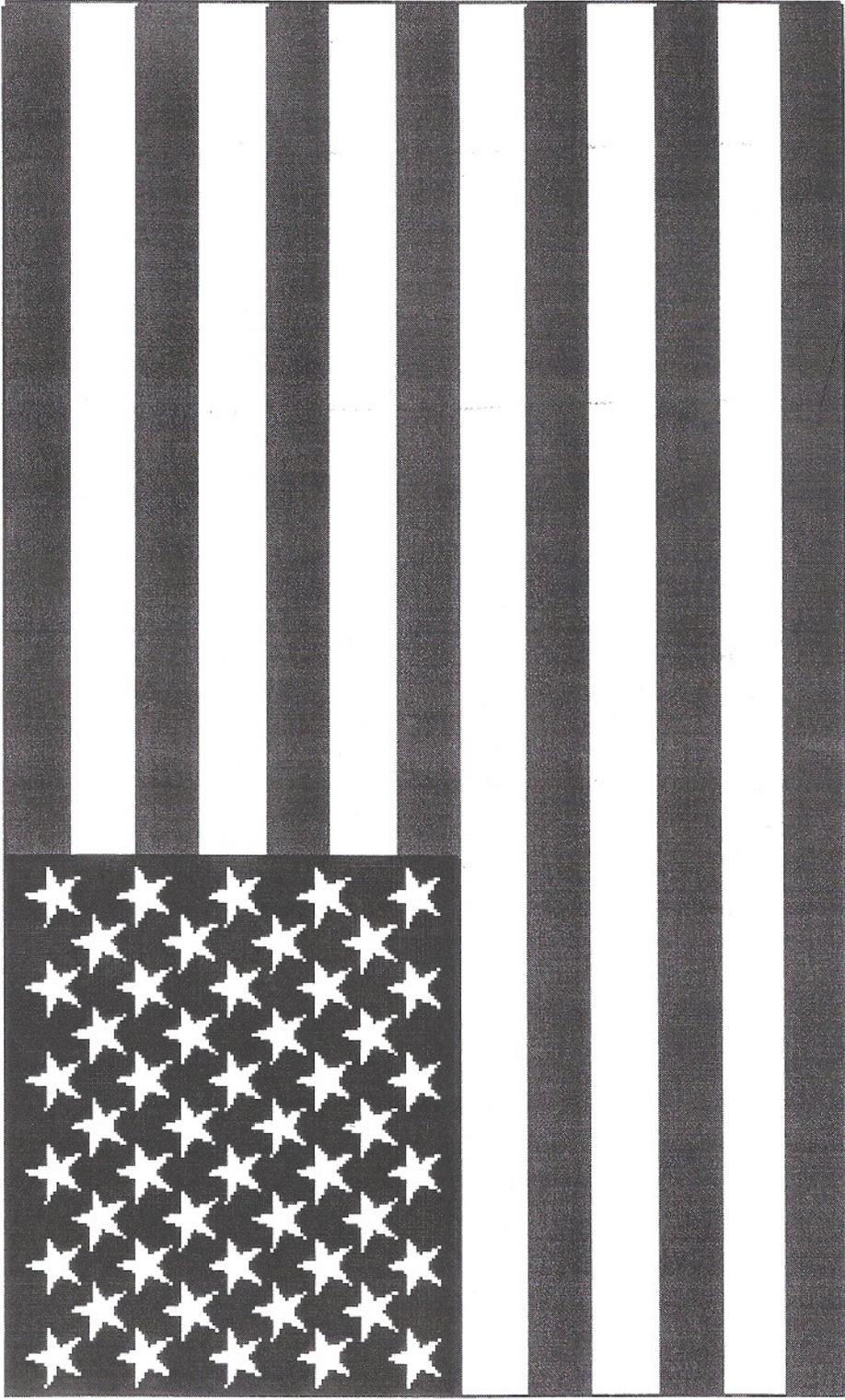
(Wait for the Honor Guard or Flag Detail to inspect the flag—after the inspection, resume reading.)

After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington and the sailors and marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for us the rights, privileges, and freedoms we enjoy today.

HAND-OFF

CROSS-MARK

FOLD



CARRY

MARK

NPB
NCOIC OF PALLBEARERS

