



Alexandria Police Department

Directive 11.26



HONOR GUARD

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11.26.01 POLICY AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the Honor Guard Unit is to provide the department with a select group of officers who will represent the department at all required special events, and to perform all drill and ceremonial duties at functions designated by the commander of the Special Operations Section with the approval of the Chief of Police.

11.26.02 DEFINITIONS

Full Honors – Provided at the discretion of the Chief of Police, and with approval by the family. This presence is meant to signify respect for active police officers and special police officers (SPOs) killed in the line-of-duty.

Modified Honors – A modified presence of a less formal degree than for a funeral with full honors and provided at the discretion of the Chief of Police and approved by

the family. It is meant to signify respect for a current sworn employee who has passed away while employed by the department, but not in the line-of-duty.

Qualified Honors – A presence representing the department may be provided at viewings and services for immediate family members of full-time employees.

Simple Honors – Simple honors is a presence symbolic of respect for the deceased by the department at the discretion of the Chief of Police and approved by the family. Simple honors may be extended to retired police officers, department civilian employees, and retired department civilian employees. This may also be extended to department volunteers at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

Colors – National, State, City and organizational flags carried by color bearing units of the Honor Guard.

Colors Team – A detail of six (6) or more officers that will carry the Colors, as well as two (2) rifles.

Executive Officer – A sergeant or other member of the unit authorized to serve as the commander of the unit in the absence of the commander.

Firing Party – A unit consisting of Honor Guard officers with one commander and seven (7) rifle officers.

Officer in Charge (OIC) – the sergeant or officer in charge of a particular Honor Guard detail.

Pallbearers – Honor Guard members that are assigned to carry the casket.

Sentinels – Officers assigned to casket guard duty.

Greeters – Officers assigned at a funeral home or church to greet mourners during the funeral of an immediate family member of a department employee.

Honor Guard Group – A team of eight (8) officers that includes a Team Leader and Assistant Team Leader. Three groups (A, B & C) make up the Honor Guard Unit. Each may be led by a sergeant, but not necessarily. Each team will be on call for one month and will handle any details that come during that month. Group A will be responsible for January, April, July, and October. Group B will be responsible for February, May (excluding National Police Week activities), August, and November. Group C will be responsible for March, June, September, and December.

11.26.03 HONOR GUARD SELECTION

- A. **Vacancies** - When a vacancy occurs on the Honor Guard Unit, there will be a formal selection process as outlined in Police Directive 4.11A, Transfers.
- B. **Selection Criteria** - Honor Guard members will be selected using the following criteria.
1. Willingness to participate.
 2. Must remain with the Honor Guard for a minimum of 3 years and perform at least 3 details each year, excluding Police Week functions.
 3. Appearance (deportment, carriage, wearing of uniform, etc.).
 4. Attitude toward and interest in departmental activities.
 5. Ability to adhere to orders.
 6. Supervisors' recommendation.
 7. Exhibited professionalism.
 8. Ability to learn and properly execute ceremonial drill movements, including:
 - a. Stationary drills
 - b. Marching manual
 - c. Rifle manual
 - d. Colors manual
 9. Availability for assignment on short notice

11.26.04 ATTENDANCE

- A. Honor Guard members must attend all meetings, practice sessions and functions unless excused by the team leader, with the concurrence of the Honor Guard commander or executive officer.
- B. Members must be prompt for all engagements and must arrive at the locations specified in the proper uniform and with the required equipment for that event.
- C. Members failing to attend scheduled engagements without being properly excused will be subject to disciplinary action and temporary or permanent removal from the unit.

11.26.05 APPEARANCE

- A. **Uniform** - The uniform will be worn with pride and will, by its appearance, signify the highest tradition and professionalism of law enforcement. All members of the Honor Guard will report for duty with their uniforms neat, clean and pressed. Uniform inspections will be conducted prior to assignment.

- B. **Shoes** - Issued shoes will be shined, free of dirt and dust, and taps will be properly secured. Shoelaces will be tucked and black socks will be worn.
- C. **Accoutrements** – If worn, accoutrements will be cleaned and polished. Such items include nameplates, the Honor Guard pin, commendation bars, or other awards and pins issued or approved by the Chief of Police.
- D. **Hats** - Will be clean and free of lint and dust. Visors will be shined and the hat insignia will be polished.
- E. **Hairstyles** - Department policy for hairstyles will be strictly adhered to.

11.26.06 FUNERAL PROTOCOL

Depending on the type of funeral and associated tasks, the Honor Guard commander will request approval from the Chief of Police for the Honor Guard to be detailed. The Honor Guard will send a detail to a funeral if the detail can be completed within the same day. Any funeral requiring overnight lodging must be approved by the Chief of Police. Honor Guard services are provided at the discretion of the Chief of Police. The Honor Guard will work closely with the department-designated family liaison for the funeral. **The wishes of the family will always take priority over the Department's wishes regarding funeral arrangements unless it goes against established Federal or local protocol.**

A. Full Honors

In the event of a line-of-duty death, an official thirty (30) day period of mourning will be declared. All departmental flags will fly at half-staff and all members may wear a black mourning band on their badges. Police headquarters will be draped with black bunting. Funerals with full honors will consist of the following elements:

1. Motorcycle escort.
2. Sentinel detail will be posted at the casket during viewing.
3. Colors team
4. Active pallbearers (minimum of six Honor Guard members).
5. Firing detail consisting of seven officers with rifles and/or shotguns and a firing detail commander.
6. Two buglers (if available) and/or bag pipe.
7. Honor Guard commander.
8. Chief of Police or designee will attend.
9. Protocol dictates the following order for the funeral procession:
 - a. Motorcycle escort.
 - b. Assigned Commander.
 - c. Clergy.
 - d. Hearse.
 - e. Family.
 - f. Alexandria Police Department employees.

- g. Friends, patriotic or fraternal organizations and visiting police.
- h. Active pallbearers, Colors Team, firing detail and bugler will leave separately and proceed directly to the grave site.

B. Modified Honors

In the event of a non-line-of-duty death of a sworn employee, a mourning period lasting fourteen (14) days will be declared. All departmental flags will fly at half-staff and all members may wear a black mourning band on their badges for this period. Funerals with modified honors will consist of the following:

1. Colors Team.
2. Sentinel Detail will be posted at the casket during viewing
3. Active pallbearers (minimum of six) consisting of Honor Guard members.
4. Chief of Police and/or designee attends.

C. Simple Honors

In the event of the death of retired sworn officers, active department civilian employees, retired department civilian employees, or long-term active volunteers, an official period of mourning will be declared. This period will last from the announcement of the death until the close of business on the day of the funeral. All departmental flags will be flown at half-staff. Funerals with simple honors will consist of the following:

1. Sentinel Detail - Honor Guard is present during the afternoon and evening visiting hours.
2. The Chief of Police and/or designee attends.

D. Qualified Honors

In the event of the death of immediate family members of full-time employees, the Honor Guard may be called upon to serve as greeters. Funerals with qualified honors will consist of the Honor Guard's presence during visiting hours and/or memorial services in the capacity of greeters or representatives of the department.

1. For the purposes of this section, "immediate family" will mean a spouse, child, stepchild, parent, legal stepparent or guardian, parent-in-law, grandparent, brother or sister.
2. Employees must initiate the request for the Honor Guard through their chain of command to the commander of the Honor Guard Unit.
3. Services must be within the Washington metropolitan area.

E. Additional Funeral Protocol

1. Formations:
 - a. The formations for the Honor Guard, Colors Team, processions and all police personnel will be coordinated and directed by the Honor Guard commander, or designee.
 - b. The detail commander or designee will call commands for all assembled police personnel.

- c. One pre-designated Colors Team commander will echo all commands when Colors Teams are to perform a different movement than other detail units.
 - d. As the casket appears from inside the funeral building, a command to present arms will be given by the designated detail commander.
 - e. Once the casket is placed in the hearse, the detail commander will give the command to order arms.
2. Grave Site:
- a. The Colors Team Detail, Firing Party and the Casket Team should coordinate at the gravesite prior to the procession arrival.
 - b. As the hearse appears, the detail commander will bring the detail to attention.
 - c. When the back door to the hearse is opened and the casket appears, the commander will bring the detail to present arms.
 - d. Once the casket has been placed at the gravesite, the command will be given to order arms.
 - e. The detail should be brought to parade rest during the gravesite funeral service.
 - f. At the conclusion of the funeral service, the detail will be brought to present arms and the firing party will be signaled to fire. The firing party will fire three (3) volleys using rifles or shotguns with blank rounds.
3. The Playing of Taps
- a. Whenever possible, taps should be echoed.
 - b. During taps, the pallbearers will fold the flag that drapes the casket. The ideal fold shows only four stars, and no red.
 - c. An Honor Guard member will present the flag to the Chief of Police or designee.
 - d. The Chief of Police (or designee) will present the flag to the next of kin.

11.26.07 RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Honor Guard Commander Responsibilities

1. Maintain a fully equipped Honor Guard.
2. Coordinate all Honor Guard functions.
3. Promote regular training sessions to practice drill and ceremony procedures.
4. Serve at all department-related funerals.

B. Honor Guard Team Leader Responsibilities

1. Coordinate all details assigned to their group to include:
 - a. Notifying members of upcoming events.
 - b. Ensuring sufficient staffing for events.
 - c. Ensuring each member has received approval from their supervisor regarding appearances, including off-duty events,
2. Ensure team members are trained to handle all Honor Guard events,

3. Designate training dates, with the approval of the Chief of Police,
4. Submit training lesson outlines to the Honor Guard commander for approval.
5. Submit after-action reports after each assigned event. Each report should include:
 - a. A list of those members in attendance.
 - b. The starting and ending times of the detail.
 - c. Related overtime slips.
 - d. A brief description of the event.
 - e. Any recommendations to improve future events, if appropriate.

C. Honor Guard Member Responsibilities

1. Maintain military bearing at all times during Honor Guard events.
2. Represent the department in the highest professional manner during all events.
3. Maintain proficient skills in drill and ceremony.
4. Maintain all equipment in the best possible condition.
5. Obtain their supervisor's approval for each Honor Guard appearance if it will affect the officer's regular duty.
6. Respond expeditiously to notices regarding future events so that the Unit's response can be coordinated in a timely way. This will be done within twelve (12) hours of the officer receiving the page or telephone message. The response should include their availability or status.
7. Be responsible for working any detail that occurs during their on-call month. It will be the responsibility of the member to find a replacement for a detail that they are unable to attend due to pre-approved leave, vacation, day off, etc.

D. Requests for Honor Guards

1. Honor Guards are frequently needed on short notice. To expedite coordination of the details, requests should be forwarded to the Honor Guard commander as soon as possible.
2. Employees receiving teletypes or other communications regarding the death of a police officer will forward the information to the Honor Guard commander in a timely manner. The commander or designee will respond to the requesting agency regarding our attendance.

11.26.08 UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT
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- A. It is the policy of this department to equip Honor Guard members with the equipment necessary to accomplish their mission.

B. Issued Uniforms and Equipment

The following items will be issued to each Honor Guard member.

1. Class-A uniform (1)
2. Overcoat (1)
3. Honor Guard Badge (1)
4. Shoes with build-up (1)

5. Hat with hatband (silver or gold) (1)
6. Hat rain cover
7. White gloves (2 pairs)
8. Shoulder cords (1) white and (1) black)
9. Honor Guard nameplates (2 each)
10. Sam Browne belt - Clarino leather (1)
11. Holster - Clarino leather (1)
12. Handcuff case - Clarino leather (1)
13. Double magazine pouch - Clarino leather (1)
14. Honor Guard pin (2)
15. Shoulder strap - Clarino leather (1)
16. Belt keepers with "D" ring - Clarino leather (2)
17. Alpha-numeric pager (1)
18. Sunglasses (1)
19. Tie (1)
20. Garment bag (1)
21. Equipment bag (1)

C. Maintenance of Uniforms and Equipment

1. Uniforms and equipment will be inspected on a regular basis in accordance with **Police Directive 6.3, Uniforms, Appearance and Care of Equipment.**
2. Unit members who require replacement items must submit a memorandum to the Honor Guard procurement officer outlining the reason(s) for replacement.
3. All purchase requests will be routed through Fiscal Management for approval by the Chief of Police.
4. All uniform and equipment purchase requests will be coordinated and issued through the Property Section.
5. Upon resignation or retirement from the Honor Guard Team, all uniform and equipment must be turned in to the Property Section for re-issue.

By Authority of:

**Earl L. Cook
Chief of Police**