

## **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES for PGoM ASSISTANT STATE CAPTAIN**

### **(Also good info for Ride Captains)**

The state of Montana is divided into three separate districts (Central, Eastern and Western), each of which has an officer in charge known as the Assistant State Captain or ASC for that district. The duties and responsibilities of the ASC are as follows:

1. Report to and work with the State Captain regarding any Missions or events where PGoM participation is requested.
2. Upon notification of an upcoming or confirmed mission or event in their district the ASC will designate the Ride Captains (RCs) for that mission or event. They will do so by contacting an RC in their district to ascertain that RC's availability and willingness to accept the mission or event. There may be occasions where the ASC is unavailable due to work requirements, illness etc. and the State Captain can and should, designate an appropriate RC to take charge of the mission or event and then make every effort to communicate their actions to the ASC (preferably by phone) as soon as possible. There may also be situations where an ASC must assume the duties of the SC should that individual be out of state, indisposed or otherwise unable to fulfill their duties as State Captain
3. Once an RC is selected for a mission or event the ASC should make every effort to aid the RC in the planning and logistics required. This should include the times and locations that apply to the mission or event.

For Honor Missions this would include:

Staging; Date, Time and Location

Funeral Services; Date, Time and Location and when to post flag line(s)

Graveside Service; Date, Time and Location

Escorts: There are many occasions when we are requested to provide escort from airports to funeral homes, funeral homes to churches and/or to cemeteries. The ASC and RC should be aware of the routes to be utilized by the procession, plan for traffic control using local LEO if available or experienced and skilled PGoM personnel when necessary. SAFETY is the number one aspect to be taken into consideration at all times!

For other events such as Parades, Welcome Homes, Troop Deployment Sendoffs etc. the requirements for proper planning are similar for the most part and can be addressed accordingly.

When the ASC and the RC have agreed and confirmed that they have an acceptable plan ready for posting to the membership the ASC will do so. The posting shall include:

For Honor Missions: Individual's Name, Rank, Branch of Service and when served. If during time of war: which war? Date of mission, time and city or town should be included in the subject line of the posting.

The text of the posting should include a brief history of the Hero's military service and include descriptions of awards for valor or the Purple Heart if confirmed information is available. The text should contain dates, times and locations relevant to the mission or event (see #3 above) and of course, the name of the Ride Captain in charge.

For events or activities other than honor missions the subject line of the posting should contain: The name of the event, date, time and location.

The text of the posting is the same as an Honor Mission with the exception that the purpose and description of the "event" is substituted for the history of an individual.

If it is necessary to provide an escort at some stage of the event the same procedures shall be observed as those pertaining to Honor Missions, Again, SAFETY is the number one priority in these situations. A comprehensive plan for the escort is a MUST!

4. It is imperative that requests for PGoM participation be confirmed by the ASC to be in compliance with the PGoM Mission Statement. Requests for Honor Missions should only be considered if they originate from family members or their designated representatives i.e. funeral directors, attorneys or a CAO (Casualty Assistance Officer). These confirmations should be in place before any postings go out to the membership.

For events other than Honor Missions, all requests for PGoM participation should only be considered if they come from bona fide promoters or officials in charge of the event. Also, the intent or purpose of the event in question shall be in accordance with the values of the PGoM Mission Statement.

#### **DUTIES OF AN ASSISTANT STATE CAPTAIN AT MISSIONS OR EVENTS**

1. An ASC may choose to be the designated RC for any mission or event if the decision to do so is made beforehand and posted accordingly.

2. An ASC or SC present at any mission or event may not displace or overrule the designated RC at anytime. They will however, make their self available to assist or offer suggestions when requested to do so by the RC in charge. At missions or events where complexity is an issue, it is

important that teamwork is demonstrated at all times. Any conflicts, between officers present is unacceptable and violates the standards of the PGR Mission Statement.

3. An ASC present at any mission or event should observe and make note of any issues that may occur and be prepared to discuss them at a later date for possible changes to the appropriate SOP's. Topics such as flag etiquette, less than appropriate behavior in flag lines or unacceptable behavior onsite are just a few of the things to look out for.

4. Although the threat of protestors wishing to disrupt services for the Fallen has decreased dramatically in recent years, the possibility of their presence is still something to consider and be prepared for. ASC's and RC's should always be on the lookout for those of less than honorable intent especially at those Honor Missions for KIA's during the ongoing conflicts taking place around the world.

### **OTHER DUTIES AND REQUIREMENTS OF AN ASSISTANT STATE CAPTAIN**

1. An effective ASC will have good communications skills, be competent with the use of computers, be able to acquire and use appropriate software and internet applications to communicate with the PGoM membership and those who request our services intelligently. An ASC should always be prepared and willing to discuss an Honor Mission with family members by phone or in person when necessary. When talking with these good people they should speak quietly with reverence and respect. Grieving families are rarely, if ever, in the mood for humor or exuberance so act accordingly.

When speaking with organizers of other events do so in a professional manner, at the same time making sure that you understand their needs and they understand what services and their limits PGoM can provide to meet their needs. Doing this will go a long way towards eliminating any possible misunderstandings or confusion at the time of the event.

2. ASC's should keep records and contact information of everyone he comes in contact with in the performance of their duties. These people can be a valued resource for future missions or events.

3. Adaptability. No two missions or events are ever identical to any previous ones. Consider any posting of a pending mission or event a rough outline of what "should" happen. Many things can affect the execution of what seems a well planned mission or event. Situational awareness is the key to making correct decisions in times of sudden change. ASC's and RC's should be constantly aware of the health and welfare of those standing the flag line, be prepared to relieve someone where needed, know where restrooms are located, have water available for hydration on hot days and available heat and shelter if needed on cold days. An ASC or RC is first and foremost responsible for the welfare and safety of their people during any mission or

event. As long as this requirement is met, all other aspects of the event or mission should fall into proper place.

While weather can affect a mission or event, there are many other things that can require a change to the original plans. Families may ask to add or drop some part of the plan for one. There are many possibilities so be prepared to act accordingly.

4. An ASC should provide help and training to his RC's and should always be on the lookout for those members who have the potential and desire to become an RC.

5. This SOP is meant to cover the basics of what is required of an Assistant State Captain. It also is suggested reading for all Ride Captains as the duties of both officers can, more often than not, be similar and intertwined. It is in fact, imperative that an ASC should be a former RC who has been active for some time and in charge of many missions or events. In this, as in many other endeavors, experience is the best teacher and qualifier for the next step up the leadership ladder.

6. The Ultimate goal and duty of an Assistant State Captain is to provide the leadership necessary to allow themselves and the membership to serve the Mission Statement of the Patriot Guard of Montana in an honorable and respectful manner.

After all,

***"It's the Right Thing to Do!"***

***Submitted By:***

***Wes Lambert***

***Assistant State Captain***

***PGoM, Eastern District***

***Updated and Adapted by:***

***Lewis (Trooper) Wendt***

***State Captain***

***Patriot Guard of Montana***