

Ride Captain Mission Checklist

This document is to provide a Ride Captain (RC) with knowledge in accomplishing their assigned Mission. Granted, not all missions are the same and adjustments need to be made due to different circumstances that an RC will encounter.

There are several types of missions:

1. Military departures and returns at airports
2. Funeral Homes or churches
3. Cemeteries
4. Escorts to and from various locations, such as Funeral Homes, Airports, Town Halls and schools.
5. Parades and other Events.

Once the Assistant State Captain (ASC) receives a Mission request from a family member of a deceased Veteran, Law Enforcement, 1st Responder or the State Captain (SC), the ASC will contact an RC that will accept the Mission in the general area where the Honor service will be held. Once accepted, the RC will collect the information needed to build the itinerary for posting. An itinerary is then sent out to all PGoM members by the ASC. If an RC is contacted by an individual in his/her area, the RC should let the ASC know they are working on an upcoming mission and proceed as above.

The itinerary should include:

Information of the Veteran:

1. Name, Branch of Service, any additional such as awards, medals, commendations, active theaters, dates of service and age, if available.
2. Location: Funeral Home, Airport, Cemetery, or other location
3. Date and Staging location and time (30 to 45 minutes before service)
4. Escort info if preceding to another location
5. RC contact information: Name, phone and email

In the days prior to and the day of the Mission, the RC should:

1. Contact and introduce yourself to the family's Person of Contact (POC) and/or the Funeral Director in Charge (FDIC).
 - a. **This POC and FDIC information is for the RC only and should never be posted in the Mission Email.**
 - b. There should be only one (1) POC for the family. This will minimize the chances of having multiple requests that lead to confusion. Provide condolences and a brief general explanation of what we can do for them.

- c. The RC should coordinate with the FDIC on what will occur during the entire service and where the flag line(s) will be placed. This will enable the RC to plan the timing of the mission.
- d. Prior to the Military Honors Ceremony, the RC shall communicate with the Honor Guard, FDIC and American Legion for flag line placement. Each Mission will vary.
- e. Positioning of the PGoM will depend on how many members are in attendance.
- f. The RC should, always, have a coin to present and a condolence card, if desired.

Flag Etiquette

1. Unfurl and extend the flag before leaving support vehicle or staging area. NEVER walk while preparing your flag.
2. Walk toward and away from a flag line area in one or two column(s) holding the flag in a vertical position on your right side. Do not walk in front of other flag bearers.
3. Order of flags: US, Branch of Service, Montana, POW/MIA, PGR (US flags always lead. Others follow in order)
 - a. When in formation, other flags should be to the left of the US flags.
4. Where Guards are to be positioned:
 - a. Flag line should be positioned between the “uninvited guests” or protesters and the family.
 - b. Guards should face family and the casket with their backs to the public whenever possible.
5. During “Present Arms”, US flags should **never** dip (Salute). Other flags may be lowered.

When the memorial service is over, 2 Guards with flags should be placed at the end of the funeral coach for the casket/cremains to pass thru. Once it has been secured, Guards should uniformly proceed to their vehicles to quietly and quickly prepare for the escort.

Flag line Etiquette:

1. Always step back and walk behind the flag line if you need to leave your post at any time. A replacement can be selected if necessary or available.
2. Smoking is prohibited in the flag line. Smoke off property and, if possible, out of sight.
3. Keep the flag line a solemn, respectful place. No joking, talking or laughing.
4. Quietly notify others when guests are arriving. Be respectful of mourners. Assist with opening doors at Funeral Home or Church, if needed.
5. Turn cell phones off, to silent or leave in your vehicle. If anyone must take a call, step out of line and out of sight. If anyone is waiting for an important call, place them at the end of the line for a discreet exit.

6. Please do not discuss politics or religion.
7. No photos of the family or casket. Absolutely no pictures of any type should be posted on Social Media. This has been addressed by National.
8. If a Guard is approached by the Media, refer them to the RC or someone in leadership.
9. If a Guard sees something that needs to be addressed, quietly bring it to the RC or someone in leadership.
10. If a mourner wants to shake your hand, grasp your flagpole left hand, shake, and re-grasp the flagpole with your right. Keeping the flagpole on your right side at all times.
11. If “uninvited guests” or protesters arrive, do your best to ignore them. In some circumstances, PGR sing patriotic songs or rev their engines so the mourners cannot hear them. Guards will not take physical action of any kind. RC will contact Law Enforcement if deemed necessary.
12. Optional: Have a Ride/Mission Prayer delivered.
13. If the family invites the PGoM to the reception, please remember you are still representing the PGR.
14. Mention there will be a post-mission debriefing.

Escorts:

1. The RC should discuss the route the FDIC would like to follow. The lineup is normally 2 Guards (including RC) to lead the escort with the 3rd and 4th available to conduct road blocks if authorized by local Law Enforcement. If Law Enforcement is part of the escort, they will place Officers at intersections.
2. Line up: PGoM, Funeral Coach, Family vehicles and friends with 4-way flashers on. RC should inform Guard of the traveling speed as deemed by FDIC.
3. A few Guards can be sent to Cemetery entrance or graveside to stage a flag line to greet and direct the procession, if attendance numbers allow.
4. Upon arriving at Honor Site, Guards will park in an area for easy exit after service and not interfere with the mourner’s vehicles.
5. Flags should be assembled beside your vehicle before stepping into your place in the flag line. Please, do not walk while assembling. Guards will, then, walk to area instructed or lead to by the RC, keeping a large enough space between each Guard to allow free fly of the flags.
6. Graveside Honor Service:
 - a. Flag Folding by Honor Guard with Twenty-one Gun Salute and presentation of the flag and condolences to the receiving family member by Honor Guard.

b. RC presents the recipient with a PGoM Honor Coin and, if still in possession of, condolence card.

Rule of thumb on PGoM departure:

When Honor Guard and American Legion make their exit, with flags held high, quietly return, in formation, to your vehicle. Guard should tear down, store flags and wait for exit instructions. Debrief and suggest a meal/coffee rendezvous spot before heading home. Always try to leave as a group. If the family is having graveside time, keep the exit as quiet as possible.

Mission Complete. Ride Safe!

Approved by: Jim "Jimbo" Cherney

Date: 11-6-2021 (Revised)

State Captain

Montana Patriot Guard