

Ride Captain's Mission Checklist

This document is to provide a Ride Captain (RC), with knowledge in accomplishing their assigned Mission. Granted, not all Missions are equal and adjustments need to be made due to different circumstances a RC will encounter. There are several types of Missions;

1. Military departures and returns at airports.
2. First Responders.
3. Funeral Homes.
4. Cemeteries.
5. Escorts from Airports to Funeral Homes or directly to Cemeteries.
6. Escorts from Funeral Homes to Cemeteries or to Airports.
7. Other facilities where services could be held, such as Town Halls or schools.
8. Parades or other such functions.

Once the Assistant State Captain, (ASC), receives a Mission request from a family member of a deceased Veteran, Law Enforcement, or 1st Responder, the ASC will contact a RC that will accept this Mission in the general area where the service for our fallen hero will be conducted. An email will be sent out to all PGOM informing them of an upcoming Mission. The Mission statement will include:

1. The name and Military information regarding the deceased Veteran, First Responder or other honoree.
2. Funeral Home, Airport, Cemetery, or other location.
3. Date, time and location of the service.

4. If the service will continue with an escort to the Cemetery, Airport or another location.
5. Name and phone number of the Ride Captain, staging time and location.

The day prior to or the day of the Mission, the RC should:

1. Contact and introduce yourself to the family's Person Of Contact, (POC), and the Funeral Director in Charge, (FDIC):
 - a. There should be only 1 POC for the family. Several POCs can lead to a multitude of requests for the RC which leads to confusion. Provide condolences and a brief explanation of what we generally do.
 - b. The RC should coordinate with the FDIC on what will occur during the entire service. This will enable the RC to plan the Mission.
 - c. When on location, the RC shall communicate with the Honor Guard, FDIC, and the American Legion where the flag line should be located. Each Mission may vary.
 - d. Positioning the Guards will depend on how many arrive to support the Mission.
 - e. RC should have a PGR coin and if desired, a Condolence card.
2. Prior to the Ceremony, the RC should retrieve all pertinent information. This includes, but not limited to:
 - a. Name of the deceased Veteran.
 - b. Rank, if available.
 - c. Branch of Service.
 - d. Awards such as Purple Heart, Medal of Honor, etc.
 - e. Memorial Service Program.
 - f. Location of interment and if the services will continue to another

location.

- g. FDIC's name and number.
- h. Any additional information, commendations, active theaters and dates of service.
- i. If the POC requests PGOM to post flag lines in specific areas.
- j. Discuss arrangements with the FDIC and Honor Guard.

On the day of the Mission, meet all Guards at the Staging area. Provide a briefing which will include:

1. Welcome all Guards that arrive. Recognize PGR leadership, Gold Stars, first time Guards attending and any prospective members attending. Prospective members or guests must have preapproval from the RC prior to the Mission.
2. If you have a Condolence card for the family, have those present sign the card if they wish.
3. RC has attending Guards and guests sign PGR Waiver stating PGR will not be held liable in case of an accident during the Mission. Multi signatures can be placed on the back of the Waiver document.
4. Brief Guards on the deceased Veteran and family. Some Guards might like a Memorial Service Program.
5. RC is responsible to insure that there are no visible weapons, profanity, political or other offensive materials on clothing or vests. Duct tape works well to cover patches.
6. The different locations of the service.
7. Flag Etiquette:
 - a. Unfurl the flag before leaving support vehicle, or the staging area. Flags are carried in the right hand at a vertical position.

- b. RC forms the line. The Guard that leads the line should have prior experience. The American flag should be the highest; all other flags should be the same height. No saluting while carrying the flags.
- c. Order of flags: USA, Branch of Service(s), POW/MIA, Montana, and PGR.
- d. Where the Guards are to be positioned:
 - 1a. Flag line(s) should be between the Uninvited Guest (UG) or protestors, and the family. See #8k.
 - 2a. Guards will face the family and the casket. Backs to the public, roads and any disturbances.

8. Flag Line Etiquette:

- a. If you need to rest or step out of line, step back behind the line and return to your vehicle. (If Guards are available, the RC should select members to be relief personnel for those physically incapable of standing for long periods.)
- b. No smoking is permitted in the flag line. Smoke off the property and, if possible, out of sight.
- c. Keep the flag line a solemn place. No joking, talking and laughing.
- d. If you see any guests approaching, quietly notify others. Be respectful to the mourners. Guards may assist mourners with opening doors to the Funeral Home or Church.
- e. Turn cell phones off or to vibrate. If you must take a call, step out of the flag line and if possible, out of sight. RC: If someone is waiting for an important call, have that individual be last in line. This will enable the Guard to depart without any problems.
- f. Please do not discuss politics or religion. It could be offensive to others.
- g. No photos of the family, casket and absolutely no pictures on any type

on Social Media. This has been addressed by National.

- h. If a Guard sees something that needs to be addressed, quietly bring it to the RC's, or leadership's, attention.
- i. If Guards are approached by the media, refer them to the RC or someone in leadership.
- j. If a mourner wants to shake your hand, grasp the flag pole with your left hand, shake, re-grasp the flag pole with your right hand and return your left hand to your side. Always leave the flag pole on your right side.
- k. If Uninvited Guests, (UG), or protestors arrive, do your best to ignore them. In some circumstances, PGRs have sung patriotic songs or revved their engines so the mourners cannot hear the UGs. Guards will take no physical actions against UG. RC can contact local Law Enforcement (LE) if he/she deems necessary.
- l. If the grieving family invites the PGOM to the wake. Please remember:
If you attend, you are representing the Patriot Guard Riders.
- m. Mention that there will be a post Mission briefing.

When the PGOM will escort the deceased Veteran from the Airport, Funeral Home or other location:

1. The RC should contact the FDIC to determine which route the Funeral Precession will go. The lineup is normally 2 Guards that are knowledgeable of the route, on their motorcycles to lead the escort and to conduct road blocks only if authorized by local LE. Road blocking can be dangerous due to vehicles not acknowledging PGRs being authorized to conduct road blocks.
2. The hearse, Funeral coaches with family and PGOM in staggered formation. PGOM should have their 4-way flashers on. RC should discuss the appropriate speed to safely travel with the FDIC.

3. No blocking intersections, unless prior permission has been obtained from the local Law Enforcement Officers, (LEOs). If LEO are part of the escort, they will have other Police Units block intersections.
4. If there are enough Guards, designate some Guards to go to the next location to position themselves next to the burial spot and/or at the entrance of the cemetery or airport with their flags. RC should contact those Guards prior to departure from the current location.
5. When the Funeral Procession arrives at the designated location, Guards will park in a location where their vehicles will not interfere with the mourners vehicles.
6. RC will establish a Guard line and inform the lead Guard where to position the flag line. The flag line will walk to the designated location.
7. Once the funeral service begins, the Guards may take a quiet break unless you are at the Cemetery. If Guards are positioned on the opposite sides of the casket, they may need replaced to prevent spinal or knee pain due to prolonged standing.
8. Once the service is over and the procession is ready to continue to the final location, Guards need to take their places. RC will reassign positions. Guards need to be positioned at the rear of the hearse as the casket or urn passes.
9. Once the casket or the urn is in the hearse and the door is closed, Guards need to return to their vehicles and prepare for the escort to the Cemetery or Airport.
10. Normally, there is an Honor Guard that will fold the American flag that has been draped over the deceased Veteran's casket followed by a Twenty-one Gun salute. The Honor Guard will present the folded American flag and other condolence items to the spouse or to the family member. Directly after the presentation of the flag, the RC should present the PGR Coin/s and the condolence card to the person/persons that received the folded American flag/s.

Service is completed. Departing the flag line and returning to their vehicles or staging area:

1. Guards depart after the Honor Guard and American Legion. Guards and flags in the same order as they arrived, American flag to lead the way.
2. Walk in a straight line and keep it professional.
3. Fold your flag once you have returned to your vehicle or staging area.
4. Debrief and thank the membership for traveling and participating.
5. Open time for sharing upcoming Missions and Events.
6. Suggest if any Guards would like to rendezvous for a meal or coffee to decompress and talk.
7. This concludes the PGOM portion of the Mission. You are now relieved of your duties and responsibilities. Please return safely to your residence.

Jordan High

Approved by: Jordan High, State Captain, PGOM

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