



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
27 OCTOBER 2008
08-61

CONTACT: NATE CRAWFORD
615-313-0793(OFFICE)
615-714-8638(CELL)

Funeral Honors Program for veterans is filling important need across Tennessee

NASHVILLE - Every eligible veteran in Tennessee may now receive a military funeral through the Tennessee Army National Guard's Honor Guard Program, a project begun in 2003 which has grown tremendously as more veterans and families have become aware of it.

Only about 300 services were performed annually when the Military Funeral Honors Program began five years ago. In 2008 officials expect there will be more than 6,000. A total of 22,600 services have been performed by Honor Guard team members since 2003.

Tennessee is projected to lose approximately 13,000 veterans a year. In order to meet the increasing demand for military funeral honors, the Guard has partnered with Veterans Service Organizations across the state to provide every eligible veteran with military burial ceremonies. They conduct workshops and training sessions for these groups in addition to briefings with community leaders, funeral homes and community VA officials.

Currently the program has over 140 National Guard soldiers, each of whom is trained to Arlington Cemetery's "Old Guard" standards. These tasks include flag folding, pall bearing, rifle volleys, flag presentation and sounding of Taps. Additionally they are trained for planeside Honorable Transfer for service members Killed in Action.

An Honor Guard is available to any person who served in either peace-time or war-time on Active Duty, or in the National Guard or Reserve. The honoree must have completed at least one enlistment and received an Honorable discharge. There is no cost to family members and they need only to notify their funeral director that they desire to have military funeral honors rendered at the interment.

The funeral director may telephone, toll free, **1-866-368-6338**. Documentation required by the funeral director will be the veteran's Form DD214, or Form NGB22 or a Certificate of Honorable Discharge.

Next of kin may contact the Tennessee Military Department War Records Division, 615-313-2664, to secure discharge papers. If the veteran lived outside Tennessee at the time of discharge, the family will need to contact that state's War Records Division.

(More)

PO BOX 41502
NASHVILLE, TN 37204
615.313.3001

Military Honors 2-2-2-2

The Tennessee National Guard program has regional offices in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Jackson and Smyrna, and each of these regions has teams strategically placed throughout the state to cover funeral requests. The State Coordinator and Operations Center is located at the Guard's Volunteer Training Site in Smyrna and is open seven days a week to gather and process requests for the honored veterans of Tennessee.

The Military Honor Guard program in Tennessee is one of the largest in the nation and has been recognized by National Guard Bureau in Washington for its high degree of excellence.

"We provide a richly deserved tribute to every eligible veteran who has put on a uniform to serve their country," said Command Sgt. Maj. Bill Marley, with the program's Operation Center. "Each of them did something special when they donned that uniform, and now it's time that we do our part to honor them."

Marley pointed out that there are three distinct and different types of a Funeral Honor Guard:

Veteran Honors: For all eligible veterans. The Honor Guard may consist of three personnel to conduct the military flag folding, presentation of the flag to the family, and the sounding of Taps.

Retired Veteran Honors: This is for a *retired* member of the military or a current member of the military not killed in action. The ceremony may consist of seven personnel to conduct the Basic Honors, rifle volley and/or pall bearers.

Special/Full Honors: Provided for a service member killed in action, a Medal of Honor recipient, a General Officer or an E-9. The ceremony may consist of 21 personnel to conduct the military flag folding, presentation of the flag to the family, ceremonial rifle volley, the sounding of Taps, pall bearers, color guard and Chaplain.

####

All Tennessee Army and Air National Guard press releases can be found at
<http://www.tnmilitary.org/PressReleases.htm>