



Oak Creek Police Department

Ceremonial Honor Guard

S.O.P. 2

CASKET WATCH

Changing of the Guard

*After completion of, "Paying Respects", (Refer to S.O.P. #1) a set, (two) members of the Honor Guard Detail will post at the head and foot of the casket. After the initial posting of the Honor Guard Detail, the decedent **Will Not Be Left Unattended** at anytime by the Honor Guard Detail, until such time the detail is completed. (At times it is customary to have a small memorial service toward the end of the visitation.) The Honor Guard usually doesn't stand watch during this service, but may post up immediately after the service until all visitors have left, or at which time the Funeral Director begins to summon all visitors out of the viewing area.*

Prior planning, usually through the funeral director, that the respective ends of the casket should be cleared of floral displays allowing adequate room for the casket watch guard and switching guards out. There are two methods for placing Casket Guards at their posts, the procedure of dropping two Guards after the Unit as a whole "Pays Respect", or placing two Guards with the OIC method. Either of which is correct.

- A. After the initial Detail has completed, "Paying our Respects", (S.O.P. #1) and upon the Detail exiting the front of the casket, the last two members of the Detail could post at the head and foot of the casket.
 1. The last two members of the detail shall orient themselves to the Head & Foot of the casket.
 - a. Normal marching steps or shortened steps to the proper positioning.
 - b. Once at the proper position, each member will remain at the position of "Attention."
 - c. Once both detail members are in place:
 - The team member to the rear will give a heel click (or verbal command) to signify a facing movement ("RIGHT-FACE") toward the casket/Decedent.
 - The same team member will give a heel click for the step-out to the positioning point for the watch.
 - That same team member will give a heel click for the "About-Face"
 - This same team member, after the rest of the detail has left the viewing room, will then give the command, "CEREMONIAL PARADE-REST"

2. The alternate method is to assemble two members of the Casket Watch Detail with an OIC and immediately place two guards Standing Watch after the "Paying of Respects" as described below.

B. Switching out the Guard

1. Once in the doorway of the room to be entered, or in the room if crowded, the leader of the relief Guards will give the commands to start the Detail. *(This also assists with the visitors clearing the way for the oncoming Guards, or someone should be dedicated to assist with clearing the path.)*

This is a three member detail. The first person in line will orient to the head of the casket, the second will orient to the foot of the casket and the third person, the Commander or Honcho remains in the center of the casket, approximately 6ft or so from the casket.

2. The relief detail Commander will give the commands:
 - "STAND-BY
 - "**DETAIL**" Members will immediately come to the "Parade-Rest" position.
 - "**ATTEN-TION**"
3. The Detail standing watch will come to "**ATTEN-TION**" by the designated or senior member of the Guards on that watch once the relief guards are in view.
 - The Commander will give the command, "Forward-**MARCH**".
 - The relief team members will march up to the casket to the proper positioning.
 - At the foot of the casket, the guards will face each other, slightly off set lining up name tag to name tag
 - At the head of the casket, the guards will face each other, slightly off set lining up name badge to badge.

When stepping in/out of the casket posting position, it's imperative to line up as stated above, so the guards can lean and step around each other gracefully, avoiding over exaggerating trying to get to the same (about same) position. The relief Guard always moves in closest to the casket.

- Once Badge to Badge or Name Tag to Name Tag, the Commander will give the command, "**PRESENT-ARMS**".
- Then, "**ORDER-ARMS**".

The hand salute's intended purpose is for the guards to be saluting each other. This hand salute would be rendered whether the U.S Colors were present or not when switching out the guard. In the case where the Decedent is not a veteran, or the U.S. Colors are not a part of the Honors afforded, prior planning should have had the United States Colors placed at the head and behind the casket and State or other ceremonial flag at the foot and behind the casket. This is paramount as the first guard posting detail, or referring to S.O.P. #1 "Paying our Respects", the hand salute wouldn't be warranted. With the U.S. Colors present, the hand salute would be required. This gives the family and survivors the impression that you are saluting their loved one when in fact you are saluting the U.S. Colors.

4. The Commander of the relief team will give the command for the guards to switch out, "DETAIL or READY- **POST**" (Verbal or heel clicks) and the guards will switch out as described.
 - The Commander will give the command, or heel clicks for the relief or new guards to do an "ABOUT-**FACE**".
5. The Commander will then do an "About-Face".
 - The Commander will then take a slow left step out, trying to give time for the guards that have been relieved to step out at the same time. The guard that was at the head of the casket will proceed first, and the guard at the foot will fall in behind him. There will be a space between the Commander and the guard behind him/her, however the second guard should fall in at the proper interval for marching out.

C. Ending the Casket Watch

1. The Commander will enter the room, bringing himself/herself to the position of "ATTEN-**TION**".
 - This gives the guards standing watch time to bring themselves to the position of Attention.
2. The Commander marches in to what has been the pre-determined spot/area that the Commanders have stopped prior.
 - The Commander gives the command, "PRESENT-**ARMS**".
 - Then "ORDER-**ARMS**".
3. The Commander will then do an About-Face.
 - The Commander will then step out with the hesitated slow step
 - The Guard then step out as described here.

D. Final Salute

In the event the Honor Guard wishes to perform a final salute, it can be accomplished in the following manner. Remember, the U.S. Colors should be present for this. There is no protocol prohibiting the saluting of the Decedent out of respect, but generally the salute is due to the U.S. Colors being present. This should be done immediately after pulling off the last guards, and just prior to the memorial service. It requires a little more skill, but you could incorporate the Standing Guards into the final salute as noted below, or pull them off as described, then immediately form up and march out the entire detail for the Final Salute. Either way would be correct.

NOTE: As determined in training (July 8, 2009) the following are notes on proper placement of Honor Guard Members for the final salute incorporating the standing Guards.

1. Four (4) total team members:
 - The two members of the detail will place themselves within the perimeters of the head and foot of the casket, evenly spaced, so the Guards standing watch can just step out, do an "ABOUT-**FACE**" and now all four members of the Guard are evenly spaced in front of the Decedent.
2. Five (5) total team members:
 - Same as above, three of the members of the detail will place themselves within the perimeters of the head and foot of the casket, evenly spaced,

so the Standing Guards can either step out straight, or with minimal movement to orient themselves in an evenly spaced line of 5 members in front of the casket.

3. Six (6) total team members:

- *Four members of the details will need to space themselves as follows: The first member in line will step slightly past the Standing Guard at the head of the Casket, allowing the Standing guard to step out and in slightly toward the middle of the casket to be properly spaced. The last member of the detail will have to stop short of the Standing Guard to the foot of the casket, allowing a space for the Standing Guard to step into the line. Then two members of the detail will place themselves towards the middle of the casket. The object is to orient in such a manner that if you have 6 members of the Casket Detail, you are evenly placed (distributed) in front of the casket.*

1. The Unit Leader on this detail will assemble all detail members in the doorway of the room to be entered in the same manner as switching out the Guards.
 - The entire unit will orient to the front of the casket.
 - The detail will be in a soft Mark-Time march.
 - The Detail Commander will bring the detail to “DETAIL-HALT”
 - The Leader of the Unit will signify a facing movement toward the casket with a heel click, or verbal command.

*At this time, the Unit Commander will give the command, “Present-**ARMS**”. The Detail will render the hand salute. The Detail Commander will give the command, “Order-**ARMS**”. Even for a non-Line-of-Duty death or a non-sworn Officer or Dignitary, the United States Colors in a stanchion behind the casket is highly encouraged. Thus when you approach the Decedent for the final time, you would be rendering a hand salute as the United States Colors are present, giving survivors you are saluting their loved one. Even rendering a hand salute out of respect for the Decedent would be okay and wouldn’t be a violation of any protocols. Otherwise, going to the Parade-Rest position with the head bowed upon the command, “DETAIL-**POST**”, pause for 3 to 5 seconds, “DETAIL-ATTEN-**TION**”.*

- The Detail Commander will then give the command for a facing movement, either by a heel click or verbal command.
- The next and last command is the Unit Leader giving the command, “Forward-**MARCH**”

An alternative approach requiring much less coordination is to formerly pull off the Casket Guard, immediately join the remainder of the Casket Watch Detail already formed up and standing by, the approach the casket in the described means with the entire unit, spacing as necessary.

For the Final Salute, orientation from the foot of the casket is preferred, then leaving the opposite direction.