



Membership in the Highland Lakes Honor Guard

We are always interested in hearing from those who would like to become members of the Highland Lakes Honor Guard. Because of the Department of Defense's requirements pertaining to those performing Military Funeral Honors, and in order to maintain our tax exempt status under sections 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code, members must meet the following criteria:

Eligibility: Primary membership of the HLHG will consist of at least 75 percent veterans who served in the US Armed Forces. The remaining members up to 97.5 percent, can be ROTC/Service Academy Cadets, Widows and Widowers of Veterans, as well as Ancestors and Lineal Descendants of same. The last 2.5 percent must be voting age US Citizens who have high standards of moral character, citizenship, patriotism, service, and love of country.

Those not eligible: Those discharged from the Armed Forces under dishonorable conditions, or those convicted of a Felony. Eligibility questions should be addressed to the Highland Lakes Honor Guard Commander.

What is expected of members Members meet regularly. Meetings are held at the Marble Fall United Methodist Church, Marble Falls, Texas. Members are expected to make all meetings unless good cause prevents them from doing so. Members also must be available to render Military Funeral Honors and participate in patriotic programs when called upon to do so.

Uniforms: Members are required to purchase their own ceremonial uniforms through the Highland Lakes Honor Guard at cost to assure uniformity within the detail. Special financial arrangements are available. This may be waived by the treasurer with an agreement to return all items upon leaving the Honor Guard. The selected uniform consists of a white shirt with black trim with American Flag the Highland Lakes Honor Guard (HLHG) patch, single loop braided shoulder cord and black ascot (neck covering). Guardsmen wear their own insignia of military rank or branch of service, military ribbons and name tag. Black uniform trousers with black web belt and white pistol belt with black shoes or combat boots and white gloves complete the basic uniform. Head wear may be either a black beret with insignia or a western style felt hat with insignia. Additional uniform requirements may be added.

Protocol: The Saturday meetings are for the purpose of conducting business and practicing detail protocols: order of arms, rifle drills and three volley firing sequence; flag folding and presentation together with "Taps;" Chaplain's prayers; marching; and special programs.

Contact Information: If you are interested in joining the Highland Lakes Honor Guard please contact either of the following:

Commander, Charlie Taylor 325-248-1833 cft1144@yahoo.com
P.O. Box 106, Bluffton, Texas 78607

Vice Commander, Karl Provost 512-800-9033 rhino1lead@gmail.com
606 Newport Dr, Briarcliff, TX 78669

The Highland Lakes Honor Guard Initiation Ceremony

Commander: We shall now proceed to the initiation of those members who have been accepted into membership but have not heretofore been initiated into the Highland Lakes Honor Guard. In order that we may impress upon these individuals the serious import and sacred obligations required of membership, all present will conduct themselves in a manner befitting such ceremony.

Vice Commander: [The Vice Commander introduces those to be initiated and gives a short background of their military record e.g. branch of Service, period of or war-time service, highest rank held and discharge status].

A copy of their DD-214 form has been received and is on file to confirm the qualifying status of each member to be initiated into membership in the Highland Lakes Honor Guard pursuant to our Administrative Guidelines.

As these individuals have been accepted for membership and now await initiation, we shall proceed with the initiation ceremony. Initiation candidates, front and center.

Please stand and uncover for our prayer.

Chaplain: Let us pray: Our heavenly Father, grant that we may approach this ceremony with clean hearts. Keep us ever mindful of our obligation to those who have made the supreme sacrifice for our country and her noble purpose.

We humbly pray that your love may find its way into our hearts and souls that they shall never again seek occasion of conflict, but live in peace and harmony, laboring for the broader benefits of humankind.

You have blessed us with the opportunity to serve our country in her hour of need. We pray that you will grant us continued opportunities to serve in time of peace as we served in time of war. Bless the Highland Lakes Honor Guard and those here who await its obligation, that

together we may continue to honor those with dignity and respect who have served our country in the United States Armed Forces, in life as well as in death; and in doing so may we serve You and our country in undivided loyalty. Amen.

Commander: The Highland Lakes Honor Guard is a unique organization comprised entirely of war veterans that provide military funeral honors for those who have served honorably in the United States Armed Forces and are now deceased.

Our country's involvement in various military operations around the world has greatly reduced the availability of active service personnel to perform military honors.

Fortunately, a provision in The National Defense Authorization Act responds to the shortage of military personnel to staff such honor guards and increases the likelihood that an honor guard will be available to the families of veterans who served their country.

The measure requires the military services to provide the honor guard details. But it allows the Secretary of Defense to suspend the requirement in cases of military necessity. It authorizes the Department of Defense to provide material and equipment to "non-governmental" organizations such as the Highland lakes Honor Guard for support of honor guard activities.

We therefore have a sacred mission: Honoring our departed comrades with respect and dignity. We never charge for these services and never will. As it has been said:

"The death of Patriotism will begin when America chooses not to render full Final Honors to those who fought for our freedoms; our veterans."

As a secondary purpose, we appear at patriotic events, provide a color guard detail to lead in parades and put on special patriotic memorial programs in remembrance of all who have, or are now, serving in the military.

This too is a sacred mission: To perpetuate a love of God and Country, a true Americanism and the preservation of our country's history.

Your duty, as members of the Highland Lakes Honor Guard, is to attend all meetings and practice sessions and to participate in all its scheduled events and activities; with exception for good and sufficient cause.

You will be required to wear a uniform provided at your expense and to keep it clean and in good condition. Demonstrate your pride in being a member of this organization by the uniform you wear. In addition, you are to maintain and keep in good working order any and all equipment issued to you and assure its safe keeping. Such equipment is to remain in your custody, possession and control at all times.

You will be required to abide by the Highland Lakes Honor Guard's Code of Conduct, a copy of which you have already received prior to this initiation.

You will also be required to take the Oath of Membership which I will now ask the Vice Commander to hand out to you.

[Vice Commander distributes Oath of Membership]

Vice Commander: Please raise your right hand and repeat after me using your own name: I, _____ do hereby take this Oath of Membership without equivocation, reservation, hesitation or purpose of evasion.

“I Pledge Allegiance to the Flag of The United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, with Liberty and Justice for all.

I furthermore Pledge that I will never participate in any effort whose goal is the violent overthrow of our representative form of government nor shall I ever become a member of any group or organization that advocates the same.

I furthermore Pledge that, as a member of the Highland Lakes Honor Guard, I will be proactive in my membership and will at all times comply with the By Laws, Official Directives and Policies of the same.

I furthermore Pledge that I will actively support and participate in the Missions of the Highland Lakes Honor Guard to the fullest extent of my capabilities and abilities.

I furthermore Pledge that I will be a pro-active advocate in the advancement of:

Honoring America’s deceased Veterans

Honoring and supporting our Active Duty military personnel

Patriotism among the citizens of the United States of America

Hands down!

As newly initiated members of the Highland Lakes Honor Guard I congratulate you. Each will receive a special cap that only members may wear, whether on or off duty. You will also receive a special pin designating you as an Authorized Provider certified as such by the United States Department of Defense to render military funeral honors to be worn on your uniform. Wear them both with pride.

Again, congratulations and welcome aboard !

Code of Conduct: As a member of Highland lakes Honor Guard, I agree to comply with and live by the following CODE OF CONDUCT:

- I. That I shall, at all times, conduct myself as a law-abiding, patriotic citizen of the United States of America and pledge allegiance to our Constitution and our democratic form of government.
- II. That I shall never take up arms against the United States of America nor participate in any seditious manner to overthrow our democratic form of government,
- III. That I publicly proclaim and maintain a belief in a Supreme Being and that I will respect other's religious beliefs as witnessed in the way I live my life.
- IV. That I shall, at all times, conduct myself in such a fashion as to never bring discredit upon myself, my family, my community or the Highland Lakes Honor Guard.
- V. That I shall never discriminate against another because of race, creed, ethnicity, national origin, gender, personal life-style choice, religious belief or, because of any particular station in life. Nor will I engage in political or religious debate while in the performance of my duties as a member of the Highland lakes Honor Guard, or, in any situation where the Highland Lakes Honor Guard might be brought into focus of the debate.
- VI. That I will always wear the uniform of the Highland Lakes Honor Guard as prescribed in and according to their regulations; only at places, events and in such situations as authorized; and while wearing the uniform, conduct myself appropriately. If a male member, I will be clean shaven or have a trimmed beard and/or mustache. While in uniform I will maintain a clean-cut, professional appearance and not dishonor the uniform by combining it with other items of clothing or decorations not previously authorized.
- VII. That I shall not engage in nor tolerate the speaking of falsehoods, stealing, falsification of documents or any other activity that is unethical, dishonorable or would bring discredit or shame upon myself, the Highland Lakes Honor Guard or the legacy of Valor, Honor and Sacrifice embodied in our military veterans, and, that upon witnessing any such occurrence within the Highland Lakes Honor Guard organization, I shall immediately report the same to proper channels within the Highland Lakes Honor Guard organizational Chain-of-Command.
- VIII. That I take this CODE OF CONDUCT seriously and willingly submit myself to any duly constituted Highland Lakes Honor Guard tribunal ("Honor Court") called to investigate my CONDUCT and will accept the outcome of any such tribunal in accordance with established procedures for the same
- IX. That I will not engage in the unlawful sale, transfer, possession or use of controlled substances and, shall not use alcoholic beverages unless of legal age, and only within the spirit the law.

X. That I will live my life honorably and be a positive influence on my family, in my community and for my country.