

Summary of changes and additions to the HLHG Handbook. 6-13-23 (changes in yellow shade)

This is a Commander approved supplement and takes precedent over the manual when different. Refer to the on-scene HG Commander before each service for questions concerning these procedures.

The purpose of this is not only to implement changes, but ensure standardization of procedures. Most importantly, it provides a somewhat quick review of what we need to go over while preparing for a new service, especially if it has been a while.

Suggestions for changes should consist of a written proposal presented during new business at the monthly meeting. It should include the perceived problem, the solution, and how it gets fixed.

1. Riflemen and Commanders add 15 min to muster
2. Select safe direction, pivot **20-30 degrees RIGHT** (left foot forward swings the barrel left).
3. Detailed review of commands, 2 dry fire runs with rifles (Finger outside the trigger guard)
4. Add "**Safety**" **command**, right after "Port Arms" during the Rifle Salute (allow 2-3 sec for this).
5. Step into it with left **foot forward**, barrel swings left, and shoulder the rifle, ready for the cadence.
6. Ready – Aim - Fire on all 3 shots, with a solid 2 seconds between
7. After 3rd shot, "Cease Fire – **Port Arms** - Present Arms"
 - 7a. Before Order Arms, **Port Arms-Safety**
8. Bugler hits the 5 sec timer at the cease fire call.
9. After Commander marches up front, stay quietly in formation until his return.
10. Go to port arms for safety before policing brass.
11. Added Position for Door Security

DETAILED NOTES are all posted on the web page here - highlandlakeshonorguard.org

Please read them ALL and let me know if you have questions, find errors, or have suggestions.

I recommend you re-write any needed steps in your own words, print them out and carry them with you

Review Notes, Procedures, and Pockets Guides
Command approved supplement to the Handbook

Rifle Commander

Preparation Scout out avenues of approach for obstacles (both sides)
Approach is always behind the folder, he will do an about face
BOTTOM LINE - approach where the STRIPES are, no matter what side
Put 3 polished shells in your pocket, give the zip bag to #2 for brass pickup
Give Instructions for calling commands after you leave. Remind them to stay in formation
Location – along side of the seating or slightly forward, to see/hear the chaplain and casket.
Check safe direction, and do a dry Run with Rifles.
Review all commands and instructions for when you leave. Coordinate with Bugler
Show them safety push with back side of trigger finger
Careful with butt stocks to avoid fouling gloves-shirts, use pad in the trailer
When indoors, bring the squad back in to the back of the chapel to salute the presentation.

Casket Arrival ID the location you expect to see them.
Post someone as lookout (may be police, fire, headlights or just the flower van)
Upon arrival, get team quieted down and in formation, check uniforms
Hearse Doors opened – “RIFLE DETAIL, TEN HUT”
Flag Starts to emerge – “PORT ARMS, PRESENT ARMS”.
When they back away from the casket: “ORDER ARMS”, “REST”
Where are the stripes ? Walk up front if needed.

-----Consider taking a seat, this could be a LONG time-----

Rifle Salute and taps Look for the chaplain to approach the podium (listen for the sound system)
Motion Bugler to power on. Quickly Form Up 20-30 deg right of safe direction.

“RIFLE DETAIL, TEN HUT”, “DRESS RIGHT DRESS”, “READY FRONT”

When Prayer ends, Listen “For all those that are able, please stand....”

“DETAIL, TEN HUT”, “PORT ARMS-SAFETY”, wait 2 sec, “PREPARE TO FIRE” (Left Foot Fwd)
“READY-AIM-FIRE” (2, 3) “READY-AIM-FIRE” (2, 3) “READY-AIM-FIRE”
“CEASE FIRE-PORT ARMS-PRESENT ARMS” You Salute *TAPS*
“PORT ARMS_SAFETY”, “ORDER ARMS, REST”

Rifle Commander Brass Insert - Meet with the Commander and/or folder for details on what they prefer, then follow their instructions. The following is the most common procedures for the average service. Always be prepared to adjust as necessary, and ALWAYS get your questions answered BEFORE the service. Don't forget to check your approach lanes for spacing, and obstacles, and "FIND the STRIPES".

Get polished brass from Karl, **Matt**, or Tim. Assign a member to call commands for the flag presentation and give them the zip bag for empties. Remind everyone to stay quiet and in formation until your return (no brass pickup). Don't leave the front until the folders break formation, they know when it's appropriate.

You should have already scouted out the side with the stripes. If you forgot, get close enough to see who is folding. It is almost always Max. When Max is absent Charlie usually folds (maybe Karl or Alan in the summer). Don't assume you know who the folder is, things can change at the last minute. **The most important thing is making sure you come in on the STRIPES side**, where the folder is. The folder is the one who will do the about face and present the flag for insert.

Most Graveside services will require you to approach from the sides. The key is to know (or find out) where the stripes are. Get your polished brass ready as you slowly walk up front, squaring your corners as best you can. Try to be inconspicuous as you get close to your approach lane. Hold short about 5-10 paces from the folder.

When you hear "John Paul Jones" from the Chaplain (or when the commander finishes the fold - he will come to attention just before the salute), SLOWLY approach the rear of the folder to about 3 paces and look for the Commander to begin his salute (the folder will do his about face right after the salute). As he brings his hand up to salute, come forward to 2-3 feet behind the folder. The key is to arrive behind the folder as the salute is finishing and not before.

When he turns to face you, close the gap for the insertion. Listen to the Chaplain say the 3 key words. Hold up the brass and insert after each word DUTY-HONOR-COUNTRY. Pause briefly with your hand up to show the brass. Push the shells half way in towards the closest side, then over the curve in the fold.

Watch the commander and folder. Copy their movements as they turn toward the family, then salute. As they depart, get in line and follow them out. Stay with them until they break ranks and then return to your squad to retrieve the brass. Finally, check the rifles are safe and give them to Karl (or Tim / Matt) along with the brass in the zip bag. **Tell us if there were any malfunctions. Any rifle with a live round in the chamber needs to be unloaded (being careful to preserve the "dummy" rounds for loading).**

For indoor services, the basic process is the same with the following differences. Quietly, bring the squad in to form up in the rear of the sanctuary. Stay with them until about 3 folds to go, then slowly approach the front, holding short at the front pew. When you hear John Paul Jones, come forward slowly, squaring your corners as you look for the Commander to begin his salute. The rest is the same.

Port Arms Command - From now on the "Port Arms" command will be given before ALL "Present Arms". This includes the casket salute, the flag presentation and also after the cease fire call. This will prepare everyone to "Present Arms" in unison, and also make sure the barrel is in a safe direction after "Cease Fire".

Tip – Before "Order Arms", bring everyone to "Port Arms" to get the safety back on. This is especially important if someone missed a round leaving a live one in the chamber. If this isn't done after present arms, do it before falling out for brass. One last benefit, no one moves for anything without a command.

Pocket Guides - Rifle Squad

Loading (use protective pad for butt stocks)

Live Round at the top (Crimps)
Slam bolt shut (check lug below Op-Rod arm)
Cycle the safety forward and back

Rifle Cage

Ammo Can Closed and behind rifle stocks
All rifles secured with bungies
Top Cross Bar inside all 4 brackets
Cross bar Secured with bungie

2-Man Rifle Loading

Clip delivery-to back of can

Load from the front

SAFE Direction, Safety ON

Gas Lock Tight, Hand Hold Loose

Lock Bolt Open, Clear Chamber

Dummy Down, Crimps on top

Confirm Top Round moving FWD

Slam lock the bolt forward

Check lug is under the Op-Rod

Cycle the Safety, Safety ON

Malfunction Review

1-Can't pull the trigger Safety ON

Push it off, catch up on 2nd shot

Next 3, Your DONE, Don't Touch

Point Safe, Follow commands

2-Hammer Clicks - Does NOT Fire

Warning -- Possible Hang-Fire

3-Trigg pulls - NO click - Not Cocked

4-Jammed -- Extract or Eject Failed

Safety-Trigger Basics

Safety engaged = Trigg won't move

Trigger won't Move = Safety must be ON

Hammer released = Safety inoperative,

trigger moves freely, does nothing

Dry Run

SAFETY ON, FINGERS CLEAR of the trigger

Form Up

Rifle Detail Ten Hut

Dress Right Dress – Ready Front

Casket Arrival

Rifle Detail Ten Hut (when they form up)

Port Arms - Present Arms (start to move back)

Order Arms – Rest (after departing casket)

Rifle Salute (RAISE YOUR VOICE)

Rifle Detail Ten Hut

Port Arms - Safety (wait 2 sec)

Prepare to Fire (Left foot Fwd)

Ready - Aim - Fire 2 3 (TWICE)

Ready - Aim – Fire - Cease Fire

Port Arms - Present Arms ****TAPS****

(NO safety until commanded)

Port Arms – Safety, Order Arms – Rest

Flag Presentation

Rifle Detail Ten Hut (when he kneels)

Port Arms - Present Arms (when he stands)

Order Arms – Rest

Methods to learn the Commands (or any other position)

Best way to practice is a method I used with new pilots called "chair flying". This may sound silly, BUT IT REALLY WORKS. It's a great defense against CRS. You will feel like you have already done it for real.

1. Find some place quiet, and hide your phone, Get a rifle or a stick, close your eyes and picture yourself standing in the cemetery. One event at a time, practice the whole sequence OUTLOUD with the rifle and the motions: Form-up, Casket, Safety Off, Volley, Brass Insert, Present Arms.
2. Every service, I walk through everything in my mind that's going to happen, including every position. I do this the night prior and during the long drives. I run through ALL commands out loud, recite the flag presentation, etc. This prepares me to step into ANY position as needed. If you have forgotten anything, or simply are not sure, read the manual and review notes, then ask questions when you arrive.
3. Anytime you are waiting during a service (dead time), run through the very next thing that's coming up silently recite the commands, always staying one step ahead.

Bugle Player

3 controls: clockwise L to R: Play (Only "rounded" button, starts taps in 5 sec)

Green Light (on when playing, basically useless) Volume - Knurled Dial (R increase)

Red Light (on steady = good batt, tough to see in bright light)

Power – "Slide" switch furthest to the right (L on – towards Red light, R off)

SETUP: Check Battery – power on (furthest to the right), red on steady if battery good, flashes if low
Select location where you can see/hear Chaplain and Rifle Commander (it is best to be out of direct sight of the family (to the side and slightly behind, far enough to sound somewhat distant)

Test Play – it is the only "rounded" button (and furthest to the left).

Set Volume based on distance, get a helper to assist. The older bugle (#2) needs at least ½ volume

CEREMONY: Follow all the commands from the Rifle Commander (Attention, Present Arms, etc.)

When Chaplain begins, turn power on (square slide towards the red light, check on)

Get your finger ready to push the rounded button (furthest away from power)

As soon as you hear "Cease Fire" push play. You have 5 sec to get it to your lips.

When finished playing, lower it to turn power off (slide away from red light, check light off)

MALFUNCTION: If anything goes wrong, FIRST GET THE POWER OFF.

Start over, power on, Red light on, Hit play

Still not working after two 5 sec delays ?? Motion to David thumbs down and he will play the app

Once again check power OFF

POCKET GUIDE

Check Battery – Volume (test location)

Chaplain Begins – Power on (Red on)

Cease Fire – Play (Green on)

POWER OFF – Light off

Securing Door - Inside Services

This is an important position for keeping outside noise from distracting from the service. It can be done by the bugler but not efficiently, or completely.

As soon as possible (best time is during Dry Run practice), coordinate with the Rifle Commander **AND Bugler** on how you will operate the door, and what your signal will be for him to begin the Volley.

When the rifle squad and bugler file outdoors, you stay inside as they get formed up and review last minute commands. Position yourself to see and hear the Chaplain. The bugler turns power on, and everyone waits for you to open the door. Open and close the door slowly and be careful when it shuts.

When the Chaplain invites everyone to stand for the Rifle Salute and playing of Taps (you should see everyone stand), you open the door fully and signal the Rifle Commander to begin. If able to hold it open at attention, salute during Taps, otherwise, just secure the door fully open.

When Taps is finished, stay outside and close the door completely. When the team is ready to re-enter, quietly open the door for them to file in and form up at the rear.

Occasionally, mostly at funeral homes, you may be needed to assist in opening a lane for the casket dolly, opening double doors, or loading the casket.

Flag Middle

Coordinate with the flag folders on where they want you before and during the fold. Your primary responsibility is to steady the flag in high winds, NOT to help fold the flag. Scout out your avenues of approach for obstacles and tripping hazards.

Cemetery-Casket - Take your position up front with the Commander for the casket arrival and be ready for the Commands to Salute. When the Chaplain says "The flag Folding Ceremony...." The folders will approach the casket, you hold short at attention (NO Salute). They will salute the flag, remove the band, pull it off the casket and partially fold it as they line up the stars with the recipient (if possible). When they stop in position with the flag vertical (and are FINISHED adjusting the "Offset"), you slowly approach the center behind the flag, square your corner to face the family, and grasp the top and bottom of the flag. The far hand should be 6-8 inches MIN away from the Blue, near hand about shoulder width on the side of the folder, help adjust the top edges to hold the "Offset", about 1-1/2 to -2 in, NO Salute. Be careful to keep the top edge straight and level. **No Casket** - Same procedure, only the folders will be marching in with the flag already partially folded. Follow the folders and hold short until they are finished adjusting and are in position.

Folding - When the folders turn the flag flat, look left and right to make sure you are in the center. Lightly grasp the near and far edge. Keep checking to make sure it is straight and level with the folders. When the folder gets within 1-2 folds from you, drop the near hand. DO NOT wait until he is on top of you. He needs to see the edge to make adjustments. Dropping hands early is always better than late. After the next fold, drop the remaining hand and step back slightly to give the folder room to pass you. Remain at attention until the Rifle Commander completes the brass insertion.

Flag Presentation - Follow the commanders lead, face the recipient, and salute slowly as he does, then get in line with everyone as they march out.

Holding Flag for Folder

The most important part of this job is coordination with the Folder. This is best done up front as close to where you will be during the service. The first item to discuss is how you will approach, from the side, or up the center.

Casket

Check the area for obstacles and tripping hazards. Take your position up front with the Chaplain and folder. Find out who will call the commands to salute the casket. Most graveside funerals will require approaching from the sides.

When the chaplain says "The flag folding Ceremony...." You will approach the casket and head toward the stars. Once in position at the ends, you and the folder will slowly salute the flag. Next is removing the band and laying it down behind.

Both pick up the flag, move it off the casket for partial folding. You half-fold the stripes up to the stars, setting a 2 inch "offset" on the blue edge. If the folder decides, you will make a second fold (quarter fold) again, up to the same offset.

You will now hold the flag vertically for the remainder of the narrative until Taps is complete. When the Chaplain begins again, you will rotate the flag horizontal (offset on top) and the folder commences folding. Keep enough tension for the folder to make it tight and also to stop sagging, continually checking it is level with his hands. When he makes the last fold, look at the opening to determine which side is first as you must do a 45 degree fold on the long side (diagonal). Leave about a 2 inch space to keep enough material to go up over the bulge. Stuff it in and roll it over the curve if able. Help the folder straighten out the corners and push in any red that is showing. When finished, half step back, Ten Hut and slowly Salute. He will about face to get the brass. When finished he will turn to face the recipient and you do the same. When he rises after the presentation, everyone slowly salutes when he does, then marches out together.

No Casket.

There will probably be a display up front with the flag. Just before the service begins, the folder will retrieve the flag to the rear. When the Chaplain begins, you 2 will open the flag and do the partial fold. When the Chaplain begins "The Flag Folding Ceremony..." you will slowly march up front and stop in front of the family, usually stars in front of (or near) recipient. Ask the folder who will go first. If you are in the lead he will tug on the flag to signal you to stop.

Chaplain

1. Coordinate with Funeral Director to determine the order of service. Find a cue for when you will begin.
2. Check out your approach and the PA system (How to adjust position, on-off, Vol, etc.)
3. Confirm Veteran's name and branch of service (see if there is a preferred nickname)

Check belt, gloves, hat - Lead Team Prayer at scheduled muster, inserting Vet's name for Comrade. Follow Commander's lead for forming up and find out who will call commands for casket

Intro. Prayer – Insert Veteran's name and branch in place of Honored Veteran

Flag Folding Intro – Folders will approach casket for quarter fold (or March in for memorials)

Come to attention after the request to stand for Rifle salute and taps. Salute during Taps

When Taps is finished invite everyone to be seated.

Flag folding – Watch the folder to try and match your narrative to his count of the folds. Slower is better than faster, the folder merely waits for your count to advance.

Brass Insert – when folding narrative is complete, pause as necessary for the Rifle Commander to arrive in proper position for the insert. Watch as he pulls out each casing to not get ahead, slower is better.

Presentation – at the end of the narrative, recite the appropriate Latin and translation.

Offset Flag Fold

First (1/2 Fold) – Stripes up to the Blue, set 2 in offset on blue edge
Second (1/4 Fold) – Same as the first, up to the Offset edge (stars now outside)
1st Diagonal fold to the offset edge, 2nd, match outside opening.
3rd, keep inside folded edge (point it to the inside if needed).
4th match folded edge, 5th back to the offset (pinch it off if needed)
8th fold check that it points between the edge and first star.

Flag Presentation

First, get with the Funeral Home Rep, Pastor, or family and make sure you know who will be receiving (confirm branch of service 1 more time), what their relationship is, and if possible where they will be seated. Next make sure there is a plastic flag holder placed up near the podium (or near your seat if inside) to place the flag in right after the presentation. Check that the printed insert is in there explaining the folds and taps.

I don't know what shape your knees are in. If your joints are having a bad day, lean over instead of kneeling. Make sure you have the triangle pointing towards you. The folder normally hands it to you ready to go. When he does the about face back to you, offer your hand palm up and he will place it on as you put your other hand on top, then back away and pause as he salutes. Turn right or left face as needed to face the recipient, square your corners as you approach. Look them in the eye and relax your composure, less military at that moment and more empathy. No need for everyone to hear you (in my opinion), I suggest soft, medium-low voice.

The actual narrative for presenting the flag has many forms. Here is the one in our manual:

On behalf of a Grateful Nation, the United States ____ (Branch), and the Highland Lakes HG,
I am Honored to present to you this Flag of our Country under which your ____ (loved one) so Honorably, and Faithfully served.
May God Bless you, your Family, and may God Bless the United States of America.

It does not have to be exact, but it is best you decide on exactly what you will say and stick to it forever. Keep it simple and to the point. Anything else becomes a speech. The only thing that is different from person to person is usually the first 3-4 lines.

Starting with "I am Honored..." never changes (except for the loved one)
2 other suggestions for the first 3 lines are here:

**On behalf of the United States of America,
the United States _____ (branch),
and a grateful nation,**

**On behalf of the Highland Lakes Honor Guard,
The United States _____ (Branch),
And a grateful Nation,**

When you have decided on what you will say, write it down and carry it with you. I recite it in the car out loud for every service just to keep it fresh. I still do the same with the rifle commands, I never want to lose the familiarity. I learned that in the fighter business a long time ago, and it saved my butt more than once in an emergency.

I can have yours laminated if you like, just send it to me.

Deputy Armorer

Prep Before Service

Unload clip and 5 empties, then reload with 3 live rounds, place in back of your can
Finish Level 2 cleaning in order of usage (careful not to get behind more than 3-4).
Contact Armorer when complete, so he can update Status Chart.
White glove check with lint free towels.
Get zip bag ready with 3 polished brass.
When loading deliveries, be sure #Tag is with the correct rifle.
Check next to shoot from Rifle Status on Web Page

Arriving On Site

Load deliveries into cage (check correct #Tag, safety on)
Confirm "Next to Shoot", take them out with the ammo can.
Make sure the gas Cylinder lock and BFA are tight, wipe down butt stock.

Loading Clips

In safe direction, lock open the bolt (push against the lever to be sure)
Slowly push in the clip until the bolt moves forward pushing on the first live round
Slam the Op-Rod lever forward to lock the bolt (check slot under Op-Rod)
Cycle the safety off (forward), then on (inside trigger guard)
If you can't push it into safe, it is NOT ARMED - unload and repeat

Misc

Always load rifles with clips from the Trailer can, then refill from yours.
Present zip bag with 3 polished brass to Rifle Commander.

1. When not sure, load an extra and leave the tag on it. This will be last to shoot for late or no-shows.
2. Leave the cage unlocked, unless you feel it is a security risk.
3. Make sure the loaded rifles are monitored visually at all times.
4. Lock-up: ammo can behind rifles, long bungie across all rifles, steel bar inside 4 Tabs plus short bungie