

CHAPTER 16

17 IN THIS VOLUME

Final Honors.

INTERMENT COORDINATOR

The graveside, the bagpipes, the twenty-one-gun salute, the folding of the flag, and its presentation to the next-of-kin.

The interment is also, logistically, one of the hardest events to execute: a cemetery full of uniformed officers in formation, a grieving family at the center, a tent over a grave, a bugler with a single chance to play taps, and weather that will do whatever it chooses.

The Interment Coordinator walks the ground, builds the formation, coordinates with the memorial park, and holds the ceremony together from the motorcade's arrival at the gate through the final dismissal.

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE – FROM AGENCIES WHO HAVE DONE THIS

- 01 **Walk the ground.** A cemetery is uneven, soft, full of hazards. Every slope, tree root, and wet spot is your problem.
- 02 **Time the procession.** From motorcade arrival to first word at graveside is 10–20 minutes. Time it; do not guess.
- 03 **Plan for the bugler twice.** Primary, backup, and a recorded device. Ceremony cannot run short.
- 04 **Blank fire is loud.** Coordinate with PIO for a 60-second-prior social-media notice; coordinate with dispatch.
- 05 **The flag fold is the moment.** Rehearse on grass, at the grave. Folds clean, casings in, gloves on, eyes down, count silent.
- 06 **Family stays comfortable.** Shade in summer, heaters in winter, seating for elders, water within reach, tissues in every pocket of the tent.
- 07 **Dismissal is choreographed too.** Family leaves first; honor guard holds; agency dismisses in order; press released last.
- 08 **One last salute, one last silence.** Command staff lingering at the grave for a final moment after everyone has left. Hold the space.

MODERN CONSIDERATIONS • 2026

- **Livestream of graveside.** Family decision; respectful camera placement; archived copy delivered.
- **Drone overflight.** FAA TFR if warranted; news drone coordination; ground spotters for unauthorized drones.
- **Pre-recorded taps backup.** Bluetooth speaker tested with venue AV; standby at the bugler's position.
- **Press boundary marked and staffed.** Long-lens photography coordinated; family-face proximity prohibited.
- **Sister-agency honor guards credentialed.** Briefed on host agency's flag-fold and salute.

TURN THE PAGE FOR THE CHECKLIST →

CHECKLIST 16 • HONORING THE FALLEN

Interment Coordinator checklist.

A working one-page reference. Begin at first assignment; complete through service close.

PRE-DAY

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| ☐ Walk gravesite, tent, parking, and formation ground. | ☐ Confirm order of honors with Honor Guard and Chaplain. |
| ☐ Confirm any other funerals scheduled at park that day. | ☐ Coordinate with Traffic on motorcade entrance and parking. |
| ☐ Coordinate with Logistics on restrooms, water, seating, weather gear. | ☐ Coordinate with PIO and AV on graveside livestream. |
| ☐ Build inclement-weather and hot-weather plans. | |

ORDER OF HONORS

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|---|---|
| ☐ Bagpiper position confirmed. | ☐ Taps player(s) primary + backup positions confirmed. |
| ☐ Rifle team position confirmed. | ☐ Flag-fold detail position confirmed (2-4-6-8-10). |
| ☐ Fly-over timing confirmed (if applicable). | ☐ K-9 honor timing confirmed (if applicable). |
| ☐ Mounted unit entry / exit confirmed. | ☐ Awnings, umbrellas, weather gear, tie-downs ready. |

LOGISTICS & CASKET

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|---|---|
| ☐ Restrooms and waiting area for family. | ☐ Refreshments for family. |
| ☐ Portable toilets, water, barricades for attendees. | ☐ Media parking and reporting area plan. |
| ☐ ADA-accessible path and seating verified. | ☐ Cooling / warming vehicles staged. |
| ☐ Casket-lowering decision: viewing / private / staff after. | ☐ Vault crew on standby. |