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Arranging for Military Funeral Honors

By Cathy Tyson



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personnel are not eligible, according to Cruz. See <http://www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil/>

for a complete listing of who is eligible.

It all boils down to obtaining a "proof of service document" whether that was for Grandpa back in World War II or for a service member having recently served in Afghanistan. The national archive website is best place to start looking for proof of service documents at <http://www.archives.gov>. In addition, veterans or next of kin of deceased veterans can use the online order form at vetrecs.archives.gov.

The second step is simpler, once you have "proof of service papers," those documents should be delivered to the funeral parlor handling the service; they initiate and coordinate the request said Cruz.

At a graveside service, a special folded flag is presented to the family, three volleys are fired, and finally a bugler plays taps. As a courtesy, organizers generally notify local police about the shots, blanks of course, that are fired. It takes at least a week to complete all the necessary arrangements.

For further information contact Allan Cruz at allanfpcruz@aol.com or via his cell phone at (925) 899-3488. The Veterans Memorial Building on Mount Diablo Boulevard is available for memorial services, for more information call (925) 283-1153.

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"The rendering of Military Funeral Honors is a way to show the Nation's deep gratitude to those who, in times of war and peace, have faithfully defended our country. This ceremonial paying of respect is the final demonstration a grateful Nation can provide to the veterans' families," notes the Military Funeral Honors website.

For eligible veterans nearing the end of life or for folks planning ahead, Colonel Allan Cruz, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.), who is now President of the Lafayette War Veterans Board of Directors, suggests getting some of the paperwork together in advance to arrange Military Funeral Honors. Obviously this is a stressful time for families, even for those putting their affairs in order, but some find comfort in knowing the preliminary steps are in order. There are various categories of qualification. Military members on active duty or in the selected reserve are eligible, as are former military members who completed at least one term of enlistment. Dishonorably discharged