

GRAVESIDE CEREMONIES FOR DEPARTED MEMBERS

This service is designed to either precede or succeed the regular burial service at the grave side of the departed member, if desired by the family. The wishes of the officiating clergy and the family should be determined in what order the Military Order of the Stars and Bars Service will be conducted.

Prior to the beginning of the service it is desirable that the coffin be covered with the First National Confederate flag (The Stars and Bars). If at all possible, a uniformed firing party of uniformed soldiers and a bugler will be present. All the members will assemble at a short distance from the grave so that they may approach in military step preceded by a flag of the Confederacy (this should not be the battle flag; one of the versions of the Confederate national flag should be used). When all have arrived at the graveside, the Commander will take his place at the head of the casket, the Chaplain at the foot, and the service will commence.

Commander: We are here today to pay the last tribute of friendship in the presence of the honored dead. We are to commit to the grave the body of a comrade whose life aside from its other ties of friendship and sociability was drawn very close to our lives by a bond of love which was formed amidst a common dedication to that great heritage and responsibility which is ours as descendants of a Confederate Soldier in the Confederate States of America.

Chaplain: We have heard with our ears, Oh, God - our fathers have told us - what work thou didst in their days, in the time of old. Surely, I will never forget any of their works. Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. We call upon you, Lord, in the day of trouble as thou sayest, "I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the fountain of the world. Amen.

Lieutenant Commander: He was an honored member of our great Order, true and tried, a gallant spirit who by his steadfastness held up the immortality of Southern Arms. He fought a good fight and has left a record of which we, his surviving compatriots, are proud, and which is a heritage of glory to his family and their descendants for all time to come. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Commander: Once more the bugle call has sounded and another compatriot, obedient to the signal, has laid down in his sleep. No more shall the sound of martial music, the measured tramp of marching legions, the crash of arms, or the roar of conflict arouse in him the warrior's resolve "To do or die." His battle of life has been fought, he has been relieved from his post of duty in our great Order, and he has crossed over the river to rest under the shade of the trees. Let us leave him to his rest, and as the earth will hide him from our sight forever; Let us bury in oblivion any recollection of his human frailties, commemorating only the virtues of one who was our friend. Yet a little while, and we, too shall fold our hands in peaceful repose, from which there shall be no awakening until the last great Reveille shall rouse the slumbering millions to answer to their names before the great Captain of the Universe.

Lieutenant Commander: Compatriots, let us engage in the battle of life with an unfaltering resolve to do our duty. Let our vicissitudes, however trying, no pleasures, however alluring drive or tempt us to abandon our post; and when at last we approach the Sentinel that keeps eternal guard over the great golden gate, let us be prepared with the countersign that will admit us to the company of those who have been tried and not found wanting, those choice spirits who, holding their conscience unmingled with blame, have been in all conditions true to themselves, to their country, and to their God.

Chaplain: God, Creator of the universe and Commander of the hosts of heaven, to thy care we commit the spirit of our departed comrade. While by day the sun makes its round, and by night the stars keep watch and ward above the bivouac of the dead. We commit his body to the earth. Dust to dust, ashes to ashes in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the dead through Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercies of Christ rest in peace. Amen.

NOTE: At the conclusion, the firing party will fire three volleys. The bugler will then play taps. The Commander and Lieutenant Commander, or other appointed members of the Chapter, will fold the flag and present the sacred banner to the widow or other family member. The members will then withdraw and be dismissed by the Commander.