

Sons of The American Legion and Military Funeral Honor Guards

Michael L. Lawler, Detachment Adjutant 2/14/06

Sons of The American Legion Members:

Use of Army Issued Ceremonial Rifles for Honor Guard Services

The official Army determination

"After much discussion with our legal department it is hereby determined that ceremonial rifles may be used by the entire American Legion family of organizations which includes the Sons of the American Legion and the Ladies Auxiliary.

Rifles may only be issued to an American Legion Post, the Post remains responsible for the proper maintenance, storage and security of the weapons. However, it is permissible for the Sons of the American Legion and the Ladies Auxiliary to augment the Post's honor guard, carry and use the rifles.

Be advised that it remains the responsibility of the Post to insure compliance with the Gun Control Act which prohibits the possession and use of any weapon to anyone convicted of a felony and/or a misdemeanor of domestic violence."

Ed Woolverton
Chief, Army Donations Program

Sons of The American Legion Members:

Being Certified to Perform Military Funeral Honors

The Sons of The American Legion can be certified individually with the Legion members, as our organization is under the American Legion.

"Michael; based on the Wisconsin Military Funeral Honors Program we are authorized to conduct a training session for those veterans groups who are part of the State's Veterans Council. These groups are the AL, VFW, AMVETS, and many others.

If you do have members who would like to attend our training sessions with another veterans group that is a member of the council then I don't see that as a problem. I can still certify individuals who attend training, but however could not certify your veterans group.

If you have other questions or need further clarification please feel free to contact me at 1-800-947-8387 or (608) 261-0179.

Ken Grant, Director - Funeral Honors"

[Military Funeral Honors Program, http://dva.state.wi.us/Ben_funeralhonors.asp](http://dva.state.wi.us/Ben_funeralhonors.asp)

Email: honors@dva.state.wi.us

The Military Funeral Honors Program (MFHP) in Wisconsin provides a final tribute to the men and women who served our state and nation honorably as members of the U.S. armed forces. It allows a grateful nation to pay its last respects in a dignified and solemn ceremony. The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) administers the program with assistance from veterans' service organizations, County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs), funeral directors and the active and reserve components of the U.S. armed forces

[Rifle Information, http://dva.state.wi.us/Ben_MFHPFAQ.asp#Rifle,](http://dva.state.wi.us/Ben_MFHPFAQ.asp#Rifle)

The process for the issue of weapons has become easier and consists of proper completion of only four forms. However, the forms shown on the TACOM Web site are obsolete and should not be used.

Contact the Military Funeral Honors Program at 1-877-944-6667 and we will mail the information packet with the proper forms.

The Ceremonial Rifle Donations Program is the responsibility of the U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armament Command:

U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armament Command, 6501 E. 11 Mile Rd., ATTN: AMSTA-LC-LEAD, MIS: 419, Warren, MI 48397-5000 Phone: 1-800-325-2920 Ext. 469434 or (586) 574-5718

Remember that your American Legion Post orders the rifles.

[Ceremonial Bugle, http://www.ceremonialbugle.com/](http://www.ceremonialbugle.com/)

The Salute at Military Funerals is not a 21-gun Salute

Although it is a common misconception, the salute at military funerals is not a 21-gun salute. According to the Arlington National Cemetery website, the practice of firing three rifle volleys over the grave originated in the old custom of halting the fighting to remove the dead from the battlefield. The army would then fire three volleys to indicate that the dead had been cared for and that they were ready to continue fighting.

The fact that the firing party consists of seven riflemen, firing three volleys, does not constitute a 21-gun salute. An actual 21-gun salute means 21 shots fired one at a time, in honor or memory of a high-ranking official or for a special occasion, such as Memorial Day.

Bobbe Stuvengen,
Past National Historian,
The American Legion,
Orfordville, Wis.