

# **NH PATRIOT GUARD RIDERS, INC.**

**RIDE CAPTAIN**

**&**

**FLAG LINE CAPTAIN GUIDELINES**



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# Table of Contents

PREAMBLE 5

LEADERSHIP CODE OF CONDUCT ..... 6

PATRIOT GUARD RIDERS MISSION STATEMENT ..... 6

Article I. GENERAL INFORMATION ..... 7

Section 1.01 NH PGR SUCCESS ..... 7

SECTION 1.02 PROFESSIONALISM..... 7

SECTION 1.03 “REMEMBER THE MISSION STATEMENT” ..... 7

SECTION 1.04 SAFETY ..... 7

Section 1.05 THIS IS A GUIDE ..... 7

Article II. LEADERSHIP ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES ..... 7

SECTION 2.01 STATE CAPTAIN (SC) ..... 7

SECTION 2.02 DEPUTY STATE CAPTAIN (DSC) ..... 8

SECTION 2.03 SR. RIDE CAPTAIN (SRC) ..... 8

SECTION 2.04 RIDE CAPTAIN-IN-CHARGE (RCIC) ..... 8

SECTION 2.05 RIDE CAPTAIN (RC) ..... 8

SECTION 2.06 FLAG LINE CAPTAIN (FLC)..... 9

SECTION 2.07 RIDE CAPTAIN-IN-TRAINING (RCIT) ..... 9

SECTION 2.08 FLAG LINE CAPTAIN-IN-TRAINING (FLCIT)..... 9

Article III. PRE-MISSION CONTACTS ..... 9

SECTION 3.01 CASUALTY ASSISTANCE OFFICER (CAO)..... 9

SECTION 3.02 FAMILY..... 10

SECTION 3.03 FUNERAL HOME ..... 10

SECTION 3.04 CHURCH ..... 10

SECTION 3.05 CEMETERY ..... 11

SECTION 3.06 LAW ENFORCEMENT ORGANIZATION(S)..... 11

Article IV. RECON ..... 11

SECTION 4.01 STAGING AREA(S)..... 11

SECTION 4.02 PARKING ..... 12

SECTION 4.03 ESCORT ROUTE ..... 12

Article V. MISSION POSTING ..... 12

Section 5.01 Title ..... 12

SECTION 5.02	BODY .....	13
SECTION 5.03	DETAILS.....	13
SECTION 5.04	MISCELLANEOUS .....	14
Article VI.	NH STATE VETERANS CEMETERY .....	15
SECTION 6.01	PARKING .....	15
SECTION 6.02	FLAG LINE DISMISSAL .....	15
Article VII.	PLAQUES .....	15
SECTION 7.01	ORDERING .....	15
SECTION 7.02	PICK UP.....	15
SECTION 7.03	PRESENTATION.....	15
Article VIII.	GROUP RIDING PROTOCOL .....	16
SECTION 8.01	RIDERS MEETING .....	16
SECTION 8.02	SAFETY GUIDELINES.....	16
SECTION 8.03	RIDING FORMATIONS.....	17
(a)	Staggered Formation .....	17
(b)	Single Formation .....	17
(c)	Double Formation .....	17
SECTION 8.04	HAND SIGNALS.....	18
(a)	Staggered Formation .....	18
(b)	Single Formation .....	18
(c)	Double Formation .....	18
(d)	Road Hazard .....	18
(e)	Left Turn.....	18
(f)	Right Turn.....	18
(g)	Stop .....	18
SECTION 8.05	LEO ESCORT .....	18
SECTION 8.06	ROAD GUARDING .....	18
SECTION 8.07	FLAG PROTOCOL .....	19
Article IX.	FLAG LINE PROTOCOL .....	19
SECTION 9.01	SETUP .....	19
SECTION 9.02	FLAG LINE CONDUCT .....	20
SECTION 9.03	FLAG LINE POSITIONING.....	20

SECTION 9.04	FLAG LINE COMMANDS & ACTIONS .....	20
(a)	Parade Rest .....	20
(b)	Present Arms.....	21
(c)	Order Arms.....	21
SECTION 9.05	NON-FLAG HOLDERS .....	21
SECTION 9.06	PHOTOGRAPHY .....	22
SECTION 9.07	FLAGS .....	22
(a)	NH State Veterans Cemetery (NHSVC) .....	22
(b)	VA Medical Center (VAMC).....	22
Article X.	UNINVITED PERSONS .....	23
Article XI.	COMMUNICATION WITH THE MEDIA .....	23
SECTION 11.01	DO NOT DISCUSS UNINVITED PERSONS (UP’S).....	23
SECTION 11.02	SAMPLE QUESTIONS .....	23
(a)	Where the Patriot Guard Riders physically at Matthew Snyder’s funeral?.....	24
(b)	What exactly do the Patriot Guard Riders strive to achieve when attending military funerals or protests at military funerals? What do you believe you can do for the families of the fallen?.....	24
(c)	Do you believe the first amendment right protects the picketing of military funerals or funerals in general?.....	24
(d)	How did your organization get started? What was the initial inspiration/event that sparked the creation of your group? .....	24
(e)	Do you believe there is any way to put a stop to these funeral protests anytime soon? Continuing, do you think there is anything the government can do to put an end to military funeral picketing? .....	24
(f)	How long has your organization been in existence? How many members do you currently have?25	
(g)	If you feel comfortable, can you comment on the Snyder v. Phelps decision and what impact you and your organization have felt from this decision? .....	25
(h)	Feel free to add any additional information if you’d like, these are just some basic outline questions I’d love for you to answer. Once again, thank you so much for your time. I sincerely appreciate it!.....	25
Article XII.	RIDE CAPTAIN / FLAG LINE CAPTAIN CERTIFICATION .....	25
SECTION 12.01	RIDE CAPTAIN VS FLAG LINE CAPTAIN .....	26
SECTION 12.02	CERTIFICATION.....	26

## PREAMBLE

This document is intended to set forth the general guidelines for NH PGR Ride Captains (RC's) and Flag Line Captains (FLC's) and to assist in organizing, planning, and executing assigned missions.

The following pages are by no means all inclusive. It is merely what it says, a guide. This guide has been assembled to assist you in completing your mission safely and successfully.

When you are the RC or FLC, remember, the leadership team is here to assist you, that includes your fellow RC's and FLC's as well as the Sr. Ride Captains, Deputy State Captains, and State Captain; do not hesitate to ask. It is better to be embarrassed by asking a question than to have an embarrassing moment in front of the family and guests.

The following three (3) points should be your primary concern as the RC or FLC conducting the mission:

- **The Hero and the Family come first.** We do what they want, when and how they want it. We stand tall and silent. If you cannot give the family you're full and undivided attention from the time of the request to the last memorial service, then ask the DSC or SC to find another RC or FLC. These missions are time consuming and definitely emotional. Be a pillar for the family to lean on.
- **Safety is Paramount.** Riding motorcycles is a dangerous activity. Riding in groups is even more dangerous. Throw in a bunch of Sunday drivers in cages and you get the point. If riders are unsafe, politely ask them to leave. You, as the RC, are the head safety rider and must conduct a safety briefing prior to any mission. We want everyone that starts the mission to finish it safely. Do not tolerate unsafe riding by anyone.
- **You are the RC or FLC.** You should seek advice as required, but in the end, it is YOUR mission. You in conjunction with the other RC's or FLC's assigned to the mission use whatever resources are necessary to ensure the success of the mission. Some people may question your actions; suggest they review the PGR mission statement. However, if your actions are as requested by the family, you have nothing to worry about. It is important that the RC and FLC and all riders are courteous to everyone. Show the family that we are not a band of bad bikers, rather a support group that is assembled to show Honor and Respect for the Veteran and their family.

## LEADERSHIP CODE OF CONDUCT

I will adhere to the Patriot Guard Riders mission statement, and integrate its principles into all my actions as a NH PGR leader. Remaining mindful that all are volunteers, I will treat all PGR members with the same dignity and respect I would expect for myself. I will remember that my NH PGR leadership role is a position of responsibility to those riding escort and to the flag line members. I will do everything in my power to display to Gold, Silver, and Blue Star families, and families of Veterans and home-front First Responders that the PGR Honors them for their service and sacrifices. This is extended to activities Honoring living individuals and units of these organizations. I will remember that our mission to Honor these families and their wishes is my main priority as a NH PGR leader. I recognize that my interactions with law-enforcement, government, and the military reflect on the entire Patriot Guard Riders organization and can have far-reaching implications for those relationships in other areas. I will act accordingly, respecting the protocols and regulations of those agencies. Though the PGR is a volunteer organization, I will remain mindful that we are required to meet certain legal obligations, including handling of funds. I will work with the other leadership team members to ensure these obligations are met and that PGR funds are used for their intended purpose. In my interaction with the media and general public, I will avoid interactions or communications which would negatively impact the reputation and good-standing of the PGR. This includes actions which could present the appearance of political activism on behalf of the PGR, which is prohibited by regulations governing 501(c)3 non-profit organizations.

## PATRIOT GUARD RIDERS MISSION STATEMENT

The Patriot Guard Riders is a 100% Volunteer, Federally registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization which ensures dignity and respect at memorial services honoring Fallen Military Heroes, First Responders, and honorably discharged Veterans.

The Patriot Guard Riders is a diverse amalgamation of riders from across the nation. We have one thing in common besides motorcycles. We have an unwavering respect for those who risk their very lives for America's freedom and security including Fallen Military Heroes, First Responders, and honorably discharged Veterans.

We don't care what you ride or if you ride, what your political views are, or whether you're a hawk or a dove. It is not a requirement that you be a veteran. It doesn't matter where you're from or what your income is; you don't even have to ride. The only prerequisite is **Respect**.

Our main mission is to attend the funeral services of fallen American heroes as invited guests of the family. Each mission we undertake has two basic objectives:

1. Show our sincere respect for our fallen heroes, their families, and their communities.
2. Shield the mourning family and their friends from interruptions created by any protestor or group of protestors.

We accomplish the latter through strictly legal and non-violent means.

## Article I. GENERAL INFORMATION

### Section 1.01 NH PGR SUCCESS

What has made the NH PGR successful is the fact that we are a team. With your own experience, as well as that of the other RC's, FLC's, DSC's and the State Captain, we have a formidable team with a wealth of knowledge and experience at your disposal. It doesn't matter how many missions you have completed, each and every one is different. Each mission has its own dynamic, and it will often change minutes before it starts. A lot of the planning you have put into it may no longer matter.

### Section 1.02 PROFESSIONALISM

During the course of the mission, it is important that you remain flexible. Above all stay professional at all times. The time to voice your opinion about any changes is not at the staging area or in front of any family members. You can pull the DSC or SC aside and talk to them about it. You never know who is listening. We have had family and friends of the fallen riding with us. Your professionalism is paramount.

### Section 1.03 "REMEMBER THE MISSION STATEMENT"

Remember what we are here to do, to show respect for the fallen and their family. We are here to Honor their sacrifice. Because you are the RC or FLC for the mission you have a certain amount of responsibility and authority, do not abuse your position. The quickest way to lose riders, insult family and friends is to strut around and bark orders. If you are overheard abusing your position, consider yourself relieved of your duties. There is no room for this type of behavior. We rely on the riders to support the leadership team; the riders are there to show their respect to the fallen warrior, their family and their community.

### Section 1.04 SAFETY

Safety takes precedence. Take the time to plan and recon the route, parking, and staging areas at each site. A safety briefing is ALWAYS required before leaving a staging area. Discuss safe riding, review hand signals, spacing, and any special considerations regarding your mission.

### Section 1.05 THIS IS A GUIDE

Use this document as a guide. Do not hold it as absolute; it is flexible as are the missions themselves. It is important to talk with the other RC's and FLC's after a mission and discuss lessons learned. Offering constructive criticism is a learning experience for all and hopefully will assist in improving missions in the future. You may not realize it until you are actually planning a mission, but there is a great amount of work and planning required of you, here's where teamwork enters into successful mission execution.

## Article II. LEADERSHIP ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### Section 2.01 STATE CAPTAIN (SC)

- (a) The State Captain shall oversee all NH PGR missions, events, and operations.
- (b) The SC will assign RC's and/or FLC's to each mission depending on availability and experience.
- (c) The SC may act as the RCIC, RC, or FLC for any mission on an as needed basis.

### **Section 2.02** DEPUTY STATE CAPTAIN (DSC)

- (a) The Deputy State Captain's shall assist the State Captain in the general oversight of all NH PGR missions, events, and operations.
- (b) DSC's will assign RC's and/or FLC's to each mission depending on availability and experience.
- (c) DSC's may act as the RCIC, RC, or FLC for any mission on an as needed basis.

### **Section 2.03** SR. RIDE CAPTAIN (SRC)

- (a) The Sr. Ride Captain's shall be the first point of contact regarding any questions, comments, issues or feedback regarding a mission.
- (b) SRC's may assign RC's and/or FLC's to each mission depending on availability and experience.
- (c) SRC's may act as the RCIC, RC, or FLC for any mission on an as needed basis.

### **Section 2.04** RIDE CAPTAIN-IN-CHARGE (RCIC)

- (a) A Ride Captain-in-Charge will be assigned as the overall planner, and organizer of any multi-part missions.
- (b) The RCIC will be responsible for contacting the Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO), Law Enforcement Organizations (LEO), church, funeral home, cemetery, and any other additional organizations/individuals as needed for the mission.
- (c) The RCIC is responsible for contacting the family if required to explain what services the NH PGR provides, such as: Present Flag Line at the Airport, Funeral Home, Church and Cemetery as well as escort the fallen from the Airport to the Funeral Home, Escort Family from Home to the Funeral Home, from Funeral Home to Church, Church to Cemetery. As the RCIC conducting the mission it is up to you to meet the principles and maintain close contact with the family from the start to finish of the mission.
- (d) The RCIC will be responsible for making the appropriate contacts upon his/her arrival at the staging/service locations. The RCIC will pass along pertinent mission information to the other RC's and FLC's; working together to ensure the mission will be a success.
- (e) The RCIC will coordinate with the Missions Group to get the mission posted and emailed to the membership in a timely manner and updating the posting as required should any changes present themselves.
- (f) The RCIC is responsible for coordinating the ordering, retrieving and presentation of the plaque to the family or their designee.
- (g) The RCIC will complete and email to the SC and DSC's an evaluation of the performance of any assigned RCIT's or FLCIT's.
- (h) The SC, DSC, SRC, or RC may be assigned as the RCIC for any mission on an as needed basis.

### **Section 2.05** RIDE CAPTAIN (RC)

- (a) A Ride Captain will be responsible for the execution of all escorts as assigned to include the pre-escort safety briefing.
- (b) RC's will assist the RCIC when required in the organizing and planning of any escorts.
- (c) RC's will coordinate with the Funeral Home, Law Enforcement, the family or any additional individuals/organizations as needed to safely conduct the escort



- (d) The SC, DSC or any RC may be assigned as an RC for any portion of a mission on an as needed basis.

### **Section 2.06**      **FLAG LINE CAPTAIN (FLC)**

- (a) A Flag Line Captain will be responsible for the execution of all flag lines as assigned to include the pre-flag line briefing.
- (b) FLC's will assist the RCIC when required in the organizing and planning of all flag lines.
- (c) FLC's will coordinate with the Funeral Home, Cemetery, the family or any additional individuals/organizations as needed to adequately present the flag line in a dignified and respectful manner.
- (d) In the event that no escort is involved then no RCIC will be assigned and the mission may include only a flag line. The FLC will be responsible for:
  - (i) The overall planning, coordinating, and execution of the flag line(s).
  - (ii) The coordinating with the Mission Group in getting the mission posted and emailed to the membership in a timely manner and updating the posting as required should any changes present themselves.
  - (iii) The ordering, retrieving, and presentation of the plaque to the family or their designee.
- (e) The SC, DSC, SRC, any RC, or FLC may be assigned as a FLC for any mission on an as needed basis.

### **Section 2.07**      **RIDE CAPTAIN-IN-TRAINING (RCIT)**

- (a) A Ride Captain-in-Training must complete three (3) missions with a RC or FLC to become a RC. One of those missions must be a funeral escort.
- (b) The RCIT's role is to shadow the RC or RCIC in learning the ins and outs of organizing, planning, and executing a service request.

### **Section 2.08**      **FLAG LINE CAPTAIN-IN-TRAINING (FLCIT)**

- (a) A Flag Line Captain-in-Training must complete three (3) missions with a FLC to become a FLC. One of those missions must be a funeral.
- (b) The FLCIT's role is to shadow the FLC in learning the ins and outs of organizing, planning, and executing a flag line.

## **Article III.      PRE-MISSION CONTACTS**

The following is a list of primary contacts as well as the basic information you should gather to successfully complete an assigned mission.

### **Section 3.01**      **CASUALTY ASSISTANCE OFFICER (CAO)**

- (a) For the sake of simplicity we'll use the term CAO in this document. The Army uses the title "Casualty Assistance Officer". The Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard use the title "Casualty Assistance Calls Officer". The Air Force uses the title "Casualty Assistance Representative". Regardless of the title, the CAO will be an invaluable source of assistance and information.
- (b) The CAO is the primary military contact for the family in the event of the death of a loved one on active duty. A number of missions begin with the CAO contacting the PGR and expressing the

families' desire for our participation in the services. Most missions where a CAO has been assigned, the CAO and the Funeral Home Director will be your only contact with the family. The CAO is a key player in ensuring the families wishes are accurately conveyed to you. Listen attentively to what the CAO requests of us; they are an extension of the family for our mission purposes. Ask the CAO any questions you may have regarding the PGR's participation in the services. Offer suggestions as to how to conduct the PGR aspect of the mission. Ultimately, what services we provide will be those requested by the immediate family.

### **Section 3.02** FAMILY

- (a) Service requests involving the death of a veteran/hero will most likely come from the family or a representative of the families'. The PGR does not attend services without an invite from the family or their representative. Invites from friends of the family that have not consulted with the family are not valid requests
- (b) The following information should be obtained in order to adequately fulfill the request:
  - (i) Name and contact information for the families point of contact
  - (ii) Name of the veteran/hero
  - (iii) Service information (branch of service, rank, status (active duty, veteran, retired, etc..), dates of service, conflicts served)
  - (iv) Date(s) and time(s) of service
  - (v) Funeral home information (name, address, contact) – if applicable
  - (vi) Church information (name, address, contact) – if applicable
  - (vii) Services requested (escort, flag line ... where, when?)
  - (viii) Next of kin, who will be receiving the flag/plaque?

### **Section 3.03** FUNERAL HOME

The funeral home director should be contacted anytime a funeral home is involved

- (a) Date(s) and time(s) for all funeral home services (wake, calling hours, funeral departure)
- (b) Flag line information
  - (i) location of flag line for the wake, calling hours, funeral
  - (ii) parking for flag line participants
- (c) Escort information
  - (i) Approximate number of vehicles including funeral home vehicles
  - (ii) Proposed route from the funeral home to the church and from the church to the cemetery
  - (iii) Position within the escort for the motorcycles (Typically this will be right behind the lead vehicle and in front of the hearse, however at times the group may be split between the front and rear or behind the family)
  - (iv) Staging/parking location for the motorcycles

### **Section 3.04** CHURCH

The minister/pastor should be contacted anytime a church service is involved

- (a) Time and anticipated length of service
- (b) Entrance that the family and friends will use to enter the church
- (c) Entrance that will be utilized to move the Hero into and out of the church

- (d) Location at the church for the presentation of the flag line
- (e) Available parking area for motorcycles and support vehicle(s) at the church or adjacent property
- (f) Entrance and exit of the funeral procession

### **Section 3.05** CEMETERY

The caretaker of the cemetery should be contacted for the following

- (a) Time of service
- (b) Location of grave site
- (c) Best route into and out of the cemetery
- (d) Parking for motorcycles and support vehicles
- (e) Best location for the flag line. Keep in mind the flag line should not interrupt the line of sight between the family, the Military Honor Guard or the Bugler. The flag line should be present and felt but not the focus of attention.

### **Section 3.06** LAW ENFORCEMENT ORGANIZATION(S)

Depending on the size of the procession law enforcement should be contacted

- (a) Assistance from LEO's in blocking intersections and to provide escort for the procession from the Funeral Home to the Church to the Cemetery.
- (b) Contact local law enforcement in the communities the procession will be traveling through. Provide the approximate time the procession will be passing through (does not apply to highway travel)
- (c) If traveling via interstate for "high profile" escorts it is recommended that you alert local Fire Departments of the cities/towns you'll be riding through that have overpasses. Provide the date and approximate time the procession will be passing through. Most cities/towns will post any available units on the respective overpasses rendering respect to the fallen hero and their family

## **Article IV.** RECON

After you've gathered the necessary information from the required contacts it is advisable to recon all the locations involved as well as the recommended routes. It is also possible to do the recon while making contact with all involved parties.

### **Section 4.01** STAGING AREA(S)

- (a) Locate a staging area in the general vicinity of the church/funeral home but away from heavily congested traffic areas. If the area is private property, seek permission of the land owner.
- (b) The staging area should be large enough to accommodate the anticipated number of bikes and support vehicles.
- (c) The staging area should be easily accessible and identified in the mission post. It should be easily recognized by people not familiar with the area.
- (d) If possible plan the staging area for ease of departure in the direction of travel to the next location in order to prevent a left-hand turn against traffic.

## Section 4.02 PARKING

- (a) Evaluate parking at all locations (church, funeral home, and cemetery). Identify the entry and exit points in which direction the bikes and support vehicles will be entering and exiting from.
- (b) Parking for any portion of the service may need to be done off site so as to not interfere with the services and accessibility by the family and friends. If this is the case then identify a suitable location and make arrangements with property owners and if necessary local law enforcement.

## Section 4.03 ESCORT ROUTE

- (a) The suggested route for the escort should be recon'd in advance to identify any traffic hazards, road conditions or other safety hazards that may hinder the flow of the procession.
- (b) If the locations allow identify backup routes or alternative points of entry in the event of any last minute road closures or traffic delays.

## Article V. MISSION POSTING

When composing a mission post, ask yourself if it answers: Who, What, Where, When and Why.

To have a mission posted to the website and added to the distribution list the RCIC should compose the mission as it should be presented on the website and email that to the Missions Group at [missions@nhpatriotguard.org](mailto:missions@nhpatriotguard.org).

Mission postings are broken up into three (3) main parts:

### Section 5.01 Title

- (a) The mission title is also the email subject line and should include the Hero's name, branch of service, conflicts served, city/town in which the service is originating and ending in (if different) and date(s) of service. The title is not the time to be overly specific; the mission body has plenty of room for that.
- (b) If the Hero was active duty or retired then the title should also include their rank before their name, otherwise the rank will not be included.
- (c) The branch of service as well as conflicts will be abbreviated in the title line, otherwise they will be spelled out in the remainder of the mission posting.
- (d) The title line only includes conflicts in which the Hero served not the era in which they served (i.e. Vietnam vs Vietnam Era). The era can be included in the mission post.
- (e) Examples:

#### **Veteran**

Joseph A. Smith, USA – WWII | Anytown, NH – 01 Jan. 2013

#### **Active Duty**

Sgt. Joseph A. Smith, USA – GWOT (KIA) | Anytown, NH – 01 Jan. 2013

## Retired

Sgt. Joseph A. Smith, USA (RET) – WWII | Anytown, NH – 01 Jan. 2013

### Section 5.02 BODY

- (a) The body portion of the posting is the section to get specific with the Hero's name, rank, branch of service, and conflicts served. In this section you can also include dates of service, deployment locations, or other information about the Hero or his/her military service.
- (b) There is no need to abbreviate within the body of the posting.
- (c) Within the body of the posting we adhere to PGR National post guidelines and avoid terms such as remains/cremains or body. Utilize terms such as "fallen" or hero instead.
- (d) Any reference to the PGR is just the PGR, not the NH PGR or any specific state.
- (e) If available the body should include a link to the Hero's obituary. The obituary will have more details about the individual and family for the members to read.
- (f) The body text should be standard 12pt, Times New Roman font. The Hero's name should be in bold for the first entry and normal font for all subsequent appearances.
- (g) Example:

The family of **Joseph A. Smith**, U.S. Army, WWII Veteran, have invited the PGR to provide an MC Escort from the Funeral Home to the Cemetery and to stand in Mr. Smith's Honor on Thursday, 01 January 2013.

Mr. Smith served with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne and participated in the Battle of the Bulge. Mr. Smith served our country from June 1943 until April 1946, serving his tour almost exclusively in the European Theater of Operations.

[Link to Mr. Smith's obituary](#)

### Section 5.03 DETAILS

- (a) The details section breaks down the various aspects to the mission and should be listed in the order in which the mission is occurring.
- (b) In the event of a mult-day mission that exceeds four (4) staging points it is recommended to break up the mission posting into separate posts for each date. A link for each dates posting can be included on each post.
- (c) Each location should include the name, full address along with a link to the google maps location for gps purposes
- (d) The details section should list the staging time, briefing time, KSU/Flag Line time as well as approximate duration times.
- (e) Include any special instructions for each location such as parking restrictions, escort restrictions, flag line instructions or any additional information specific to that portion of the mission that attending members should know.
- (f) Example:

## Mission Details: Thursday, 01 January 2013

**MC Escort: ABC Funeral Home**, 123 Any Ave Anytown NH

Google Map Link

**Staging:** 2:00 pm

**Briefing:** 2:15 pm

**KSU:** 2:30 pm

*The escort is limited to MC's only, no cages. The route will include travel on I-93 for approx. 20 miles at speeds of approx. 55 – 60 mph. 3x5 flags are welcome and encouraged.*

**RC:** Bill Day

603.xxx.xxxx

[bday@nhpatriotguard.org](mailto:bday@nhpatriotguard.org)

**Flag Line: NH State Veterans Cemetery**, 110 Daniel Webster Hwy Boscawen NH

Google Map Link

**Staging:** 2:45 pm

**Briefing:** 3:00 pm

**Flag Line:** 3:15 pm

*Tall flags will be provided. For those not participating in the escort please enter the cemetery via the south entrance and park between the maintenance building and admin building off to the side, keep off the grass.*

**FLC:** Sue Strong

603.xxx.xxxx

[sstrong@nhpatriotguard.org](mailto:sstrong@nhpatriotguard.org)

### Section 5.04 MISCELLANEOUS

- (a) The sample(s) given above cover the basics and are far from all-encompassing when posting and planning missions. Your training as an RCIT or FLCIT will go into more detail but don't be afraid to reach out to either the Missions Group or your fellow RC's and FLC's for assistance if needed.
- (b) Things can and likely will change at the last minute, the bigger the mission the bigger the chance of something changing. **Be flexible** and respond to the changes with the **PGR Mission Statement** at the forefront of your thinking.
- (c) After completing the mission post email it to the Missions Group at [missions@nhpatriotguard.org](mailto:missions@nhpatriotguard.org) for review and to be posted on the website. Any corrections that need to be made will be corrected by the Missions Group at the time of posting. Any updates or modifications that need to be made to the posting should also be emailed to the Missions Group.

## Article VI. NH STATE VETERANS CEMETERY

The following procedures and protocols apply only to interment ceremonies conducted at the NH State Veterans Cemetery (NHSVC)

### Section 6.01 PARKING

- (a) Include on all mission posts that all vehicles (including MC's) arriving at NHSVC that are NOT riding in an escort must use the south entrance and park on the side of the roadway between the maintenance building and admin building. Vehicles should park so that they are not on the grass. They should arrive as quietly as possible as there may be other services in progress.

### Section 6.02 FLAG LINE DISMISSAL

- (a) Typically the flag line should be dismissed upon the departure of the Military Honor Guard, as requested by the NHSVC administration. However, if the RC/FLC checks with NHSVC administration and there are no other interment ceremonies scheduled in the same section as the flag line is being presented it is at the discretion of the RC/FLC as to when to dismiss the flag line.

## Article VII. PLAQUES

### Section 7.01 ORDERING

- (a) Plaques are ordered by the NH PGR Missions Group when a mission post is sent in.
- (b) One plaque is ordered per mission excluding special circumstance such as a divorce. In such cases an additional plaque can be ordered with approval from the SC or DSC.

### Section 7.02 PICK UP

- (a) Plaques are ordered from Crown Trophy in Hooksett, NH and can be picked up at their facility within 1-2 business days unless specifically requested otherwise.
- (b) The RCIC will be notified of when the plaque is ready to be picked up and it is up to him/her to arrange to have the plaque picked up prior to the mission

### Section 7.03 PRESENTATION

- (a) It is up to the RCIC to present the plaque to the family or make arrangements otherwise
- (b) Presentation of the plaque should occur immediately after the presentation of the flag by the Military.
- (c) When presenting the plaque it is up to each RC/FLC to present in his/her own manner. When speaking with the family be clear, concise, and professional.
- (d) It is recommended when handing the family the plaque to remove the plaque from the protective sleeve (remove the plastic and dispose of prior to) so that the family may see the plaque and read it if they wish.
- (e) The plaque will typically go to the same individual that received the flag, keep this in mind when handing the family the plaque as it should not be placed on top of the flag. If required assist the family in placing the plaque underneath the flag.

- (f) Rendering honors (salute) after presenting the flag is up to the individual presenting the plaque. Non-Veterans do not salute, to render honors you place your right hand over your heart.

## Article VIII. GROUP RIDING PROTOCOL

The following are some of the guidelines to adhere to when riding in groups as part of an escort

### Section 8.01 RIDERS MEETING

- (a) Prior to the start of every escort the RC should conduct a riders meeting with all riders
- (b) Introduce yourself and your leadership team (if applicable). Welcome any new members, or first time members. Identify riders from other organizations such as the VFW, ALR, CVMA, etc. Thank them for participating.
- (c) Confirm that all riders have signed the Release of Liability Waiver
- (d) If LEO's are present identify them and thank them and their departments for assisting. Pass along any specific instructions from LEO's if applicable.
- (e) Review the mission requirements, whom the mission is for, what is expected from each participant. This is a solemn occasion to pay respect, keep the noise level to a minimum and no showing off.
- (f) Integrate the safety briefing into the riders meeting, including a quick review hand signals and safety items
- (g) Discuss the route and identify any potential road hazards
- (h) Identify the lead rider and tail gunner as well as any road guards
- (i) If the procession is stopping or not stopping for intersections, discuss what to do.
- (j) Explain arrival procedures at the group's next destination (entry/exit points, parking, etc...), will there be anyone on site to assist with arrival?

### Section 8.02 SAFETY GUIDELINES

- (a) The RC or his/her designee should perform a quick visual inspection of all bikes prior to any ride. This includes tires, loose equipment or accessories and properly secured flags (if applicable).
  - (i) It is up to the RCIC or RC to determine if a bike and/or rider is fit to ride in a group. If the rider appears to be impaired in any way they are not permitted to ride.
- (b) Make sure you understand the safety guidelines and the safety briefing prior to engaging in a function. If you have any questions, ask.
- (c) There is no smoking while **riding** in a sanctioned event/mission/pre-stage. This policy is not only for the safety of the riders it is also so we project a professional image to the general public and others who may observe us.
- (d) Do not perform any illegal maneuvers or show-off while group riding.
- (e) Remember that the left rider always has the lead position in turns, right or left. Right side riders do not cut-off the left rider in making right-hand turns.
- (f) After making a turn, right or left, it is a natural tendency to accelerate. Resist the temptation to accelerate after the turn as this separates the group. Maintain a steady speed during and after a turn.



- (g) Do not over-ride your own abilities. If the group is traveling faster than you can handle, break formation; the Tail Gunner will assist you in arriving to the destination
- (h) Obey all traffic laws to include NOT passing the formation after serving as a road guard to return to the front of the formation (except where legal). Rather, fall into the rear of the procession. Do not speed. The RC is responsible for ensuring that there is adequate time to make any movements during the mission without exceeding the posted speed limit.
- (i) Vehicles with malfunctions that present a possible hazard will not be allowed to travel in group formations.
- (j) Be constantly aware of the LEO during the process. The LEO's could be moving rapidly up the left-hand side of the procession.
- (k) When riding in formation on a 4 plus lane divided highway, it is safer and preferable to have the procession travel in the left hand lane to avoid any vehicles that wish to enter or leave the highway. Doing so eliminates the necessity for non-escort vehicles to cut through the procession to take an exit or enter the highway.

### **Section 8.03 RIDING FORMATIONS**

#### **(a) Staggered Formation**

The RC/Lead Rider will establish a position on the left side of the traveling lane, the second bike will align 1 second behind the first bike, on the right side of the traveling lane, and the third bike will align 2 seconds behind the lead bike on the left side of the traveling lane. The rest of the bikes will repeat the formation maintaining the same distance throughout.

- (i) Realignment in the formation will be "sliding" forward. One bike moves up to fill an empty position. Do not crisscross positions in formation.
- (ii) Trikes are considered two motorcycles and should ride centered in the travel lane. When a trike and bike try to ride staggered they take up a lane and a half. This could pose problems for any LEO moving up fast in the left lane.
- (iii) Be very aware of spacing and speed when entering and exiting from access roads to highways. There is a dangerous tendency to accelerate on entrance ramps and then brake hard to slow to procession speed.
- (iv) Unless otherwise necessary all escorts will be ridden in staggered formation.

#### **(b) Single Formation**

When road conditions or hazards warrant it, the group will establish a single line formation. The RC/Lead Rider will issue the command. Distance between bikes should be maintained at a 2 second interval unless warranted otherwise by road/weather conditions.

#### **(c) Double Formation**

Otherwise known as Parade Formation, this formation is to be used only in a protected environment where there is no traffic. In a double formation vehicles will travel side-by-side inside of the same lane.

## **Section 8.04**    HAND SIGNALS

These are some of the basic hand signals to be used while riding in formation. Hand signals should be repeated by every member of the formation so that the message is conveyed properly.

### **(a) Staggered Formation**

The RC/Lead Rider will raise his/her left hand, with the index finger and pinky extended up.

### **(b) Single Formation**

The RC/Lead Rider will raise his/her left hand with one finger extended up.

### **(c) Double Formation**

The RC/Lead Rider will raise his/her left hand with two fingers extended up.

### **(d) Road Hazard**

Any rider can initiate this command. In the event that a road hazard appears on the road, the rider will extend the left arm out with the index finger pointed down if the hazard is on the rider's left. The rider will extend their right foot down if the hazard is on the rider's right.

### **(e) Left Turn**

The RC/Lead Rider will extend his/her left hand out to the left side with their palm facing down.

### **(f) Right Turn**

The RC/Lead Rider will extend his /her left arm out bent at a 90 degree angle up, fist clenched.

### **(g) Stop**

The RC/Lead Rider will extend his/her left arm out bent at a 90 degree angle toward the ground, palm facing back.

## **Section 8.05**    LEO ESCORT

- (a) All hand signals still apply while riding in a LEO assisted procession
- (b) Unless otherwise indicated do not stop for traffic control devices when in a procession that is LEO escorted. Proceed cautiously as other motorists may believe they must yield to the LEO only.

## **Section 8.06**    ROAD GUARDING

- (a) Road Guarding is permitted but not to be abused and only to be utilized when necessary to ensure the safety of the other riders in the group.
- (b) All road guards will wear a reflective vest to aid in visibility, including day time.
- (c) Road Guarding is not permitted on the highway; at no time will any NH PGR member come to a complete stop on the highway to stop traffic.
- (d) Road Guards are encouraged to utilize a rolling road block procedure to slow traffic as opposed to coming to a complete stop. This is a safer method than pulling out into traffic and forcing motorists to come to a complete stop in the roadway.

## Section 8.07 FLAG PROTOCOL

For more detailed information regarding the proper placement of flags on non-military vehicles see the *NH Patriot Guard Riders Vehicle Flag Display Guidelines*. When mounting flags on your bike or vehicle the following considerations must be made:

- (a) When utilizing a solo or double flag setup the U.S. Flag should always be mounted on the right side (as your sitting on the bike). From a spectator's point of view the flag should appear over the operator's right shoulder.
- (b) When utilizing a three flag setup the U.S. Flag should either be mounted all the way to the right if all three flags are of the same size and height, or mounted in the middle provided the U.S. Flag is mounted higher than the other two flags.
- (c) Flags should be mounted utilizing a pole stronger than a standard household mount pole from the hardware store. Many times those are light aluminum or wood and will not hold up to the stress of a flag traveling at 55+ mph.
- (d) The RC/RCIC has the final say if they believe a flag is mounted securely enough for the mission. If the RC/RCIC does not believe the flag is mounted appropriately it is up to the rider to correct it appropriately, roll the flag up, or remove it from the bike altogether. If the rider cannot do any of the above they will be requested to leave the ride.

## Article IX. FLAG LINE PROTOCOL

The following are the protocols for how the NH Patriot Guard Riders conducts a flag line. With some exceptions each state does flag lines differently and when in another state each member should follow the direction of that state's leadership. The NH PGR conducts flag lines in the following manner:

### Section 9.01 SETUP

- (a) Prior to the arrival of the members it is a good idea for the FLC to scope out the area in which the flag line will be conducted. In the event of inclement weather is there a spot indoors for the flag line or under cover
- (b) Determine the best approach method when leading in the flag line members, as well as the best route of exit so as to not interrupt the family
- (c) Find a suitable parking location for the flag line support vehicle. Something easily accessible for anyone that may arrive late or need to leave early but far enough so that it isn't in the way of attending family and friends
- (d) Be mindful of positioning the flag line at the cemetery to **NOT** interrupt the line of sight of family, friends, and mourners, the Military Honor Guard or Military Bugler.
- (e) In ALL circumstances, establish the flag line at a "**respectful distance**". Do not establish a flag line that causes family/mourners to have to walk a "gauntlet" to reach the service/wake. We are there to respect and honor the fallen hero and their family as well as to shield the family/mourners from uninvited people. It is difficult, if not impossible to accomplish our objective if we're "in the faces" of those attending.

## Section 9.02 FLAG LINE CONDUCT

- (a) Prior to a flag line the FLC or RCIC will conduct a briefing to go over the details about the flag line.
- (b) When standing a Flag Line, **ALWAYS** remain **SILENT** and **RESPECTFUL**
- (c) Cell phones should be set to off, vibrate or left on your bike or in your vehicle
- (d) There is **NO** smoking, **NO** use of electronic devices. If you cannot comply with this request, please excuse yourself from the flag line. This is about a fallen Hero and their family, not about an individual member.
- (e) Flags should be unfurled at the staging location, not at the flag line location. Upon completion of the flag line flags should be furled again at the staging location.
- (f) Approach to the flag line location should be accomplished in an orderly fashion, preferable in a single or double column. All flags should be carried in a vertical position on the right side of the person carrying the flag. American Flags first, followed by the service flags. Departure from the flag line to the staging location should be accomplished in the same fashion as the approach.
- (g) If you must leave the flag line do so in a quiet and orderly manner. The same applies if someone arrives late and desires to join the flag line.
- (h) At **NO** time should a member standing a Flag Line render a hand salute or other type of gesture (hand over the heart) etc. If covered (wearing a hat), the flag holder should remain covered.

## Section 9.03 FLAG LINE POSITIONING

- (a) The American Flag is **ALWAYS** on the **RIGHT** as viewed from the holder's perspective. Another way of viewing it if you're behind the flag line (looking at the backs of the flag holders), the American Flag should be on the right. If you are standing in front of the flag line facing the front of the holders then the American Flag will be on your left.
- (b) U.S. Service and other miscellaneous flags should be arranged in a flag line (left to right when facing the flag line) in the following order: Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, POW/MIA, Combined Services Flag

## Section 9.04 FLAG LINE COMMANDS & ACTIONS

### (a) Parade Rest

- (i) American Flag: Stand at parade rest with the right hand, parallel to and snug against the right side of the body. The American Flag should be vertical along your right leg with the base of the flag pole placed snug to the outside of the right foot, the flag pole should be resting along your shoulder and the base of your collarbone. The American Flag should **ALWAYS** be held in a vertical position, **NEVER** tilted at an angle.
- (ii) Non-American Flag: Stand at parade rest with the right hand, parallel to and snug against the right side of the body. The flag should be vertical along your right leg with the base of the flag pole placed snug to the outside of the right foot, the flag pole should be resting along your shoulder and the base of your collarbone. In this position the flag should be vertical.

## **(b) Present Arms**

- (i) American Flag: When the call to “Present Arms” is made the American Flag holder should come to attention and the American Flag should be brought to the front center of the holder’s body, held with both hands, with both arms extended to length. The American Flag will remain in the vertical position.
- (ii) Non-American Flag: When the call to “Present Arms” is made, all non-American Flag holders should come to attention and the flag should be dipped forward at approx. a 45 degree angle or as far as the holders arm length will allow. The flag is to remain on the holder’s right side.
- (iii) The call to “Present Arms” will be made when the Hero is removed from the hearse. “Present Arms” will be held until the Hero has been moved into the church/funeral home or grave site. The same procedure applies when the Hero is being moved from the church/funeral home to the hearse. “Present Arms” shall be held until the Hero has been loaded into the hearse and the door is closed.
  - 1) For interments where the RC or FLC knows the service will not be longer than 15-20 minutes the call to “Present Arms” will be made when the Hero is in site (either being removed from the hearse or carried over by the Honor Guard) and all flags and flag holders will remain at “Present Arms” for the duration of the service.
- (iv) The call to “Present Arms” shall be made and held for the following: Rifle Volley, Taps, National Anthem, Pledge of Allegiance, and the presentation of the colors. Observing the Military Honor Guard can be very helpful in determining when to call “Present Arms”.

## **(c) Order Arms**

- (i) The call “Order Arms” will return all flag holders and flags to parade rest.

### **Section 9.05 NON-FLAG HOLDERS**

When in a flag line it is possible to not be holding a flag. This can be because there aren’t enough flags; you arrived late to the flag line or have other duties that prohibit you from holding a flag. In such cases the following actions should be taken:

- (a) Stand Tall and Silent: Unless your duties prohibit you from remaining stationary you should stand tall and silent throughout the service. Your position should be similar to the flag line and out of the way of the family, mourners and the Military Honor Guard.
- (b) Render Honors: Regardless of your role within the flag line you should always render honors where applicable. This includes for the moving of the Hero, the Rifle Volley, Taps, National Anthem, Pledge of Allegiance, and the presentation of the Colors.
  - (i) The Defense Authorization Act of 2009 allows for a Veteran to render a hand salute while “out of uniform” for any of the above listed items. As a civilian (non-veteran) to render honors you would place your right hand over your heart, if you are wearing a cover then it should be removed from the playing of the National Anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance.
- (c) When conducting an MC escort from a funeral service at a church/funeral home to a cemetery, it is not always possible to stand a flag line when the Hero is being loaded into the hearse. Typically there is not enough time to break down a flag line and get the escort bikes into position ready to go for the escort. Thus, it would be appropriate to have the riders form a line

(without flags), at a respectful distance, and render honors (either a salute or hand over their heart) when the call to "Present Arms" is made.

## **Section 9.06** PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography is permitted with a few exceptions

- (a) Anyone taking photo's should do so outside of the flag line either before or after the service and not in the presence of the family or mourners
- (b) Photos of the family, mourners, the casket, or of anything except the PGR is strictly prohibited. This includes any photos of the PGR where the above listed items may be in the background.
- (c) Due to the formalities and precision of a military funeral it may be a first for many of the family or mourners as such they may be inclined to take either photos or video of the service to include the PGR, that is their right.

## **Section 9.07** FLAGS

Flags to be used in flag lines and other events are stored in two (2) locations: NH State Veterans Cemetery and the VA Medical Center in Manchester.

### **(a) NH State Veterans Cemetery (NHSVC)**

- (i) The flags stored at the NHSVC are all 10' non-collapsible poles. There are multiple bundles of American Flags and a complete set of service flags including a POW/MIA flag and a combined services flag.
- (ii) Flags can be accessed during normal cemetery business hours and are located in the maintenance building in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor loft.
- (iii) Flags do not need to be signed out for any services being conducted at the NHSVC.
- (iv) Anytime the flags are removed from the NHSVC for services or events the flags must be signed out. Email [flags@nhpatriotguard.org](mailto:flags@nhpatriotguard.org) with the date the flags were removed along with the qty of flags removed and if any service flags were taken as well. Upon returning the flags to the NHSVC a return email must also be completed.

### **(b) VA Medical Center (VAMC)**

- (i) The flags stored at the VAMC are a combination of 10' collapsible flags and 10' non-collapsible poles all organized in bundles of 10. There is also a complete set of service flags including a POW/MIA flag.
- (ii) Flags can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and are located in the maintenance garage behind the hospital. Outside of normal business hours call the VA Switchboard and request Campus PD to meet you by the maintenance garage to allow you access.
- (iii) Anytime the flags are removed from the VAMC for services or events the flags must be signed out. Email [flags@nhpatriotguard.org](mailto:flags@nhpatriotguard.org) with the date the flags were removed along with the qty of flags removed and if any service flags were taken as well. Upon returning the flags to the VAMC a return email must also be completed.

## Article X. UNINVITED PERSONS

Uninvited persons are just that, uninvited. The only appropriate action is to turn our backs to them and to shield the family from their presence.

Here are some guidelines on how to deal with those that are uninvited:

- (a) Ensure you meet with LEO to discuss any uninvited persons
- (b) **Do not confront** any uninvited persons
- (c) **Ignore** personal taunts
- (d) **Do not threaten anyone**
- (e) Under **no circumstances** should you make physical contact with an uninvited person
- (f) Be aware of and abide by all local ordinances and laws. The LEO's may apply any infraction they can to arrest an uninvited person (i.e. jaywalking, littering, etc.). However they are also forced to apply the same enforcement policies to us as well.
- (g) Be aware that the uninvited persons may have photographers and/or videographers.
- (h) Be **certain** to cooperate with and follow the instructions of any LEO's. If you disagree with the officer's actions, follow the instructions and when it is appropriate, ask to speak to a supervisor.
- (i) Be certain you discuss these guidelines during your mission briefing if uninvited persons are anticipated.

## Article XI. COMMUNICATION WITH THE MEDIA

In a leadership position within the PGR, you may occasionally be asked for an interview by a representative of the media. During interviews you may be asked for an opinion regarding a particular church in Topeka, Kansas. We ask that you temper your remarks. RCIT's, FLCIT's and members should defer all communication with the media to the RCIC/RC or FLC.

### Section 11.01 DO NOT DISCUSS UNINVITED PERSONS (UP'S)

- (a) It is our official policy that we do not discuss uninvited persons or funeral protests
- (b) It is our belief that there are organizations who pour over every word they can find in interviews with any of us. They are looking for any statement, an allegation or accusation that may be actionable, i.e. grounds for a lawsuit.
- (c) Be careful. We've had individuals pose as college students working on a project for journalism class and use that ruse in an attempt to provoke a comment that a court may find slanderous.
- (d) **Please in ANY interview, do not mention UP's. Not by name, not by initials, not by actions.** The truth is, we do what we do. If there is a protest or not, we honor our heroes. We stand for those who stood for us. UP's should never be our focus.

### Section 11.02 SAMPLE QUESTIONS

The following are actual questions with appropriate responses, posed by college students working on a project for a law class.

**(a) Where the Patriot Guard Riders physically at Matthew Snyder's funeral?**

- (i) Yes, we received a personal invitation from LCPL Matthew Snyder's family to attend as their invited guests. Many of our members from Maryland and throughout the US attended the funeral in Westminster, MD.

Patriot Guard Riders attend military funerals, and funerals for Police, Fire and EMT's as invited guests of the family. We also attend Welcome Homes and Send-Off's after the Commanding General or Unit Commander issues an invitation to attend as the guest of the military.

**(b) What exactly do the Patriot Guard Riders strive to achieve when attending military funerals or protests at military funerals? What do you believe you can do for the families of the fallen?**

- (i) We are NOT a protest group or a counter-protest group. We attend missions as invited guests of the family or military unit.

Our members stand reverently on the flag line, holding the American flag, demonstrating Honor and Respect for the fallen hero, their family and their community. Family members have told us that when they see the sea of American flags, that they feel safe and protected. They also realize that someone cares about the ultimate sacrifice that their loved one has made.

We work in conjunction with the military to see to it that our Gold Star families get to know each other and hopefully build relationships with each other. It is our hope and prayer that through those connections their suffering may be eased.

**(c) Do you believe the first amendment right protects the picketing of military funerals or funerals in general?**

- (i) The Patriot Guard Riders is an apolitical organization, so I will not comment on this.

**(d) How did your organization get started? What was the initial inspiration/event that sparked the creation of your group?**

- (i) A group of Patriots in an American Legion in Mulvane, Kansas decided that something needed to be done about the protests at local Kansas funerals. They started a group named Patriot Guard. In Nov. 2005, a gentleman by the name of Jeff Brown decided to take the idea national, and started Patriot Guard Riders. We are now in all 50 states, US territories and protectorates. Today we have a quarter of a million members.

**(e) Do you believe there is any way to put a stop to these funeral protests anytime soon? Continuing, do you think there is anything the government can do to put an end to military funeral picketing?**

- (i) Again the Patriot Guard Riders is an apolitical organization, so I will not comment on this. However, as an organization we do exactly the same thing at every mission whether or not any protestors are present. For the majority of the 7,000 missions we conducted in 2011 there



were no protesters present. If the protesters were to disappear tomorrow, we would continue to carry out our mission in exactly the same manner as we do today.

It's about Honor and Respect, it's about making the family feel safe and letting them know there are Patriots who care about their loved one's ultimate sacrifice and that the sacrifice will not be forgotten.

As for Welcome Homes and Send-Off's, the military units know there are Americans who support those 0.7% of Americans who serve in uniform today and that we care about them and their families, as they protect the other 99.3% of Americans freedoms. Never has so many owed so much too so few.

Our group is made up of every political ideology; we have pro-war and anti-war, veterans and civilians, bikers and non-bikers as members. What we all have in common is our commitment to those who serve in uniform while protecting our freedoms. That includes the Police, Fire and EMT's who serve and protect us at home.

**(f) How long has your organization been in existence? How many members do you currently have?**

- (i) As stated earlier, the Patriot Guard Riders (PGR) started in November 2005 and today we have approximately two-hundred fifty thousand (250,000) members throughout the US and it's territories and protectorates.

**(g) If you feel comfortable, can you comment on the Snyder v. Phelps decision and what impact you and your organization have felt from this decision?**

- (i) Since we are apolitical, it has had no effect on the Patriot Guard Riders or the way we carry out our mission.

**(h) Feel free to add any additional information if you'd like, these are just some basic outline questions I'd love for you to answer. Once again, thank you so much for your time. I sincerely appreciate it!**

- (i) We are an all-volunteer organization, no one receives any payment other than the personal satisfaction of knowing we make a difference to that family on the worst day of their lives, the day they bury their loved one. We get our reward in the smiles and hugs from the families and those who serve our country in uniform.

## **Article XII. RIDE CAPTAIN / FLAG LINE CAPTAIN CERTIFICATION**

Being a Ride Captain or Flag Line Captain for the Patriot Guard Riders is an Honor and Privilege. It is a lot more than jumping on your bike and going for a ride or showing up to the cemetery and joining the flag line. To become an RC or FLC is not something to be taken lightly. These are not titles given to someone just because they have ridden in several missions or been a long time member of the PGR.

### **Section 12.01 RIDE CAPTAIN VS FLAG LINE CAPTAIN**

- (a) Ride Captains are responsible for the planning, organizing and execution of missions from the beginning to the end. A ride captain may assume any role within a mission.
  - (i) Ride Captains are recognized by the National PGR and after certification are given the Maroon Hat.
- (b) Flag Line Captains are responsible for organizing and executing the flag line portion of a mission.
  - (i) The position of flag line captain is not a recognized position outside of NH and as such they are not given a Maroon Hat or the same “authority” at the National level.

### **Section 12.02 CERTIFICATION**

To become a RC or FLC the following must be completed:

- (a) Successfully completing three (3) missions
- (b) One of the three missions must be a full funeral mission. For RC’s this means the planning, organizing and executing of a full escort/flag line funeral mission including the coordinating with other RC’s and FLC’s.
- (c) To remain a RC or FLC you must perform the duties, responsibilities and functions as a RC or FLC on at least two (2) occasions in a 12 month period.