

# Requesting Military Funeral Honors

*Do I need a copy of DD214?*

Many don't realize that military members who die on active duty or in the Selected Reserve and veterans who complete at least one enlistment are eligible for full military honors at their funeral.

There are a few restrictions on military funeral honors-the service member can't have a dishonorable discharge, be convicted of crimes spelled out in the U.S. Service code, or fail to meet the minimum requirements for military funeral honors. Otherwise, veterans are entitled to honors at their funeral which include:

- Folding and presentation of the flag to the next of kin by members of the veteran's branch of service
- The playing of Taps at the funeral service

According to the Department of Defense, military funeral honors consist of a uniformed military detail of at least two people in addition to a bugle player when available.

These honors are usually coordinated through the funeral director, who is required to show proof that the deceased served in a branch of the armed forces and was given a discharge other than dishonorable. A retired or separated veteran's DD214 is the most common form of proof-of-service required as it has all the official details required for the Department of Defense to approve military burial honors for the veteran.

In some cases when the DD214 is missing, the next of kin may be able to get help from the Department of Veterans Affairs. When the veteran was in the VA healthcare system, proof of service is much easier to obtain. Veterans who never made claims or received care/compensation from the VA might not have a paper trail to follow. The DD214 is the best proof of service next-of-kin have to claim military burial honors for their loved ones.

Unfortunately requesting a replacement DD Form 214 from the National Personnel Records Center may take too long; the replacement copy will likely arrive long after the funeral. Surviving spouses or other family members should still request a replacement copy as the DD214 is required for other benefits surviving spouses or family members may be eligible for after the veteran's death.