



National Funeral Directors Association  
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## **2011 POLICY**

### **ENHANCE AND IMPROVE THE FUNERAL HONORS PROGRAM FOR ALL QUALIFIED VETERANS**

#### **NFDA Position**

That NFDA continue to work with Congress, the Department of Defense, individual Service Branches, various veterans service organizations and other interested parties to improve the military honors program and insure that implementing policies regarding the providing of military honors for qualified veterans reflect congressional intent and continue to address our specific concerns.

#### **Background**

By law, certain qualified veterans are entitled to a full military funeral including the presentation of the flag, a firing team and the playing of taps by a bugler. However, in practice, many of these benefits were being denied either because of lack of available resources or because there was no military post of the deceased veteran's branch of service located nearby to perform the service even though there may be a post of another branch of service close to the cemetery. Either by policy or tradition, they did not perform a military funeral service for a qualified deceased veteran of another branch of service.

#### **Discussion**

NFDA has long supported and advocated that all qualified veterans, regardless of their branch of service, are entitled to a full military funeral and burial service. To deny that reality because of lack of resources or the qualified deceased veteran is of another branch of service is not only unacceptable, but also unconscionable. It also can have a severe debilitating and emotional impact of the veteran's family. In this instance, lack of commitment and prioritization on the part of the Department of Defense and/or petty inter-service rivalries, traditions and policies must give way to the greater goal of properly honoring America's veterans who have devoted their lives in service to their country. An NFDA-sponsored provision was contained in the FY 1999 DOD Authorization Act that mandates these honors be performed and at least one member of the Honors Team must be a member of the service of the deceased. Since then, NFDA has been working closely with the DOD, the various Veterans Service Organizations and others to insure that implementing policies reflect congressional intent and continue to address our specific concerns. We continue to work with Congress to enact legislation to improve and enhance this benefit and will continue to do so in 2011.

**NFDA Governance History:**

1998: Committee Action 1/13/98; Policy Board Action 3/30/98

1999: Committee Action 1/26/99; Policy Board Action 3/15/99

2000: Committee Action 2/1/00; Policy Board Action 3/27/00

2001: Committee Action 1/30/01; Policy Board Action 3/19/01

2002: Committee Action 1/29/02; Policy Board Action 3/18/02

2003: Committee Action 1/23/03; Policy Board Action 3/24/03

2004: Committee Action 1/26/04; Policy Board Action 3/15/04

2005: Committee Action 1/18/05; Policy Board Action 3/7/05

2006: Committee Action 1/17/06; Policy Board Action 3/8/06

2007: Committee Action 1/16/07; Policy Board Action 3/26/07

2008: Committee Action 1/14/08; Policy Board Action 3/10/08

2009: Committee Action 1/29/09; Policy Board Action 3/30/09

2010: Committee Action 1/20/10; Policy Board Action 3/08/10

2011: Committee Action 1/27/11; Policy Board Action 3/09/11

Attest: NFDA Policy Board (original resolution)      Date: March 30, 1998      File Code: RES038/Policybd