



NORTH BEACH SUB-BRANCH

Guidelines	Death of Members and Funeral Arrangements
Responsibility	Sub-Branch Executive
Date of Procedure	8 March 2021

This Sub-Branch Guideline is based on Chapter 6 of the “Ceremonial and Commemorative Protocols and Procedures” of RSLWA (Attached), and those of DVA relating to Funerals. It reflects accepted practice exercised by the North Beach Sub-Branch.

In most cases, and where it is appropriate, representatives of Sub-Branch Members attend the funeral, provide a Guard of Honour for the Casket, hand out poppies if requested), and may present the Flag to the Next of Kin.

It is the role of our Sub-Branch to support the family of the deceased member when it is appropriate and has been asked for by them ,and to pay respects to the deceased on behalf of the RSL.

The Responsible Officer for exercising this Guideline is a Wellbeing Support Officer who accepts the role, following nomination by the Sub-Branch Executive. The nominated member who and accepts the role may perform other Wellbeing Support activities - or be a dedicated Wellbeing Support Officer – Funerals (**WSOF**).

*Attending funerals and dealing with grieving relatives can take a toll on personal wellbeing. The Sub-Branch Executive expects the **WSOF** to share the load with others and seek assistance when it is needed.*

When a death of a Member occurs, the **WSOF** may be asked by the Secretary to contact and assist the Next of Kin or the responsible family member (**NOK**).

*The **WSOF**, with support of the Executive, identify a Member who was a friend/colleague of the deceased and/or family, and is willing to:*

- Contact the family in the first instance to offer sympathy on behalf of the Sub-Branch, and:

Enquire:

- Whether they or a family member are able to advise relevant authorities, such as DVA, Centrelink, State and Commonwealth Electoral, State Seniors, etc
- How the Sub-Branch can support them and pay its respects at the funeral.

*In most cases a Guard of Honour is provided where agreed to by the **NOK**.*

- Whether Poppies are required to be distributed to attendees.
- If they want a Sub-Branch tribute (Eulogy) at the funeral.
- Whether they have a particular Sub-Branch member that they wish to deliver a Eulogy at the Service; and
- Enquire (if appropriate) who will receive the flag.

Note – the family of the deceased member may have already made funeral arrangements, in accordance with the wishes of the deceased.

Information gathered by a nominated Member is to be collated and passed on to the **WSOF**, .

The **WSOF** may / will:

- Assist with, or provide advice to the **NOK** or family member on how, to:
 - Advise DVA Bereavement Section.
 - Request ADF records if necessary, for eulogy purposes.
 - Advise the RSLWA Advocate team – who will notify Legacy in the case of a surviving Widow/Widower.
- Contact the nominated funeral director and celebrant to make them aware what the **NOK** has requested of the Sub-Branch, your role, and contact details.

The Sub-Branch Secretary and President are to be kept advised of Sub-Branch involvement, timeframes and whether further support is needed.

Prepare for the service:

- Confirm funeral details with members and brief them on timings, Sub-Branch role and dress standards.
- Collect together information in order for a eulogy to be prepared, if requested by the **NOK**.

*If the **NOK** requests that an RSL Eulogy be delivered at the Service, then it may be given by a Sub-Branch friend or associate of the deceased, or the Sub-Branch President.*

- Obtain the Flag (if used) and pass to Funeral Director.
- Clarify who will present the Flag to the **NOK**. This may be funeral director, family member or Sub-Branch representatives.

At the service.

- Ensure all Members have poppies, if required.
- Liaise with the Funeral Director and the Celebrant.
- If it has been requested by the **NOK**, ensure there is a recording of “Last Post” and “Rouse” and establish a cue for their playing.
- Present the flag to the **NOK** if it is to be a Sub-Branch representative.

If requested by the **NOK**,

- discuss War Grave entitlements with the RSLWA Wellbeing Advocate team.

Flag Procedure at RSL Funerals

It should be noted that it is RSL policy that the Australian National Flag should be used at all RSL funerals, except in the circumstances where the deceased member was a British Ex- Serviceman, and the next of kin expressly request the use of the Union Jack.

When used to cover a casket at a funeral, the top left quarter (the upper hoist) of the Australian flag should be draped over the left shoulder of the deceased. The flag should be removed after the service at the Chapel / Crematorium or before the casket is lowered into the grave. At all times care should be taken to prevent any portion of the flag touching the ground.

To remove the flag, two representatives (funeral directors or as nominated) are to move to a position at the head and foot of the casket, and:

- Grasp each end of the flag and remove it while stepping clear to one side of the casket and spread the flag to arm’s length.
- Fold the flag once along its width, with the upper hoist facing downwards.
- Fold the flag again along its width, with the upper hoist facing downwards.
- The representative at the foot of the casket then moves towards the other, and hands his corners of the flag, making a fold along its length. The trailing edge is lifted to fold it once again.
- The representative at the head of the casket then drapes the folded flag to be carried over the arm and presented to the **NOK**, with the words “*Presented on behalf of a Grateful Nation*”

CHAPTER 6 - FUNERALS

INTRODUCTION

The form of ceremony to be used at the funeral of an RSLWA Member or ex- serviceperson is discussed below. The ceremony is a suggestion only and may be varied to meet particular requirements e.g. next-of-kin, local Clergy wishes etc.

In the case of a Church only service, followed by a private committal, it is important that the conduct of the RSLWA Funeral Tribute is cleared with the Officiant (a priest or minister who performs a religious service or ceremony). It must be clearly understood that The Rector, Minister, Priest or Pastor has a primary duty to his congregation and their wishes. Additionally he/she has to balance this with the wishes of the bereaved.

Except in the case of a burial, regardless of the type of Service, the Religious Committal is to be recited by the Officiant. In the case of the Church only service; this is when the casket is placed in the hearse.

To re-iterate; prior communication with the Officiant is to be made to ensure that there is no variation in the minds of the Officiant and the RSLWA Representative; or the Veteran's family and relatives of how the service is to be conducted. Also so that the wishes of the bereaved are met.

For the following three forms of tribute the Presiding RSLWA Member should ask for members to stand before commencing the tribute. With seating being more common at gravesides, it cannot be presumed that Members will be standing.

FUNERAL TRIBUTE – CHURCH AND GRAVEYARD COMMITTAL

The following procedure is for guidance only, dependent upon the location and ability of those attending; and of any local custom not contrary to the Objects of RSLWA.

The attendance of Members of the RSLWA at the Church Service is at each Member's discretion.

Prior to the arrival of the hearse at the cemetery RSLWA Members and other ex-service personnel should assemble at a certain location so that poppies can be issued, and the form of Tribute outlined.

The Tribute party should form up in fours (two's if necessary) and then march to the hearse forming lines on either side of the hearse as it proceeds to the gravesite. The form up point is likely to be within the Cemetery grounds.

When the hearse stops the Tribute party continues on to form an avenue (guard) through which the casket is borne to the gravesite.

As the casket passes, each member in succession shall fall in behind the last mourner, as the mourner passes them. At the grave, one file of the Tribute party proceeds to the right and the other to the left to form up on both sides of the grave.

The appropriate time for the RSLWA Funeral Tribute, is immediately before the committal, as long as this is the agreed place in the service.

Form of Tribute

An officer of the Sub-Branch steps forward and says,

“Their bodies are buried in peace and their names liveth for evermore”

An officer of the Sub-Branch takes a place at the grave and delivers the RSLWA eulogy.

An officer of the Sub-Branch steps forward and says:

“O valiant hearts who to your glory came Through dust of conflict and through battle flame, Tranquil you lie, your

knightly virtue proved, Your memory hallowed in the Land you loved."

If desired, and a Chaplain or Church Representative is present, a prayer shall be said at this stage. (Note: The casket is still on the bearer supports for the RSLWA Tribute and is only lowered after the flag is removed).

The Sub-Branch President, or officer of the Sub-Branch, holding a poppy in hand then continues with: *"The hour has come for rest. This poppy- an emblem of sacrifice, the symbol of a life offered in the service of one's country- is a link between our comrade and us who remain. We place it here - in remembrance."*

The President, or officer of the Sub-Branch, drops the poppy on the casket, followed by the other members of the Tribute party in turn saying their own form of farewell or the words: *"Our Beloved Comrade."*

The President, or officer of the Sub-Branch, then says: *"The Ode will now be recited followed by the Last Post, Minutes' Silence and Reveille. Please remain standing."*

The President, or officer of the Sub-Branch then says:

"They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old, Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn, At the going down of the sun and in the morning, We will remember them."

ALL REPEAT

"We will remember them."

The President or officer of the Sub-Branch then says:

"Lest we forget."

ALL REPEAT

"Lest we forget."

Then follows:

LAST POST. SILENCE. REVEILLE.

The Religious Service will then continue with the Committal being said by the Officiant. Dispersal.

FUNERAL TRIBUTE CHURCH SERVICE ONLY

The following procedure is for guidance only dependent upon the location and ability of those attending, and of any local custom not contrary to the Objects of the RSLWA.

The attendance of members of the RSLWA at the Church Service is at each Member's discretion.

Prior to the commencement the Church Service RSLWA members and other Ex-service personnel should assemble at a certain location so that poppies can be issued, and the form of Tribute outlined.

The Tribute party should form up in a group on either side between the rear of the hearse and the Church entrance. The casket is brought into the Church between the Tribute party following the family into the church.

Flexibility has to be allowed due to the variation of situations. Form of Tribute:

An officer of the Sub-Branch steps forward and says,

"Their bodies are buried in peace and their names liveth for evermore"

An officer of the Sub-Branch takes a place at the lectern and delivers the RSLWA eulogy.

An officer of the Sub-Branch steps forward and says:

“O valiant hearts who to your glory came Through dust of conflict and through battle flame, Tranquil you lie, your knightly virtue proved, Your memory hallowed in the Land you loved.”

or

*“O risen Lord, O Shepherd of our dead,
Whose cross has bought them and whose staff has led, In glorious hope their proud and sorrowing land Commits her children to Thy gracious hand.”*

If desired, and a Chaplain or Church Representative is present, a prayer shall be said at this stage.

The Sub-Branch President, or officer of the Sub-Branch, holding a poppy in hand then continues:-

“The hour has come for rest. This poppy- an emblem of sacrifice, the symbol of a life offered in the service of one’s country- is a link between our comrade and us who remain. We place it here- in remembrance.”

The President, or officer of the Sub-Branch, places the poppy on the casket, followed by the other members of the Tribute party in turn saying their own form of farewell or the words, *“Our Beloved Comrade.”*

The President, or officer of the Sub-Branch, then says:- *“They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old, Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn, At the going down of the sun and in the morning,*

We will remember them.”

ALL REPEAT

“We will remember them.”

The President or officer of the Sub-Branch then says:

“Lest we forget.”

ALL REPEAT

“Lest we forget.”

Then follows:

LAST POST. SILENCE. REVEILLE.

The Religious Service will then continue with the Committal being said by the Officiant.

Dispersion.

FUNERAL TRIBUTE AT A CHAPEL

The following procedure is for guidance only dependent upon the location and ability of those attending and of any local custom not contrary to the Aims & Objectives of RSLWA.

Prior to the arrival of the hearse RSLWA Members and other ex-service personnel should assemble at a certain location so that poppies can be issued, and the form of Tribute outlined.

The Tribute party should form up in two lines on either side of the entrance to the Chapel and between the rear of the hearse and the front door of the Chapel. The casket is carried into the Chapel between the two lines of the RSLWA Tribute party.

Flexibility has to be allowed due to the variation of situations.

After the mourners have moved into the Chapel the RSLWA Tribute party files into the Chapel to line both walls of the Chapel. If seating is available or required because of infirmity Members may be seated.

Form of Tribute

An officer of the Sub-Branch steps forward and says:

“Their bodies are buried in peace and their names liveth for evermore”

An officer of the Sub-Branch takes a place at the lectern and delivers the RSLWA eulogy.

An officer of the Sub-Branch steps forward and says:

“O valiant hearts who to your glory came

Through dust of conflict and through battle flame,

Tranquil you lie, your knightly virtue proved,

Your memory hallowed in the Land you loved.”

If desired, and a Chaplain or Church Representative is present, a prayer shall be said at this stage.

The Sub-Branch President, or officer of the Sub-Branch, holding a poppy in hand then continues:

“The hour has come for rest. This poppy - an emblem of sacrifice, the symbol of a life offered in the service of one’s country- is a link between our comrade and us who remain. We place it here- in remembrance.”

The President, or officer of the Sub-Branch, places the poppy on the casket, followed by the other members of the Tribute party in turn saying their own form of farewell or the words, *“Our Beloved Comrade.”*

The President, or officer of the Sub-Branch, then says: *“The ODE will now be recited followed by the “Last Post, Silence and Reveille. Please remain standing.”*

The President, or officer of the Sub-Branch then says:- *“They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old, Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn,*

At the going down of the sun and in the morning, We will remember them.”

ALL REPEAT

“We will remember them.”

The President or officer of the Sub-Branch then says:

“Lest we forget.”

ALL REPEAT

“Lest we forget.”

Then follows:

LAST POST. SILENCE. REVEILLE.

- The Religious Service will then continue with the Committal being said by the Officiant.
- Dispersal.

PERIOD OF SILENCE

A period of not more than two minutes silence is to be observed.