

## ATTENDING A MISSION FOR THE FIRST TIME

Everyone attends a mission for the first time. Everyone has questions. Everybody is nervous to some degree and wonders what's going to happen, what they're supposed to do, etc. NO PROBLEM. When you decide you want to come to a mission, just show up at the designated time and location, start looking for everybody else and park with the group. The people with the maroon baseball style caps on with the PGR logo on the front are the Ride Captains. There is likely more than one at a mission, but one of them is in charge. Just go up to one and tell them that you're new and want to sign up. It's as easy as that. Welcome!! We're glad you're here. Here are some tips we think might help.

- **What are we going to do?** We are going to show respect for the deceased and their family and guests. We are most likely going to form a flag line by holding flags on poles or standing by them after securing them into the ground. We may do other things but there will be a briefing to outline everything. When in doubt, just do what everybody else is doing and ask somebody around you what's going on. The main thing is to stand tall and silent as a show of honor and respect.
- **What do I wear?** If you're on a motorcycle, wear what you would normally wear if you were out for a ride in the current weather conditions. If you're not on a motorcycle, wear what you would wear to be outside for a while on that day. Since we are outside the entire time, normal funeral attire is not required.
- **What should I NOT wear?** Please remember the setting you are in. We are invited guests to a very solemn occasion. It is not appropriate to wear clothing with vulgar or obscene sayings or that depicts nudity. Families attend these occasions and it is our mission to show honor and respect to all persons. The idea is to not offend anyone, cause a disruption, or draw attention to yourself.
- **What should I bring?** The PGR will supply the flags and water. If water is not going to be provided, that will be in the mission announcement. For anything else, like snacks, sandwich, sunscreen, hat, sport drink, rain gear, you're on your own. Depending on the type of mission, it could be a long day so try to plan accordingly.
- **How do I find out when and where the mission will be?** Check the final itinerary for the mission you will attend. All information related to the mission can be found there.
- **What are the requirements for Motorcycles or Cages?** None, really. For safety reasons we ask that you be a proficient rider or driver. If you're not comfortable riding in a formation, please let the Ride Captain know. If your motorcycle or vehicle may not be able to keep up, please let the Ride Captain know. If the Ride Captain thinks your bike or vehicle may not be safe, he/she may exclude you from riding with the group. Remember, the Ride Captain has final say.

- **What do some of the terms mean?** There are some words and acronyms that may sound strange the way they are used in our world. For example:
- **Cage** – A vehicle that's not a motorcycle. A car, truck, etc.
  - **Staging** – This is where we meet at the beginning of a mission and where a briefing will be held so we get the necessary details and information for the mission from the Ride Captain.
  - **Big Flag Bike** – A motorcycle that has a 3'x5' flag(s) mounted on it.
  - **KSU** – Stands for Kick Stands Up, or departure time.
  - **Flag Truck** – A vehicle used for transporting the flags/poles from one mission to another. It also carries water to the missions.
  - **KIA** – A service member that was Killed In Action
  - **Active Duty Death** – A person in the military who died while on active duty but not killed in action.
  - **Blue Star Family** – A family who has an immediate family member currently serving in the Armed Forces of the United States during any period of war or hostilities in which the Armed Forces of the United States are engaged.
  - **Gold Star Family** – A family who has had an immediate family member killed while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States during any period of war or hostilities in which the Armed Forces of the United States are engaged.
  - **Uninvited Guests** – Anyone that the family has not invited to the funeral or memorial service(s). A term commonly used to refer to protestors from the Westboro (KS) Baptist Church.
  - **LEO** – Sometimes pronounced as the word Leo. Law Enforcement Officer.
  - There are many others but this will get you started. Please don't hesitate to ask someone if a term slips by that you're not sure about.

A brief suggestion about general conduct: The Patriot Guard Riders are becoming more and more well known and are fast becoming a household name in both civilian and military culture in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world. While it is not our purpose to try and tell anyone how to conduct their lives, we cannot deny that the PGR is easily

recognized in public and our image is important to what we represent. The terms “respect” and “honor” are in our literature, on our patches, and freely spoken by all of us when we describe the mission of the Patriot Guard. Our logo contains the revered symbol of the folded U.S. flag. Let’s face it; people look up to us, what we do and what we stand for. Please consider that when wearing your PGR merchandise or otherwise identifying yourself as a Patriot Guard Rider. Engaging in any activity that may discredit the organization will hurt our mission. It will lessen the honor that we have shown those for which we have stood tall and silent. And probably worst of all, it will cause pain and disappointment to the families we are so proud to serve. You only have to look into the devastated eyes of a widow, child missing their parent, or mom and dad once to know that you never, ever want to do anything to cause them any more pain than what they’re already going through. Like it or not, we have a responsibility to those people. We’re not a secret any more. Let’s all please think about these things when we can be identified as Patriot Guard Riders.

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### **ROAD GUARDING**

Road guarding is defined as any time that we take, or attempt to take, the right-of-way away from the travelling public, be that on a public or private street, road or parking lot that is available for public traffic. In more recognizable terms, when we hold up traffic so we can go through a red light, stop sign, or some other kind of traffic control device.

In short – **WE DON’T DO IT.**

To do this by a civilian in Texas is illegal and the North Texas PGR does not engage in breaking the law. We are aware of laws regarding funeral processions, etc. Those do not cover what we are talking about here. Please notice we have included parking lots. If we are in a mall parking lot (for example) that is set up with traffic control devices, we will obey those. We will, at all times, obey the same laws that everyone else does. Wearing a patch and riding a motorcycle does not make us exempt.

### **ANY EXCEPTION MUST, AND CAN ONLY, BE APPROVED BY THE RIDE CAPTAIN ON SITE.**

The only situation where PGR riders being road guards will be considered will be at the specific request of Certified Texas Peace Officers. This does **not** include requests from riders of funeral escort companies. There is a difference. These Peace Officers must speak directly with the Ride Captain on site, who will work out the details with Law Enforcement. Any riders used by Law Enforcement will then become the responsibility of Law Enforcement for training and assignment.

No rider may be a road guard who has an unfurled “big flag.” No rider may be a road guard who is riding with more than one person on their motorcycle. The Ride Captain

will not participate as a road guard. The Ride Captain and Law Enforcement will be the judges as to the fitness of the person and their equipment for road guard duty.

**THESE EXCEPTIONS WILL BE EXTREMELY RARE. IT IS THE POLICY OF THE NORTH TEXAS PATRIOT GUARD RIDERS THAT WE DO NOT ROAD GUARD.**

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### **TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS**

- Do not take any pictures of the family and guests unless the Ride Captain authorizes you to do so.
  - Do not take any pictures of the coffin. If those are to be taken, our photographers will take them. (See below.)
  - Do not leave any procession to take pictures.
  - Do not stop or slow down your vehicle in any procession to take pictures. If this means that you are unable to take pictures then you should not be trying in the first place.
  - Do not take pictures while holding a flag.
  - Do not take any pictures inside the church, funeral home, religious establishment, or other building used for the service. If those are to be taken, our photographers will take them. (See below.)
  - Do not take pictures of the presentations to the family. If those are to be taken, our photographers will take them. (See below.)
  - Do not take any pictures of Uninvited Guests – **ever**.
  - You may see a couple of our riders who have been given permission to roam the mission sites for the express purpose of taking photographs. These riders have been individually briefed and been provided any special instructions pertaining to the particular mission regarding photos. They may have special permissions, instructions and requests from the family to take photographs that other riders do not have. Unless you have been specifically briefed by the Ride Captain prior to a mission on photographic rules for that mission please adhere to the general rules above.
  - If special photographs have been authorized for public viewing they will be available for everyone to see on the web site.
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## Texas PGR Organizational Structure

There is an organizational structure within the PGR in Texas. Below is an outline of that structure along with a brief explanation of what the job of that individual is.

- **State Captain** – The State Captain is appointed for each state by national PGR. The State Captain has administrative oversight responsibilities for the 11 regions in TX and is responsible for the general smooth operation of the PGR in Texas. The State Captain appoints and is the supervisory authority of the Deputy State Captains, is the primary liaison with the PGR National Regional Captain and PGR national personnel and is the head of all PGR operations in Texas. The State Captain is the designated contact person for Texas on the national PGR web site and many, if not most, of the missions we do come to the State Captain first. The State Captain can be identified as the person wearing a light tan baseball style hat with the PGR logo on the front and “State Captain” written on the back.
- **Assistant State Captain** – A person appointed by the State Captain to assist him/her with duties as assigned by the State Captain.
- **Deputy State Captain** – A person designated by the State Captain to be the administrative and operational head of one of the 11 regions in Texas. The Deputy State Captain reports to the State Captain. When the State Captain receives notice of a mission, he/she will transmit that information to the geographically appropriate Deputy State Captain for further action. The Deputy State Captain will determine the type of mission, make telephone contacts as necessary, etc., and make further assignment of the mission to a Ride Captain. In Texas, the Deputy State Captain is responsible for anything that happens in his/her region. Web site administration, most equipment procurement, funds, etc., are the responsibility of the Deputy State Captain. The Deputy State Captain is responsible for the supervision and training of the Ride Captains and ensuring that all missions are carried out appropriately. The Deputy State Captain can be identified by his/her light tan baseball style hat with the PGR logo on the front and “Deputy State Captain” written on the back.
- **Assistant Deputy State Captain** - The Assistant Deputy State Captain is a person who has been appointed by the Deputy State Captain to assist with duties as assigned by the Deputy State Captain. The Assistant Deputy State Captain will usually be a current or former Ride Captain due to their familiarity with the particular duties of both positions.
- **Ride Captain** - The Ride Captain has the hands on responsibility for any PGR mission. When a mission is assigned by the Deputy State Captain, it is the responsibility of the Ride Captain to research all information available about that mission. He/she is responsible for contacting the family of the honoree, the funeral home, the military, the church, the cemetery and anyone else who may have information relevant to our mission or who may have interaction with the PGR at any point. Most of the time these details are ever changing, requiring the Ride Captain to be flexible, diplomatic and persistent, yet firm in obtaining solid information as soon as possible so the riders can

have information as soon as they can before the mission. The Ride Captain is responsible for preparing the final itinerary and submitting it to the Deputy State Captain in a timely manner so it may be distributed to the riders and posted on the North Texas web calendar. The Ride Captain is also the PGR primary contact with the honorees' family. This duty requires sensitivity, understanding and a knack for being able to understand and anticipate their needs. It is the Ride Captain who presents a plaque and, on the occasion of a KIA, a coin on behalf of the PGR of North Texas. This is a serious and solemn responsibility and is very often quite emotional for the family and the Ride Captain. The Ride Captain is in charge of planning all logistics of the mission, from flags to water to escort procedure and route to flag line location to anything else mission related. For that reason, and many others, the Ride Captain is in complete charge of a mission once it has been turned over to them by the Deputy State Captain. They have the full support of the Deputy State Captain and the State Captain. They can be identified by their maroon baseball style hat with the PGR logo on the front.

You may notice some things that differ at North Texas PGR missions than you may be used to elsewhere. This might help explain some of them.

- You will rarely see the Ride Captain in charge of a mission standing with a flag in a flag line. The Ride Captain has many responsibilities before, during and after a mission. They are too numerous to mention them all here, but they include keeping an eye on all of the riders to ensure their well being, presenting plaques and coins as necessary, being available to the funeral personnel, military and family at a moment's notice in the event of last minute changes (which are not at all unusual), etc.
- You may see some other Ride Captains, who are not directly in charge of the mission, also not standing with a flag in the flag line. As a general rule in North Texas, additional Ride Captains have been asked to assist the Ride Captain in charge with duties such as keeping an eye on riders to make sure they do not become exhausted, dehydrated, ill, etc., while in the line. They will assist in handing out water, giving riders breaks as necessary, assisting elderly or disabled family members if required, etc. In situations where assistance is not required, the "extra" Ride Captains have been asked to stand in the flag lines if possible but to still keep their eyes open and assist when needed. It may seem to some like they are "goofing off" but that is NOT the case. They are occupied with assisting the Ride Captain in charge.
- You may see the Deputy State Captain or the State Captain performing the same tasks as the "extra" Ride Captains. At a mission they are present to assist in any way needed to ensure a safe and successful mission. Often times these individuals, along with many of the Ride Captains, have a working relationship already established with funeral home, military, church, and other personnel and you will see them conversing with these persons and making introductions. This is all part of the rapport that has been established over time between these people and the PGR and part of what makes the PGR so readily accepted in North Texas.

- You are likely to see one or two PGR members taking photographs and not standing in a flag line the entire time. This is explained in the Photographs section above and is an approved function.

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## Safety

This is perhaps the simplest but most important guideline to address of all. Safety is paramount. It is our top priority. We cannot honor anyone if we don't get there safely, either individually or as a group. If you think something is not safe, it probably isn't.

**Unsafe activity of any kind will not be tolerated and will be cause for the Ride Captain in charge of a mission to dismiss a rider from a mission or other activity.**

It is a shame to have to put something in those terms, but that's how important it is.

If someone's equipment is unsafe, if someone's riding is unsafe, if someone's actions are unsafe in any manner, that person jeopardizes not only themselves but their fellow riders, the public and the mission of the PGR. On any mission or event where a Ride Captain has been assigned, the Ride Captain has final say as to what is unsafe in any category. Anything that is unsafe will not be allowed to continue.

The Ride Captain cannot see everything. It is every rider's responsibility to be on the lookout for anything that is unsafe. If it's a hole or obstruction in the road, we point it out, right? Simple. Anything that anyone sees that is unsafe, happens contrary to the instructions given by the Ride Captain or otherwise jeopardizes anyone's safety or the safety of the mission must be pointed out to the Ride Captain in charge of the mission, one of the other Ride Captains or, if present, the Deputy State Captain or the State Captain without delay.

Consumption of an alcoholic beverage, illegal drug or any substance which appears to impair a rider's ability to function is not allowed during a mission and the rider will not be permitted to continue the mission. Arriving for a mission under the influence of an alcoholic beverage or any substance which appears to impair the rider's ability to function will prevent a rider's participation in a mission. The Ride Captain may use whatever resources he/she needs in coming to their determination, but the Ride Captain will be the person who makes this decision and their decision is final.

**In all matters, including but not limited to those listed immediately above, it is anticipated and expected that the riders present will support the Ride Captain in his/her decision and will provide any and all assistance necessary to ensure that a calm and discrete environment is maintained at all times and that the directions of the Ride Captain are complied with in a calm and efficient manner.**

Let's all make it our policy to be safe, stay safe and watch out for each other so that we can do what we came for, and that's honor our service heroes and their families.

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### **Generally Accepted Practices**

While The North Texas PGR Has No Established Protocols, The Following Are "Generally Accepted" Practices:

The graveside Saluting Protocol for a Veteran of the Armed Forces is the same as for an Active Duty Service Member.

Present Arms ... Active Military And Veterans Render The Full Military Hand Salute; All Others Place A Hand Over Their Heart. Standing At Attention While Holding The Flag Is, In Itself, Considered A Salute.

When the casket is removed from the coach. The salute should be held until the casket is placed on the bier for the interment service. **Simply stated**, all those in uniform should **salute whenever the casket is moved**.

When the three-volleys are fired and during the playing of *Taps*. *Taps* should be rendered immediately after the Rifle Squad is finished. The salute should be held from the time the Rifle Squad Leader begins issuing commands until the final note of *Taps* has been played.

Because most Honor Guards start folding the Funeral Flag during the firing of the three volleys and the playing of *Taps*, many think the salute is for the folding of the Flag.

When the Funeral Flag has been folded and passed to the Squad Leader for presentation to the Primary Next-of-Kin, all uniformed members in attendance should come to Attention and remain at Attention until the Squad Leader salutes after presenting the Funeral Flag.

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### Veterans And Military Salutes

On January 28, 2008, The LAW Was Changed To Give Veterans "Permission" To

Render The Military Salute. Not Only Have They Earned The RIGHT To Do So, But Veterans Are Encouraged To Salute To SHOW That They Have Served Our Country.

Veterans of the Armed Forces, in uniform or in civilian attire, may render the military salute during hoisting, lowering, or passing of the United States flag. Section 9 Title 4 of the United States Code was amended to reflect such action when the U.S. President signed HR 4986: National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 into law on January 28, 2008.

U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) praised the passage by unanimous consent of his bill (S.1877) clarifying U.S. law to allow veterans and servicemen not in uniform to salute the flag, even while not covered.

"I look forward to seeing those who have served saluting proudly at baseball games, parades, and formal events," he said. "I believe this is an appropriate way to honor and recognize the 25 million veterans in the United States who have served in the military and remain as role models to others citizens. Those who are currently serving or have served in the military have earned this right, and their recognition will be an inspiration to others."

All veterans should hand salute the flag, instead of holding hand over heart, to show to all that they are veterans instead of civilians who haven't served. And if covered, you don't have to remove your hat to salute in honored respect for your military service. Indoors or outdoors, this rule applies; in uniform or in civilian clothes, this rule applies.

Civilians who haven't served should still remove their hat and hold it or their hand over their heart.

**For Those Of Us Who Separated From The Military A Long Time Ago And Need A Refresher. The Following Is From "The Army Study Guide." Some Of Us Can Hardly Walk Or Even Stand Straight, But We Should Give It Our "Best Effort" To Show Our Pride. Again, These Are NOT PGR Policies, Just Food For Thought For You To Consider. The North Texas PGR Recommends That You Do Whatever YOU Are Comfortable With. We Realize That Other Branches Of The Service May Have Slight Variations.**

**Position of Attention:**

a. Assume the position of *attention* on the command **FALL IN** or the command **Squad (platoon), ATTENTION**.

- b. To assume this position, bring **the heels together** sharply on line, with the toes pointing out equally, forming an angle of 45 degrees. Rest the weight of the body evenly on the heels and balls of both feet. Keep the legs straight without locking the knees. Hold the body erect with the hips level, chest lifted and arched, and the shoulders square.
- c. Keep the head erect and *face* straight to the front with the chin drawn in so that alignment of the head and neck is vertical.
- d. Let the arms hang straight without stiffness. Curl the fingers so that the tips of the thumbs are alongside and touching the first joint of the forefingers. Keep the thumbs straight along the seams of the trouser leg with the first joint of the fingers touching the trousers.

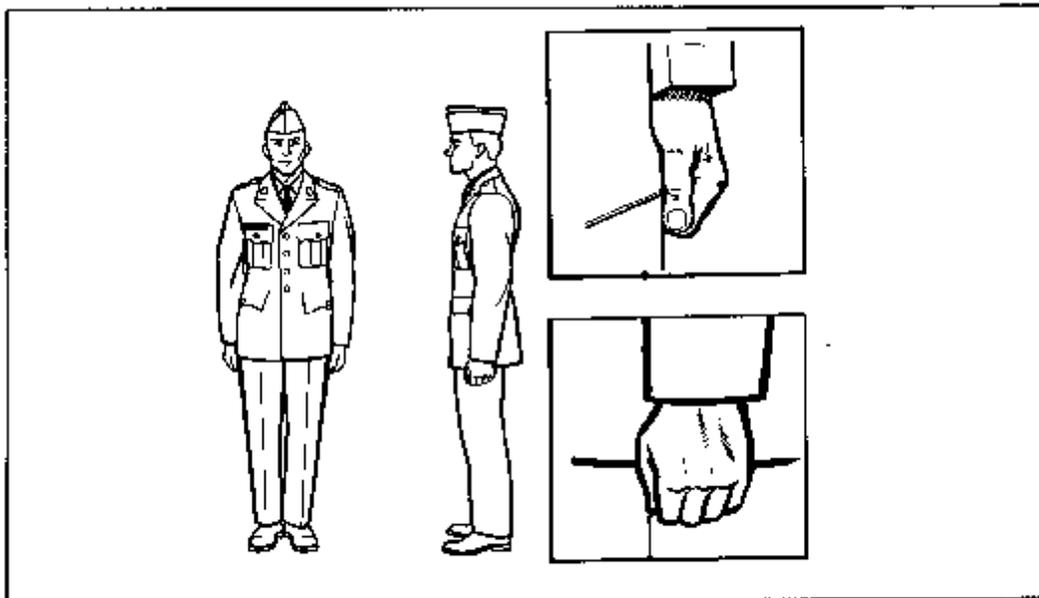


Figure 3-1. Position of Attention

- e. Remain silent and do not move unless otherwise directed.

**Hand Salute:**

- a. The *hand salute* is a one-count movement. The command is **Present, ARMS**. When wearing headgear with a visor (with or without glasses), on the command of execution **ARMS**, raise the right hand sharply, fingers and thumb **extended and joined**, palm facing down, and place the tip of the right forefinger on the rim of the visor slightly to the right of the right eye. The outer edge of the hand is barely canted downward so that neither the back of the hand nor the palm is clearly visible from the front. The hand and wrist are straight, the elbow inclined slightly forward, and the upper arm horizontal

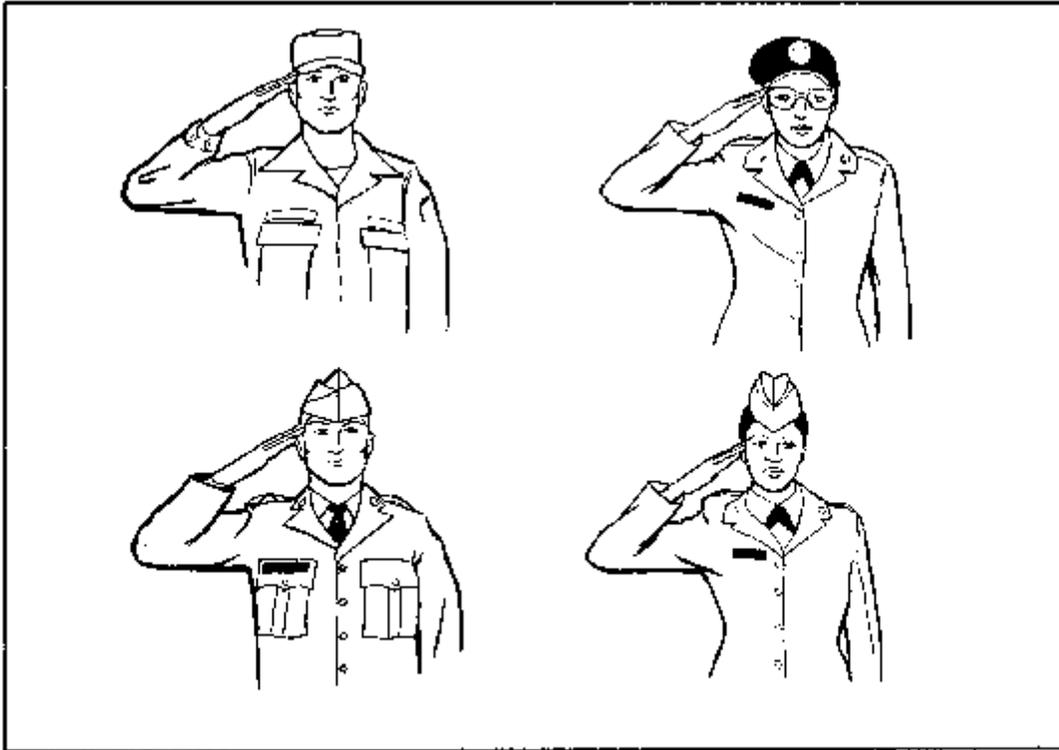


Figure 3-5. Hand Salute

- b. When wearing headgear without a visor (or uncovered) and not wearing glasses, execute the *hand salute* in the same manner as previously described in subparagraph a, except touch the tip of the right forefinger to the forehead near and slightly to the right of the right eyebrow.
- c. When wearing headgear without a visor (or uncovered) and wearing glasses, execute the *hand salute* in the same manner as described in subparagraph a, except touch the tip of the right forefinger to that point on the glasses where the temple piece of the frame meets the right edge of the right brow.
- d. *Order arms* from the *hand salute* is a one-count movement. The command is **Order, ARMS**. On the command of execution **ARMS**, return the hand sharply to the side, resuming the position of *attention*.