

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
AND
ARKANSAS VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS**

SUBJECT: STIPEND PAYMENTS FOR ARKANSAS VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE PERFORMANCE OF MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS

SECTION 1. Background and Purpose: Act 784 of the 2009 Regular Session of the Arkansas General Assembly authorized the creation of the special revenue fund known as the “Military Funeral Honors Fund” (MFHF) to help with the costs incurred by Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) when providing Military Funeral Honors at Veteran funerals. These funds are generated from the \$10 fee charged for affixing the medal decal to the Veterans special license plate.

The purpose of this Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is to establish a mutual agreement between the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA) and Arkansas VSOs regarding MFHF. Adherence to the procedures laid out in this MOA will enable ADVA to reimburse VSO Honor Guard Teams that augment Active Duty Military Branch Honor Guard Teams as an authorized provider under the Department of Defense MFH Authorized Provider Partnership Program (AP3) in the delivery of military funeral honors.

Military Funeral Honors is a way to show our nation's deep gratitude to those who, in times of war and peace, have faithfully defended our country. This ceremonial paying of respect is the final demonstration a grateful nation can provide to the veteran's family. By law, an honor guard detail for the burial of an eligible Veteran shall consist of not less than two members of the Armed Forces. One member of the detail shall be a representative of the parent Service of the deceased veteran. The honor detail will, at a minimum, perform a ceremony that includes the playing of Taps and the folding and presentation of the American Flag to the next of kin. Taps will be played by a bugler, if available, or by Ceremonial Bugle or electronic recording (CD or tape). Additional elements that may be provided as part of the Funeral Honors ceremony include: Rifle detail, Color guard, Pallbearers, Caisson, and Military flyover.

Section 1491(b) of Title 10, U.S. Code, authorizes members of VSOs, as well as other approved organizations, to participate with the Military Services in providing Military Funeral Honors. VSO and Authorized Provider Partnership Program (AP3) are authorized to augment the legislatively required two-person uniformed detail by providing additional detail elements for Veteran funerals. The AP3 trains volunteers to assist in providing MFH as “Authorized Providers.” Authorized providers are individuals or groups recognized by a Secretary of a Military Department or the Commandant of the Coast Guard, who are not members of the Military Services or employees of the United States, and who augment the uniformed members of a military funeral honors detail. Authorized providers may include, but are not limited to, Veterans Service Organizations, members of the Reserve Officer Training Corps, and other appropriate individuals and organizations that support the rendering of Military Funeral Honors.

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SECTION 2. Definition of Military Funeral Honors Terms.

2.1. **Army Tracking System:** A database within the G1 Portal that was developed by Tiber Creek Consulting and is maintained through Army National Guard Bureau (NGB). This database is used to collect data by all State/Territory Army National Guard units on conducted Military Funeral Honor Services. Each branch of the military maintains their own version/access to the database. Access is granted by the State/Territory and/or Branch of Service.

2.2. **Authorized Providers:** Individuals or groups recognized by a Secretary of a Military Department, who are not members of the Armed Forces of the United States or employees of the United States and who augment the uniformed members of a MFH Honor Guard Detail. Authorized providers may include, but are not limited to, Veterans Service Organizations, members of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, and other appropriate individuals and organizations which support the rendering of MFH.

2.3. **Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code:** A federal identification number for entities (business, individual or government agency) that want to enter into contracts with the federal government. All entities that want to do business with the federal government must obtain a CAGE code through the System for Award Management (SAM), which is an official U.S. government system. The CAGE code is tied to a company profile that contains basic information, which government agencies use to quickly determine if a company is a good fit for a particular contract before reading a bid proposal. The government provides CAGE codes after a business owner registers with Dun & Bradstreet.

2.4. **Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS):** A unique nine-digit identification number that is required by the federal government for all entities (business, individual or government agency) prior to entering into a contracted transaction with the federal government. Dun & Bradstreet is the agency that developed, regulates and assigns the DUNS number.

2.5. **Eligible Beneficiaries of MFH:** Deceased active duty personnel and Veterans (as defined in 10 USC 1491), to include members and former members of the Selective Reserve (as defined in 38 USC 2301(f)).

2.6. **Firing of Three Volleys at MFH:** The practice of firing three volleys originated in the old custom of halting the fighting to remove the dead from the battlefield. Once each army had cleared its dead for the battlefield, it would fire three volleys to indicate that the dead had been cared for and that they were ready to go back to the fight.

2.7. **Flag:** The flag of the United States of America.

2.8. **Funeral Director:** A state-licensed individual responsible for arranging all details of the burial, including requesting Military Funeral Honors.

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2.9. **Military Funeral Honors:** The ceremonial paying of respect and the final demonstrations of the country's gratitude to those who, in times of war and peace, have faithfully defended our nation. The Military Funeral Honors ceremony consists of, at a minimum, the folding and presentation of the American flag and the sounding of "Taps" by a detail of two uniformed members of the Armed Forces of the United States. At least one of the detail members shall be from the parent Service of the beneficiary.

2.10. **MFH State Coordinator:** The military office, as directed by each military Service, responsible for arranging the delivery of Military Funeral Honors within a specific geographic region.

2.11. **Service Representative:** Uniformed member of the parent Service of the eligible beneficiary, who leads the honors detail and presents the flag to the next of kin.

2.12. **Taps:** The traditional "lights out" musical composition played at military funerals and memorials. The official version of "Taps" is played by a single bugle. In accordance with AR 220-90, "Echo or Silver Taps," which is performed by two buglers, is not authorized.

2.13. **Veteran:** A decedent who served in the active military, naval, or air Service (as defined in 38 USC 101 (24)) and was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable by means of an honorable or under honorable conditions (general) discharge; or was a member or former member of the Selected Reserve as described in 38 USC 2301(f).

SECTION 3. Process for VSO to Become an "Authorized Provider."

3.1. A VSO must be an "Authorized Provider" in accordance with the Department of Defense Authorized Provider Partnership Program (AP3) to be eligible to request the ADVA MFH Stipend. To become an Authorized Provider, the following conditions must be met:

3.1.1. Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code, and keep them current, by contacting the Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Center (APTC) for the State of Arkansas:

Arkansas Procurement Assistance Center
University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
2301 South University Avenue, Room 110
Little Rock, AR 72204
Telephone: (501) 671-2390
Email: apac@uaex.edu
Website: <http://www.uaex.edu/business-communities/apac-government-contracting/>

The PTAC has other office locations in the state. Please contact the PTAC or visit their website for complete information.

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3.1.2. Complete initial Honor Guard training conducted and certified by the ARARNG MFH prior to participating in an MFH Honor Guard. The purpose of the training is to ensure a professional, dignified and coordinated delivery of MFH in accordance with ceremony standards and procedures established by the Army. The training will cover the following Honor Guard detail duty areas:

3.1.2.1. MFH eligibility requirements.

3.1.2.2. Setting up the squad/drill team.

3.1.2.3. Graveside services for casketed and cremated remains.

3.1.2.4. Firing of the volley (if firing party is present).

3.1.2.5. Bugler or proper use of the ceremonial bugle (or a high quality CD of "Taps").

3.1.2.6. Folding and presenting the flag.

3.1.3. Upon completion of initial Honor Guard training, the ARARNG MFH will provide to the VSO:

3.1.3.1. A copy of the updated MFH training video and training flags.

3.1.3.2. Training certificates for each member of the VSO Honor Guard Team.

3.1.3.3. Lapel pins for each member of the VSO Honor Guard Team, when available.

3.1.4. Complete annual renewal of Honor Guard training certification by ARARNG MFH during the recertification period (April-June).

3.1.5. Maintain a list of certified VSO Honor Guard participants.

SECTION 4. Process for VSO Eligibility for the ADVA MFH Stipend.

4.1. Before a VSO is eligible to request an ADVA MFH Stipend for reimbursement of VSO Honor Guard Team for augmenting the delivery of MFH by partnering with an Active Duty Military Branch Honor Guard Team, the following conditions must be met:

4.1.1. Complete, sign and submit the following documents to ADVA via U.S. Mail or by fax:

4.1.1.1. Memorandum of Agreement Between ADVA and VSO.

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4.1.1.2. IRS W-9 Form, "Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification."

4.1.1.3. DFA OPM Form IT009, "Bank Details/Direct Deposit Enrollment."

Mailing Address:

Attention: Deputy Director
Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs
2200 Fort Roots Drive, Bldg. 65, Room 119
North Little Rock, AR 72114

ADVA Fax number:

(501) 370-0403

4.1.2. An ADVA MFH Stipend Request Form, verified and signed by the Active Duty MFH Guard Leader, and certified by the ARARNG MFH, must be received by ADVA before an ADVA MFH Stipend can be paid.

4.1.2.1. Upon receipt of a signed and certified ADVA MFH Stipend Request Form from ARARNG MFH, the ADVA Director, or designee, will review the request.

4.1.2.1.1. If approved, the Stipend Request Form will be signed and forwarded to ADVA Accounts Payable for processing.

4.1.2.1.2. ADVA Accounts Payable staff will enter the approved Stipend request into the Arkansas state government AASIS system for payment. Payment will be made in the form of a direct deposit to the VSO's bank account.

SECTION 5. Process for VSO Honor Guard MFH Augmentation.

5.1. Notification of Veteran's death.

5.1.1. Upon the death of a Veteran, a family member or the family's representative contacts the funeral home director to make arrangements for the Veteran's service.

5.1.1.1. Family member or the family's representative completes the appropriate Service specific Funeral Honors Request Form.

5.1.2. The funeral home director determines level of MFH service desired by the family.

5.1.3. The funeral home director submits Service specific Funeral Honors Request Form to the Veteran's branch of service.

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- 5.2. Veteran's Branch of Service
 - 5.2.1. Determines Veteran's status and MFH eligibility level.
 - 5.2.3. Notifies state of Arkansas Service Point of Contact (SPOC) to arrange MFH for Veteran's service.
- 5.3. SPOC
 - 5.3.1. Determines if augmentation from VSO Honor Guard Team is necessary or available.
 - 5.3.2. If VSO Honor Guard augmentation is necessary, SPOC contacts VSO.
- 5.4. VSO
 - 5.4.1. Determines if VSO Honor Guard Team can support the service.
- 5.5. Rendering of MFH
 - 5.5.1. SPOC/VSO coordinates service and VSO Honor Guard augments rendering of MFH.
- 5.6. Verification of VSO MFH
 - 5.6.1. Prior to service, VSO completes ADVA MFH Stipend Request Form.
 - 5.6.2. Following the service, the VSO Honor Guard Team Leader gives the ADVA Stipend Request Form to the Active Duty MFH Honor Guard Team Leader for verification of level of honors performed by VSO and signature.
 - 5.6.3. VSO faxes the ADVA Stipend Request Form to the ARARNG MFH office; fax number: (501) 212-5843.
- 5.7. ARARNG MFH Certification
 - 5.7.1. Upon receipt of the verified and signed ADVA MFH Stipend Request Form, ARARNG MFH verifies the Veteran's DDF 214, and checks for VSO MFH verification/signature of the Active Duty MFH Honors Guard Team Leader.
 - 5.7.2. ARARNG MFH enters Veteran's MFH in Army Tracking System.
 - 5.7.3. ARARNG MFH State Coordinator, or designee, certifies and signs ADVA MFH Stipend Request Form.

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5.7.4. ARARNG MFH forwards ADVA MFH Stipend Request Form to ADVA for processing.

SECTION 6. Points of Contact.

6.1. ADVA: Deputy Director. Phone number: (501) 370-3820; fax: (501) 370-0403.

6.2. Name of VSO:

| | |
|------------------------------|-------|
| VSO Branch of Service: | _____ |
| Name of VSO Post Commander: | _____ |
| VSO Street Address/P.O. Box: | _____ |
| VSO City, State, ZIP Code | _____ |
| VSO Telephone Number: | _____ |
| VSO Fax Number: | _____ |
| VSO Email Address: | _____ |

SECTION 7. Effective Date and Period of the Agreement.

7.1. This Agreement becomes effective immediately upon being signed by both parties, and shall remain in effect for an indefinite period of time, conditioned upon the availability of funds and/or so long as Act 784 of the 2009 Regular Session of the Arkansas General Assembly and/or any other law authorizes the establishment of a “Military Funeral Honors Fund” and reimbursement of VSOs and other authorized providers for providing Military Funeral Honors at Veteran funerals.

7.2. Either party may terminate this Agreement by providing a written 30-day notice of termination.

Signature
NAME: _____
Post Commander

Signature
ALICIA “CISSY” RUCKER
Director
Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs

Date

Date