

Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and other Veterans' Service Organizations (VSO) are being encouraged to participate in graveside honors.

In accordance with Department of Defense Instruction 1300.15, veterans may participate as authorized providers to support the rendering of Military Funeral Honors (MFH), which includes the ceremonial folding and presentation of the American flag and the sounding of "Taps." The ceremony typically involves a minimum of two uniformed military members, in addition to a bugler, if available. Prior to being recognized as an authorized provider, there needs to be training to be qualified in order to maintain professionalism and proficiency in the rendering of MFHs.

Veterans as qualified authorized providers are used to augment the MFH detail. A daily stipend of \$50 (limited to payment of 1 ceremony per day) is available to volunteer veterans that assist the active-duty military in the participation of MFHs in an effort to defray the costs of transportation and other expenses. A Standard Form 1164 (SF 1164), "Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business," will be used by authorized providers to submit expense claims, which are processed by the local MFH coordinator.

A VSO can provide as many participants as it wants to support in MFHs, however the programmed budget only allows the payment of one daily VSO stipend for honors at veteran funerals, and up to seven VSO stipends for honors at retired veteran funerals. The MFH team for a veteran will have two uniformed military members and no more than one stipend-paid VSO. A MFH team for a retired veteran can have various combinations of VSOs; for example, two uniformed military members and seven stipend-paid VSOs, or six uniformed military members and three stipend- paid VSOs, for a total of nine team members. Consequently, any additional VSOs supporting the ceremony will not receive the stipend but are welcome to participate.

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