

HONORS ESCORT



This program offers a ceremonial escort to veteran patients who pass away while at a Medical Center, Community Living Center (CLC), Nursing Home, or Hospice.

The ceremony allows staff, residents, patients, and visitors to pay their final respects to the Veteran, and reminds family members of the high regard and reverence that is held for their loved one, even after they have passed on.

The ceremony is normally conducted by trained volunteer employees, and ensures that the veterans' service, accomplishments, and sacrifices are not forgotten as they are laid to rest.

VFW Auxiliaries are encouraged to talk with facilities in their area to encourage and assist them in establishing an HONORS ESCORT program or to volunteer to be part of the Honor Escort team.

Paying final respects to a Veteran is a difficult, yet honorable, task. Ceremonies will differ depending on the facility. In most VA facilities who have already implemented this program, when a veteran passes, a bell is rung throughout the campus.

The bell rings to honor the service and sacrifice of a Veteran who has died in the facility. It is a call for an honor escort and an opportunity for all to show respect for that person and his or her family and friends as they are escorted, on a special flag draped gurney, to the morgue or awaiting hearse.

Each Honors Escort unit performs their own individualized bedside service for the Veteran along with the Veteran's family. Next, the Veteran is transported to the appointed destination as the Honors Escort line the hallway and salute or place their hands on their heart out of respect.

Once at the appointed destination a flag folding ceremony takes place. Some units provide family members with a "token of appreciation" — a miniature American flags encased in a wooden triangle.

The Honors Escort program provides the veterans family a dignified procession that, hopefully, gives some measure of comfort from brothers and sisters in arms and a grateful nation.