

Color Guard

As Sweetie and I were having a burger and fries at the VFW recently, we talked with some of our friends who just returned from performing color guard duties at a funeral. The detail is sometimes called an honor guard. The Moorhead American Legion and Dilworth/Moorhead FVW posts have a combined color guard unit and provide services for about 85 funerals per year. Color guard details provide some or all of the following; escort the casket to and from the funeral home or place of worship, removing and folding the US flag from the casket and presenting it to the next of kin of the Veteran, playing Taps and doing a 21 gun salute. If there is no bugler in the unit, an electronic bugle or recording may be used for Taps. In order to have a color guard, the deceased must meet these requirements; be a military member on active duty or in the Selected Reserve, be a former military member who served on active duty and departed under conditions other than dishonorable, be a former military member who completed at least one term of enlistment or period of initial obligated service in the Selected Reserve and departed under conditions other than dishonorable, be a former military member discharged from the Selected Reserve due to a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty. Funeral home directors will contact the local color guard units and arrange for their attendance.

In addition, our color guard units will march in parades, normally leading the parade and carried flags. On Memorial Day, our color guard starts early performing a ceremony on the Veterans Memorial bridge, at local cemeteries and at the Memorial Day program at the Armory. On Veterans Day, our color guard units perform similar ceremonies. Our Vietnam Veterans of America presents the colors before all MSUM home athletic events.

The next time you are at an event where colors are presented, please take a moment to thank the Veterans who serve in the Color Guard units.

I'm writing this before Independence Day and you're reading it after. I hope in your celebration of the founding of our great nation, you will also remember all of those who have served in the military, especially those who gave their lives for our county.

A regular reader of this column thanked me for including some history with my articles, so here is another short history lesson. Our nation was founded when a number of men signed the Declaration of Independence from the kingdom of Great Britain. Although it was passed by the Continental Congress on 2 July, the actual text of the document was ratified and passed on 4 July. The revolutionary war ended on 3 September 1783 when the two warring countries signed the Treaty of Paris in which Great Britain agreed to recognize the sovereignty of the United States and formally end the war. I hope you had a wonderful Independence Day.