



RSL
Australia

Useful information on conducting an RSL Funeral Service

Burial Ritual

The drill below may be adapted to suit cremations.

Members assemble at Cemetery Entrance before arrival of the hearse and are handed poppies by the Sub-Branch.

Members march ahead of the hearse to the grave site where they form up to make an avenue, between the hearse and graveside, through which the flag draped casket is borne. As casket passes through, members fall in behind the mourners and, at the grave site, go to the left (facing Minister).

After the religious service, a League member taking the minister's place says:

'We are assembled here to pay a last tribute to a beloved comrade (name) who served in defence of our nation. (Statement of Defence Force Service in war or peace).

How well he/she served his/her fellow person, in addition to that service, is well known to his/her fellow members of the RSL who stand with me, here mourning the passing of one who was a loyal co-worker with us.

As we stand here remembering his/her many qualities, we join in a silent pledge to sink whatever differences we may have with each other and to extend the hand of comradeship and to carry on our tradition of unselfish service to the disabled, to the bereaved and to the highest ideals of citizenship".

Wherever possible, RSL commemoration ceremonies should follow a standard order of service. At the appropriate time of the commemoration the sequence of events for RSL ceremonies shall be as follows:

- The Ode shall be spoken by the designated person. 'They shall grow not old, (short pause) As we that are left grow old, (longer pause) Age shall not weary them, (short pause) Nor the years condemn, (longer pause) At the going down of the sun, (short pause) And in the morning, (longer pause) We will remember them (short pause).
- The gathering repeats 'We will remember them'.
- The Last Post shall be sounded (if available).

- A period of not more than two minutes' silence shall then be observed.
- The designated person shall say 'Lest We Forget' and the gathering will repeat 'Lest We Forget'.

The Rouse shall then be sounded.

(Rouse is the bugle call more commonly used in conjunction with the 'Last Post' and to the layman is often incorrectly called 'Reveille'. Although associated with 'Last Post', Reveille is only used at Dawn Services).

The ceremony is ended. The words 'thank you' shall NOT be spoken to end the ceremony. While it is expected that the form of service shall be used at the routine RSL commemoration ceremonies, variations may occur from time to time.

However, where the RSL is the organising and/or coordinating authority of a commemoration ceremony every attempt should be made to have the ceremony follow the sequence detailed above.

Led by the speaker, poppies are placed on the casket or in the grave, and members retire.

Flag Procedure at RSL Funerals

It should be noted that it is RSL policy that the Australian National Flag should be used at all RSL funerals except in the circumstances where the deceased member was a Ex- Serviceman of an allied nation and the next of kin expressly request the use of the national flag of that nation.

In laying the flag over the casket, the hoist or jack must be placed over-the left shoulder of the deceased - Tassels or other adornments to the flag should not be used.