

Department of
Veterans Affairs

Date: September 27, 2007

From: Director, Office of Field Programs

Thru: Each MSN Director

To: Each Cemetery Director

Subj: The Meaning of Each Fold of an Honor Guard Funeral Flag

It has come to my attention that cemeteries may be distributing a handout entitled, "The Meaning of Each Fold of an Honor Guard Funeral Flag" and/or posting the handout in cemetery buildings. I have also learned that our volunteer honor guards may be using the handout as a script and reciting the meaning of the thirteen folds of the flag while the interment flag is folded during the committal service.

There are various versions of the script circulating by anonymous authors. Some of those scripts are religious in nature and also ascribe meaning to the individual folds put into the flag. We have recently received a complaint sent to the President of the United States that there was a gross error in the handout with reference to the 11th fold "...glorifying the Gods Abraham, Isaac and Jacob".

There are no federal laws related to the flag that assign any special meaning to the individual folds of the flag. The National Cemetery Administration must not give meaning, or appear to give meaning to the folds of the flag by endorsing or distributing any handouts on "The Meaning of Each Fold of an Honor Guard Funeral Flag."

Effective immediately all national cemeteries are to refrain from distributing any handouts on "The Meaning of Each Fold of an Honor Guard Funeral Flag"; remove any postings from all cemetery buildings and discontinue our VA-Sponsored Volunteer Honor Guards from using the handout as a script at a committal service during the folding of the flag.

The only time the reading of "The Meaning of Each Fold of an Honor Guard Funeral Flag" is authorized in our national cemeteries is when the next-of-kin arranges for military honors with their local VSO and requests the reading during the committal service.

/s/

STEVE L. MURO