

## THE FINAL CALL CEREMONY

Many funerals for fallen Emergency Service personnel include a "Final Call" as a part of the ceremony. This is done in respect for a fallen Peace Officer, Firefighter, or EMT who was always there when they were needed. Emergency service personnel will always rise to the occasion, and answer the Call to Duty, no matter what the ultimate personal cost may be.

The Call to Duty often comes at the most inopportune of times; in the middle of an overdue meal, during a family event, while in church, or while upon a sick bed.

The heart of a public servant is such that he or she will put aside his or her own personal needs and worries, to help someone else in their time of need.

There are many variations on the central theme, and each department will customize the verbiage to fit their own particular style and local customs. There is no one singular text that will fit all such occasions.

All radio traffic ceases as the call is made live over the air for both those participating in the funeral ceremony as well as for those who are unable to attend in person but are there in spirit via radio.

Usually the task of calling upon the fallen individual for one last assignment is given to a senior communications officer who has proven to be rock steady in times of extreme distress. Quite often, though, as this is such an emotional portion of the service, the speaker himself or herself is unable to complete the task without breaking down in tears. There is seldom a dry eye amongst those in attendance, or within hearing distance of a radio.

Standing over and looking down into an open grave as the call comes out, and knowing full well that the fallen individual would rise up to answer if at all possible, this simple yet highly emotional salute speaks from the very core of one's soul. It provides a haunting reminder that there is now a huge void in our lives that will never truly be filled.