



News Release

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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HONOR GUARD PROUD TO HAVE EXTRA DUTY, HONOR FALLEN AIRMEN

CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE, S.C. – They stand motionless, in precise formation, through the heat of a Southern summer afternoon. Beads of sweat stand out on their faces as Taps is sounded, bidding farewell to a fallen hero. They do not waiver in their dedication to lay to rest, with honor, another fellow airman who fought well, lived and died for his country. They are the Charleston AFB Honor Guard, and they are proud to serve.

The Honor Guard, comprised of 42 members, is an all-volunteer unit, according to Staff Sgt. Josh Glover, Honor Guard NCOIC. They lend their services to funerals in 25 counties throughout South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia. They also perform for changes-of-command and retirement ceremonies, and provide a saber cordon for distinguished visitors and a color guard for local and regional sports events.

According to Glover, with only 42 members, the unit's activities are limited. Members are often called for critical Air Force missions, leaving them short manned.

Funerals are the number one priority, and since the requirement for funeral detail recently changed from eight members to 10, the unit has had to cancel several engagements.

"I'd like to increase our manning level from a required 50 to 65 personnel," Glover said. "When you have enough people, no one is overworked."

“I have a love for the job,” Glover continued. “There’s nothing better than giving back to the people who gave me the opportunity to wear this uniform.”

The recent slump in volunteers is hard for Glover and his assistant, Senior Airman Samuel DeMaggio, to understand.

“When I joined, so many people out of my unit wanted to volunteer, they couldn’t cover manning in the shop,” DeMaggio said.

Glover said he thinks people are turned off by the rumors about the Honor Guard being too much work.

“We have two 30-day rotations and two 15-day standby rotations, so we have coverage 365 days a year,” Glover said. “Sometimes we’ll work a four-hour day and other days we’ll work 18 hours, depending on where the funeral is located. That time takes into account prep time, travel time and the time actually spent at the service.”

Another reason for decreased numbers may be traced to decreased manning in the workplace, said Glover.

“With AEFs (Aerospace Expeditionary Forces) and all, a lot of work centers are at minimum manning,” Glover said. “When a person becomes an Honor Guard member, that’s supposed to be the number one priority. We still ask them to perform their duty even if the shop is at minimum manning. It can be rough on the work center when we ask to pull an Honor Guard member away. Sometimes we don’t get all the support we need.”

Glover said he sees a lot of advantages to being a member of the Honor Guard.

“First, it’s the only means we have to give back to those who came before us,” said Glover. “We know we have a direct effect on people’s lives when we perform. It gives a great sense of accomplishment.

“Honor Guard members also receive leadership experience, an achievement medal for each year of service, they get to travel to other cities, they get base-wide recognition, they’re exempt

from other details, they get to wear distinctive uniforms, which are dry-cleaned free of charge, and they have great EPR (Enlisted Performance Report) information,” Glover continued.

Glover said the unit is in desperate need of members for many reasons.

Along with rendering honors at a variety of military ceremonies and events, Glover said the Honor Guard also participates in a list of community functions from posting colors at a Stingray hockey game or Little League Soccer game to holiday parades in the Lowcountry.

“This is the reason we need professional, motivated members on our team,” he continued. “People we can count on to perform at their optimum level at any given time. Team Charleston Honor Guard is seeking members to increase our numbers so that we may provide appropriate honors to members deserving.”

(For more information, contact Master Sgt. Daniel Murphy at 963-5582 or Staff Sgt. Pamela Smith at 963-5589)