

Highland Lakes Honor Guard

“All Gave Some...Some Gave All”

Welcome to the Highland Lakes Honor Guard
Honoring our departed Comrades with Dignity and Respect



PURPOSE

Our primary purpose is to give all military veterans their last salute and farewell to arms. It is an honor and privilege to provide this service to our fellow veterans and their families. We hope that by visiting this site that you will come to know that we have the utmost respect for all military veterans of the United States Armed Forces.

We feel the performance of our duties shows a level of respect that these veterans have earned so much more than that. We salute them always, along with our flag and our great country. If you have any questions, comments, or are in need of our services, please feel free to contact us and we will respond as soon as possible.

The Highland Lakes Honor Guard is the only civilian Honor Guard in Burnet and Llano County that is certified as Authorized Providers by the Department of Defense and available to officially render full military funeral honors on behalf of the United States government.

Our web site will give you some idea of who we are and what we do. We sincerely invite you to enjoy your visit here and to return often.

The Highland Lakes Honor Guard never charges for its services and never will. However, honorariums to cover expenses are gratefully accepted, only when able, and from the heart.

Thank you for visiting. May God bless you, our country, and all our military men and women past, present, and future.

Highland Lakes Honor Guard History of Operations

The Highland Lakes Honor Guard started as a vision in January 2007 by Charles F. Taylor who owned a small ranch in Bluffton, TX, just east of Llano:



Known to everyone in the Highland Lakes area as “Charlie”, he was a veteran of the United States Navy who had gained considerable experience with an honor guard unit in Pennsylvania before retiring to the hill and lake country of Texas. Noticing that few honor guard services were being provided by local veteran organizations, he proceeded to locate other veterans who would be interested and dedicated to providing honor guard services to the veteran community and their families.

Charlie was the first and only commander until his retirement in January 2025, finally moving north to Montana to build his dream home. He served continuously for 18 years and during his tenure, supervised the swearing in of well over 50 members, 100’s of community service events, and over 800 military funerals. Central Texas will forever be grateful to Charlie and these men for stepping up for Veteran’s Families and establishing a legacy of providing Full Military Funeral Honors for every Veteran in Llano and Burnet County.

Early in our history, we performed quite a few flag postings and entered many parades, just to expose our unit to the community. After one year, we had ten members: Commander (above) Charlie Taylor, (below left to right) Ben Redler, Max Lantz, Harvey Klee, Nick Tabler, Bill Pratt, Dennis Martin, James Holbrook, and Ron and Cleo Hornsby.



Three others – Bill Riddle, Allan Hatfield, and Hope Izell had initially joined, however they did not remain active and dropped out within a year. The above ten members are considered founding members.

Charlie contacted all of the funeral homes in Burnet and Llano counties and volunteered us to provide the military honors for them.

We do not charge the family of the veteran for our service. We do accept tax-free donations to help with expenses. We limit our services to Burnet and Llano counties as we considered that a realistic size area to support. We also provide a transparent plastic bag for the folded flag and a paper insert providing the Thirteen-fold narration and story of Taps.

We gradually trained ourselves to perform a set procedure for recognizing the Veteran, under Charlie's guidance. Harvey introduced the Thirteen-Fold flag narration and we standardized our rifle squad actions and flag presentation procedures. We also assigned members as Deputy Commander, Secretary, Treasurer, Quartermaster, Armorer, and Rifle Maintenance.

As we gathered more members, our coordination with the funeral homes increased. We gradually decreased our flag posting and parade events as our funeral services increased. In ten years, there were twenty-seven members. Charlie was our main recruiter, although he encouraged all of us to seek new members.

Don Bueth, our oldest member served for 15 years and retired at age 93. Max Lantz, founding member number 3 is still serving at the age of 86. Mike Silzel, another early member is 83 and is still serving today. To date, we've had a total of 57 that have joined us, 11 have passed away, and others have dropped out or moved away (see full list at the bottom of the page titled "Meet the Members"). We continually added equipment, uniform items, and altered our service procedure to focus more on honoring our lost Veterans rather than call attention to ourselves with parades and posting, again under Charlie's guidance.

We have enjoyed superb coordination with all of the funeral homes, one has provided the flag bags and many have made monetary donations to support us.

The Highland Lakes Honor Guard serves all branches of the military be it Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and Space Force. POWs/MIAs/KIAs (Prisoner of War/Missing in Action/Killed in Action) are honored as well. The importance of forming a local honor guard has become critical. Our country's involvement in various military operations around the world, most recently in Iraq and Afghanistan, has greatly reduced the availability of active service personnel to perform military honors. Currently, military honor guard members must travel from Killeen, Austin, or San Antonio to provide the Funeral Honors. Frequently, this is on short notice and is a full-time job.

Fortunately, a provision in The National Defense Authorization Act responded to the shortage of military personnel to staff such honor guards, and increases the likelihood that an honor guard will be available to the families of veterans who served their country. The measure requires the military services to provide the honor guard teams. It also allows the Secretary of Defense to suspend the requirement in cases of military necessity.

It authorizes the Department of Defense to provide material and equipment to non-governmental organizations, e.g. veterans groups such as the Highland Lakes Honor Guard, for support of honor guard activities.

The Highland Lakes Honor Guard is a 501(c)(19) tax-exempt organization consisting of veterans from many branches of the Armed Forces of the United States who have served their country honorably. We are certified by the Department of Defense as Authorized Providers to render military funeral honors for lost veterans who have passed or who have died while on active duty. Essentially, we function as a military unit for the rendering of these military honors when performing those duties. Although some of our members may be members of other veteran organizations, we are not affiliated with any other veteran organization and are independent of them.

At graveside, funeral home, church or private location, the Highland Lakes Honor Guard appears in full uniform. We provide a flag display consisting of the National, Texas, POW/MIA flags together with the service branch flag under which the veteran has served. We provide a rifle squad to execute a full three-volley rifle salute using restored WW2 M1 Garrand's, a bugler to sound TAPS, a flag folding ceremony wherein the symbolic meaning of each of the 13 folds is narrated, insertion of 3 spent shell casings from the three-volley rifle salute into the folded flag, and the presentation of the folded flag to the next of kin.

These services are offered free to surviving members of the Veteran's family within Burnet or Llano County, Texas. Although donations are appreciated, they are not asked for, expected or required for the services we offer. What we do is an act of love for those who have honorably and faithfully served their country and have now gone to their eternal rest. The Highland Lakes Honor Guard is exempt from federal income tax under section 501 (c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code. Deductions made to the Highland Lakes Honor Guard are deductible as a charitable donation on federal income tax returns.

If a family member is in need of our services, contact **Commander Karl Provost** at 512-800-9033, Email: rhino1lead@gmail.com, and always leave a message. If unable, contact **Deputy Commander Max Lantz** at 830-330-4620, Email: maxelandsuzyel@yahoo.com. As much advance notice as possible is appreciated.

For detailed information about providing honors for your loved ones, open the link titled "Planning Military Honors" on the home page. Additionally, most Funeral Homes and County Veteran Affairs Offices can provide assistance in your area.

Those who have served honorably in any branch of the United States Armed Forces are encouraged to join our organization. For further details, see the Membership page. Honor Guard meetings are held monthly (except January and July) on the first **Saturday at 10:00 a.m. at the First Methodist Church in Marble Falls, Texas**. Those interested in joining are invited to attend. **Call, text or email Commander Provost to confirm time and location before attending, and always leave a message.**