

Chapter 4 – Funerals

When RBL Standards are attending any funeral, it is also customary for the Branch Standard and that of the Women's Section branch (if there is one) to form part of the procession, both into and from the church, chapel, or other sacred building. The Standards precede the coffin in the procession and, if space permits, stand abreast of it during the service. The same procedure is followed at the place of interment, and the Standard(s) Dip as an act of homage as the coffin is lowered into the grave.

When the Standard is carried at a cremation the same procedure as at an interment is adopted, if space within the building permits. Alternatively, the Standard Bearer stands six paces inside the entrance to the crematorium, facing the coffin. The Standard(s) Dip as an act of homage as the curtains are closed removing the coffin from view.

In some parts of the Country there is also a practice to have the Last Post, Exhortation and the Reveille with RBL Standards present. The sequence normally followed is that, after the coffin is lowered into the grave, (or at a cremation – from view) and the officiating clergy has pronounced his committal oration, there follows:

- The Last Post (Standards Dip)
- The Exhortation and Response
- If an interment, members drop their personal poppies into the grave
- The Reveille (Standards return to the Carry on the first note)

Remember however, that all the above suggestions may only be implemented after full consultation with the family and the officiating clergy.

The Union Flag is not paraded at funeral services. Branches may keep a Union Flag to drape the coffin. Where this is done it is normal to place a wreath of poppies on top of the flag.

Representing RBL Members

If the relatives wish, arrange wherever possible for branches to be officially represented at the funeral of any of its members. It is important to ensure that the clergy and funeral directors are also informed if this is taking place.

The Board of Trustees recommends that, if with the consent of the family and the officiating clergy RBL is officially represented at the funeral, there is no distinction between the funeral procedures outlined above for members/life members or Women's Section members. It is appreciated, however, that because of local conditions and circumstances, the branch may wish to make appropriate amendments. The solemnity, dignity of the occasion and the family's wishes are paramount.

Representing Ex-Service Members of the Armed Forces

Where possible, arrange for Branch Standards to be available for the funeral of Ex-Service Members of the Armed Forces. It is strongly recommended that RBL branches recommend to the family that they also contact the appropriate Royal Navy, Army (Regimental/Corps), or Royal Air Force association if the Branch Standard Bearer is unavailable.