



Draping of Charter Upon Death of a Comrade

Rev. Peter R. Hook

At the 62nd VFW National Convention held in 1961, Resolution 183 was passed. This resolution mandates that "charters should be draped for 30 days for all deceased comrades."

On pages 112-113 of the 2023 edition of the Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure, and Ritual, you will find a "Ceremony for Draping Charter" and on page 113, the statement regarding Resolution 183.

Here is a picture of the VFW Memorial Charter Drape which can be purchased from the VFW Store at: <https://www.vfwstore.org/products/31265>. Product code is 02532.



Ceremony for Draping Charter (Pages 112-113)

Chaplain Hook's Observation and Suggestion: I have done the Draping Ceremony as written, which involves three people. It is much easier to do the ceremony if the chaplain takes the commander's part, after the commander requests the ceremony.

After motion from floor, or Commander requests ceremony:

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will obtain drape in preparation for draping charter.

(Officer of Day obtains drape, proceeds to the altar, and salutes Commander.)

Commander: (Raps gavel twice) Members rise and face charter at attention.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will now drape our charter in memory of our beloved Comrade _____ who has passed on.

(Officer of Day proceeds to charter and drapes charter.)

Commander: (While Officer of Day is draping charter) By so doing, we as members of (name of Post) VFW Post # _____ offer solemn tribute to our departed comrade.

(Officer of Day returns to the altar. Salutes Commander, retires to station.)

Commander: Comrades, Salute - Two. (Comrades, parade rest.)

Commander: Comrade Chaplain

Chaplain: (Proceeds to altar. Gives this prayer): Eternal God, let Your grace and mercy rest upon us as we, with grateful affection, remember Comrade _____, who has departed this life. We thank You for his/her days upon earth and the joy that he/she brought. May our remembrance of (name of deceased) live long among us and be to us a source of guidance and strength. Give to those who miss him/her deeply, wells of consolation from which to draw comfort, and enable us to be Your ministers of grace and mercy to them in their time of need. Amen.

(Commander raps gavel once to seat members)

At my Post, when a comrade dies, we hold a short memorial service at the first post meeting following the death. This takes place at the end of the meeting, following the “good of the order” and prior to the “closing ceremonies.”

The Commander says, “Chaplain, lead us in a memorial service for (name of deceased).”

Chaplain renders appropriate salute to Commander, and proceeds to read the obituary and provide some information on the deceased comrade’s military background and his/her service to the VFW and the Post. This is followed by a short prayer.

(Following the prayer is an appropriate place to do the “Draping of the Charter” Ceremony).

Following the Draping of the Charter, the Commander or Chaplain gives the command for the bugler to play Taps. At the conclusion of Taps, the Chaplain says, “Commander, that concludes our memorial service and the draping of the Charter,” followed by the rendering of appropriate salute.

The Commander then proceeds to conduct closing ceremonies.

Ceremony for Undraping Charter

(Page 113)

VFW 62nd National Convention, Resolution 183, mandate provides that - "charters should be draped for 30 days for all deceased comrades." After the 30 days an "Undraping of the Charter" ceremony may be performed.

After motion from floor, or Commander requests ceremony:

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will prepare to undrape the charter.

(Officer of Day proceeds to the altar and salutes Commander.)

Commander: (Raps gavel twice) Members rise and face charter at attention.

Commander: Officer of the Day, you will now undrape our charter which was draped last month for Comrade _____.

(Officer of Day proceeds to undrape charter.)

Commander: Comrades, Salute - Two.

(Officer of Day returns to his/her station.)

Commander: This concludes our undraping ceremony. (Raps gavel once to seat members).

Blessings as you serve.

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