

Apr 24, 2021
COMPLETED MISSION

George D. Allen/ Staff Sergeant United States Army
Memorial / Celebration of Life

ROAD CAPTAIN: Steve "WHACKO" West / Flag Folding and Presentation
SECONDARY ROAD CAPTAIN: Kelly "SPECIAL K" Rasmussen/RHG/Flag Folding
RIFLE TEAM CAPTAIN: Dave "BURNOUT" Miller
SUPPORT VEHICLE: Marcus and Shelli Skinner PATRIOTS:

15 This Mission was to be held at Father's House Church and from the start we were taken by surprise one after another. The best thing that can be done is to roll with it and adapt and overcome the odds. The family contact assured me the military had been contacted. Not so much. I had asked the previous military team if they had another service later that day after being at the Kelso Elks earlier in the day for the first service. That keyed me up to ask if they even had it on their queue somewhere for another team. Not so much. I started to get concerned but I did have a moment up my sleeve. No team no folding of the flag for our HERO by the military. That leads to the next GUMBY moment. Kelly arrived with 16 cars in tow to the church and while they were getting untangled, I asked Kelly if he had ever folded a flag? "Once". Once is better than none. That was the plan at that point, and that was going to work. I had already prompted the sound booth guys to play TAPS at the end of the rifle volley. The stage was set and we were about to start the roll of bringing in the HERO. The Road Captain Steve "Whacko" West prompted everyone in attendance to stand and put their hand over their heart as the HERO was going to be moving in and be placed up front close to the family on a table of focus. All were called to attention and present arms at that point by the Road Captain. Kelly "Special K" Rasmussen led with the HEROES flag and Jeff "Thumper" Pollich carried our HEROES remains. The elements were set on the table and both of the bearers of each saluted and walked away. Kelly "Special K" Rasmussen and Steve "Whacko" West proceeded forward to unfold the burial flag. It was decided to move up on stage to do so as there was very little room to work with in the front. Kelly and I did exactly that. Shelli Skinner had been placed in the hallway to signal Dave "Burnout" Miller when to start the HONORS of the Rifle Team. Kelly and I popped the flag open and shortly after that the rifles fired and right behind that the sound booth played the perfect rendition of TAPS. At the end of the three elements Steve "Whacko" West and Kelly "Special K" Rasmussen went back to refolding the flag of HONOR. Steve folded while Kelly held. Kelly tucked the end in and took the flag and straightened it up with a little ceremonious time and really took his time with it, then Presented it back to the Road Captain Steve "Whacko" West. Kelly saluted the flag after passing it back to the Road Captain for presentation and exited the field of HONOR. Okay now Kelly has done it twice. I Steve "Whacko" West had the distinct HONOR of presenting it to the wife of SSG George D. Allen, Shirley Allen. Right in the chime of things and my last words to her she expressed, "He was a very good man". "Tank Filler" moment as every eye in the house was focused on what was being said and there were no dry eyes. A grandson in full uniform stood next to his grandmother, and he too saluted when I presented the flag. He is an E-5 Sergeant in the United States Marine Corps and was his grandmother's driver for the day. I left from in front only to return to present the coin after the flag, that finished, Dave "Burnout" Miller presented the brass and stuck them in the flag our HERO'S wife was clutching. All elements of presentation were finished the next thing to do is to get my Patriot friends out of the rain as soon as possible. I, Steve "Whacko" West called for the colors to be recovered outside and we all headed to the support vehicle. Another well planned moment with

whole bunch of tripping hazards came to a very good moment for all. I received many accolades the next day from the folks in attendance to include our POC Chelsea Bond.