COMPLETED MISSION REPORT

Master SGT John Herbert Witham (80), US Marine Corps (Vietnam) Kelso, WA.

 9 July 2021

15 Patriots gathered to Honor our Hero John Herbert Witham (80) US Marine Corps (Vietnam) at Green Mountain Cemetery Rainier, Oregon as he was presented with his much-deserved Military Honors. We Staged at the Indy Way Diner in Longview, WA where 15 Men & Women came together and formed The Patriot Guard Mission. We signed in on the Pay Sheet, imparted a bit of ourselves into the coin that was passed from hand to hand as we reconnected with old and new friends gathered to Honor a Decorated Hero on this day. We circled up & removed our covers as our Road Captain led us in a prayer. We recited the Pledge of Allegiance, and the Road Captain gave a briefing on our Hero along with instructions on the mission plan. Our Rolling Honor Guard Escort Captain selected his team and departed for the Steel Chapel in Longview to Escort Our Hero and his family up to the Green Mountain Cemetery. The Road Captain lead the rest of the Patriots out of the Indy Way Diner parking lot on our two wheeled Iron horses with American Flags whipping in the wind & our trusted support vehicles as Tail Gunners. We arrived at the Internment location atop of Rainier Hill. The Road Captain met with the US Marine Corps Honor Guard, The Marine Corps League & The VFW representatives onsite to collaborate our cues and movements. Flags were taken & unfurled by each Patriot. Our Patriots formed the Flagline along with the flags previously staked into the ground earlier. Our American Flag & US Marine Corps Flag were positioned in a place of prominence in front of the Family. The Rifle team was positioned a safe distance away and stood ready for their cue to fire. The USMC Honor Guard was in position ready to receive our Hero along with the Bagpiper and the Bugler. Then, just like it was planned, our Rolling Honor Guard came into sight with the Family in tow behind them. It shall be noted that the Nephew (Don Witham) of our Hero joined our Escort team and rode in the #2 Position of the Missing Man Formation, Honoring his Uncles memory. The Road Captain Called the Patriots to Attention & Present Arms as The Escort rolled into the Cemetery with their thundering exhaust and stopped in front of the team in position & ready to receive our Hero. The USMC Team Honorably transferred our Hero and his burial flag from the Honor bike to the table next to his internment location. The Bagpiper played the Marine Corps Hymn as the Hero was Moved and then faded out of sight and sound. The Road Captain instructed the Family as to the commencement of Military Honors and the order of events. At this time, the USMC team lifted the burial flag & began the unfolding. The Flag was canted as all patriots stood at full salute. The Rifle team sent prayers aloft in a Volley of Three. The USMC Bugler followed with the playing of TAPS right on cue. The Flag was meticulously refolded and presented to the Widow of our Hero. The Rifle Team Captain presented the Brass from the Volley of Three. Our Road Captain presented our Commemorative coin, Called the Patriots to attention, Present arms, Order arms & retired the colors. Our Flags led the way as we exited the field in a double column back to our support vehicle to stow the gear. We ended the mission with Ice Water, Handshakes & Hugs and a toast to our Hero. We then headed out in different directions to rejoin our families. I am proud of todays mission and proud of the Patriots that stood for this Hero. Everyone did an outstanding job today and the family told me how much they appreciated us all being there for their Hero. What we do Matters, and it is important that we do it right. We gathered as Patriots all, we stood guard for the Hero and his family as the PATRIOT GUARD, united not in name, but in our love of our Veterans, through Actions and Honor. May we never forget our purpose in this endeavor of Honor, Respect and love of our Fallen Heroes and their families. The love and camaraderie of all Patriots gathered this day was beautiful to see as always. 15 Patriots became 15 Men & Women again until we are called upon to stand yet again and form the Patriot Guard. This mission was conducted to the highest standards of the American Legion PATRIOT GUARD / FINAL SALUTE Mission. It was a mission completed to the highest standards of our stated mission, HONORING OUR NATIONS HEROES. May GOD bless our service members and our Patriot Family, PATRIOTS ALL that we may continue to STAND FOR THOSE WHO HAVE AND CONTINUE TO STAND FOR OUR SAFETY AND FREEDOM. My Personal Thank You to each Patriot who attended this Mission today, Your Selflessness & Dedication is an inspiration to me and a Blessing to those around you.