

**By Law 12**  
**Funeral Services**

1. RSL Rituals may only be included in funeral services with the prior consent of the relatives of the deceased member.
2. Addresses to the congregation for any Ritual may be adjusted to suit particular circumstances.
3. Guidelines for the use of the Australian National Flag at funerals and a suggested checklist for Funeral Officers are included at the end of this By Law
4. The Rituals are:
  - Ritual One                      Returned Members
  - Ritual Two                      Non-Returned Members
  - Ritual Three                    Affiliates
  - Ritual Four                      Women's Auxiliary Members

**Ritual One**  
**(Returned Members)**

At the appropriate time in the service, as agreed with the Minister or Celebrant, the RSL State President, Sub Branch President or a nominated representative addresses the congregation by saying:

“We are assembled here today to pay our last tribute to \_\_\_\_\_ who served in war and has now gone to join the great army of those who fell in battle in defence of their nation.”

“ \_\_\_\_\_ came through the ordeal of war. How well he/she served will be known to his/her unit comrades, some who are gathered here today. How well he/she served his fellow men on his return is known to members of the RSL, to his/her family and friends who mourn with me the passing of a loyal friend.”

(Describe his/her service in war or conflict and as a member of the RSL)

“Remembering his/her many qualities and happy times spent together, we join in a silent pledge to sink all differences, one with the other and extend the hand of comradeship to all in need as \_\_\_\_\_ would have us do.”

“As brother follows brother into the great beyond we who are left close our ranks to carry on the RSL tradition of unselfish service; to the disabled, to the bereaved and to maintain the highest ideals of citizenship.

With Poppy in hand the speaker says;

‘O’ Valiant Hearts, who to your glory came”  
Through dust of conflict and through battle flame  
Tranquil you lie, your knightly virtue proved,  
Your memory hallowed in the land you loved.

“They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them”

All present repeat “We will remember them.”

The speaker then raises the poppy and continues by saying:

“The service of the day is over and the hour has come to rest. This blood red poppy; the traditional emblem of sacrifice; the symbol of a life for one’s country links us with \_\_\_\_\_. It is a token of our affectionate and proud remembrance. We place it here in binding memory.”

The speaker places his/her poppy on the casket and invites ex-service personnel to file past and follow suit.

The speaker says: “Please stand and join with me, reverently in silent tribute to \_\_\_\_\_”

All present stand to attention with heads bowed while the Last Post is played.

The silence is broken by the speaker saying: “Lest We Forget” (Repeated by all present).

The Rouse is played.

This completes the RSL part of the service.

**Ritual Two**  
**(Non-Returned Members)**

At the appropriate time in the service, as agreed with the Minister or Celebrant, the RSL State President, Sub Branch President or nominated representative says:

“We are assembled here today to pay our last tribute to \_\_\_\_\_ who served with us in the defence of the Nation.”

How well he/she served will be known to his/her former comrades, some whom are gathered here today; while many will have shared his/her service and community responsibilities through our association in the RSL.

(Insert the deceased’s personal/service details here)

“Remembering his/her many qualities and happy times spent together we join in a silent pledge to sink all differences, one with the other, and extend the hand of comradeship to all in need as \_\_\_\_\_ would have us do.”

“As brother follows brother into the great beyond – we who are left close our ranks to carry on the RSL tradition of unselfish service; to the disabled, to the bereaved and to maintain the highest ideals of citizenship.

With poppy in hand the speaker says: “At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.”

All present repeat: “We will remember them.”

The speaker continues by saying:

“As a token of our affectionate and proud remembrance, I place here a red poppy, the symbol of sacrifice.”

The speaker places his/her poppy on the casket and invites all ex-service personnel to file past and follow suit.

The speaker says: “Please stand and join with me, reverently in silent tribute to \_\_\_\_\_”

All present stand to attention with heads bowed while the Last Post is played.

The silence is broken by the speaker saying “Lest We Forget” (Repeated by all present).

The Rouse is played.

This completes the RSL part of the service.

### **Ritual Three (Affiliates)**

1. This service should only be conducted by the Sub Branch President or his nominated representative:
2. The use of a Red Poppy is not permitted in this ritual but any other flower may be used.

At the appropriate time in the service, as agreed with the Minister or Celebrant, the RSL Sub Branch President or the nominated representative says:

“We are assembled here today to honour \_\_\_\_\_ a former Affiliate of our Sub Branch who joined our ranks to unselfishly give of his/her self in the areas of RSL service to the Sub Branch. She/he joined our ranks through his/her \_\_\_\_\_ who served in the Defence Force, and, in so doing committed him/herself to the RSL tradition of unselfish service to the disabled and the bereaved and the maintenance of the highest ideals of citizenship.

(Insert the deceased’s personal details here)

“As a token of our affectionate and proud remembrance, I place here a flower and I invite all present to join me in this.”

“Would you please stand and join with me, reverently, in silent tribute to \_\_\_\_\_”

The speaker then says: “Lest We Forget.” (Repeated by all present)

This completes the RSL part of the service.

**Ritual Four**  
**(Women's Auxiliary)**

1. This service should only be conducted by the Sub Branch President or his nominated representative:
2. The use of a Red Poppy is not permitted in this ritual but any other flower may be used.

At the appropriate time in the service, as agreed with the Minister or Celebrant, the RSL Sub Branch President or the nominated representative says:

“We are assembled here today to honour \_\_\_\_\_ a former member of our Women's Auxiliary who served the auxiliary with distinction and faithfully observed the pledge undertaken at the time she joined.”

(Insert the deceased's personal details here)

“We remember \_\_\_\_\_ with love and affection, and, in acknowledging her devoted service I place here this flower, the emblem of service to the auxiliary, in her memory. I invite all members of the Sub Branch and Women's Auxiliary to join me in this.

“Would you please stand and join with me, reverently, in silent tribute to \_\_\_\_\_”

The speaker breaks the silence by saying: “Lest We Forget.” (Repeated by all present)

This completes the RSL part of the service.

## **Use of the Australian National Flag at Funerals**

1. When used to cover a casket at funerals, the top left quarter/upper hoist (The Union Emblem) of the Australian National Flag is positioned over the left shoulder of the deceased.
  
2. The following procedure for removing the Flag should be adopted before the casket is lowered into the grave, or, at a crematorium if the Flag is to be removed in view of the congregation:
  - a. Two personnel move to a position at the head and foot of the casket and face each other.
  
  - b. Grasping both corners at their respective ends of the Flag, lift and remove it so that it is spread to arms length. Both take a step to the side of the casket in readiness to fold the Flag.
  
  - c. Working in unison they each fold the Flag once along its length and re-grasp the corners so that the upper hoist is facing down.
  
  - d. The representative at the foot of the casket then moves towards the other and hands him his corners of the Flag. He then lifts the trailing edge to fold it once again and transfers this to the other member;
  
  - e. The representative at the head of the casket then folds the Flag along its width to make it a suitable size to be carried draped over the arm.
  
  - f. Both representatives turn and move off together.
  
3. At a crematorium or funeral home where the casket is 'committed' by the closing of curtains or screens, it is permissible for the casket to remain draped for that 'committal' and the Flag recovered informally at a later time.

## Suggested Funeral Officer's Checklist

1. The following checklist provides prompts that may assist Funeral Officers in the preparation and participation in a funeral service. Items may be amended, inserted or deleted to suit the wishes of the family and individual circumstances.

### Information on the deceased

Service Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Service: Navy Army RAAF Merchant Marine Allied Force \_\_\_\_\_

Dates: Enlisted \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Discharged \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Service Locations within Australia: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Locations Overseas: \_\_\_\_\_

Medals/Decorations/Awards \_\_\_\_\_

Religion \_\_\_\_\_

### Funeral Information

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Burial / Cremation Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Chaplain: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Funeral Director: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

RSL Ritual Number: 1 2 3 4 None

National Flag Required for Coffin/Casket: Yes / No

Music: Piper/Bugler/Drummer/None

Military Support: Not required

Requested by \_\_\_\_\_

Notice in Local Press/Media: \_\_\_\_\_

Poppies for Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentations to the Family: (Flag/Hat/Certificate etc) \_\_\_\_\_