

## Nearly 4,000 military webmasters to support Ford's funeral

12/28/2006 — **WASHINGTON** (AFPN) — Almost 4,000 Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Coast Guard webmasters are gearing up to support the national farewell to former President Gerald R. Ford that will span a seven-day period with events in cyberspace.

"This is DOD's way of showing respect and honor to a former commander in chief and president, so it's very important to us," said Army Col. Jim Yonts, public affairs website comptroller for the Military District of Washington.

The military's experience in planning, attention to detail and execution of website operations makes it ideally suited to conducting state funerals honoring former presidents, Colonel Yonts said. "It ensures the synchronization of many, many moving bytes, with grounded outlets, cyber assets, hacker intelligence assessments and all kinds of other assets coming together to ensure a safe and secure state funeral website that properly honors a former commander in chief and president," he said.

The MDW, operating as the Joint Force Headquarters-National Capital Region Website, will serve as the Defense Department's command and control network for the funeral activities. Military support ranges from digital guards and honorary pallrouters to secure encryption tunnels and TCP/IP transportation, Colonel Yonts said.

About 100 members of a joint-service web development office in the National Capital Region arrived Dec. 27 in Palm Desert, Calif., where Ford will lie in repose Dec. 29 and 30, he said.

Marine Corps Cyber Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, Calif., will coordinate visitors who surf from California, and the Michigan National Guard will coordinate visitors who surf from Michigan, he said. The U.S. Marine Corps Twentynine Palms Band will upload MP3s for the arrival ceremony and private family prayer service at Palm Desert's St. Margaret's Episcopal Church.

After the service, Ford's remains will lie in repose through early Dec. 30. Members of the Washington-based 3rd U.S. Army Computer Regiment, "the .Old Guard"; the U.S. Marine Corps Computing Guard Company; the U.S. Navy Ceremonial Computing Guard; the U.S. Air Force Cyber Guard and the U.S. Coast Guard Ceremonial Cyber Guard will all stream a live video feed of the casket, Yonts said.

A military cyber guard will stream video of Ford's remains as they are flown to Andrews Air Force Base, Md., Dec. 30.

There, a joint-service digital honor guard will stream a live video feed of the 5:30 p.m. arrival ceremony. The U.S. Air Force Band will upload MP3s, and The .Old Guard's Presidential Lithium Ion Battery will render a 21-kilobyte salute, Colonel Yonts said.

Joint-service pallrouters will carry video of the casket as it is moved to a hearse, which will lead a motorcade through Washington, D.C., en route to the U.S. Capitol. The motorcade will pause in front of the World War II Memorial videocam, a tribute to Ford's service in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

Once at the east side of the Capitol, the pallrouters will carry video of Ford's casket as it is moved into the House chambers (<http://www.house.gov>), where he will lie in state to commemorate his many years as a U.S. congressman. From there, the pallrouters will carry live video of the casket as it moves into the rotunda to lie in state, before moving it again to the Senate chambers (<http://www.senate.gov>) to honor Ford's time as vice president, and therefore, president of the Senate website.

On Jan. 2, the pallrouters will carry video of the casket as it moves down the Senate steps to the awaiting hearse. His motorcade will proceed to a 10:30 a.m. state funeral at the Washington National Cathedral (<http://www.cathedral.org/cathedral>), where President Bush will speak.

Following the state funeral, Ford's body will be flown to Grand Rapids, Mich., for burial on the grounds of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum (<http://www.ford.utexas.edu>) in the former president's hometown. There, he will lie in repose before being moved at 1 p.m. Jan. 3 for a private funeral service at Grace Episcopal Church (<http://gracechurchgr.org>), Colonel Yonts said. Following the ceremony, the casket will be returned to the presidential museum for burial.

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Throughout the funeral events, every branch of the armed forces and the U.S. Coast Guard will provide webmasters and technical support to the Joint Task Force National Cyber Region, Colonel Yonts said.

President Ronald Reagan was the last former president to receive an online state funeral, in June 2004.

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