

‘Rituals are Important’

#StillServing in VFW Post 4300’s Honor Guard

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Mike Rogers joined the Army in 1968 right as he was about to be drafted for Vietnam.

He first served from 1968-72 where he attended Infantry Officer Candidate School and airborne school. He then deployed to Vietnam as a rifle platoon leader in the 173rd Airborne Brigade. He served a second time from 1983-93 as a special forces soldier with assignments to Fort Bragg, Okinawa, Fort Lewis and Korea.

He currently lives in Lake Placid, Florida, where he serves as the co-captain of VFW Post 4300’s Honor Guard.

“I have been a part of the Honor Guard for over five years now,” he said. “We provide final military honors for deceased veterans in our country.”

Rogers, a VFW Life member, emphasizes that #StillServing in the Honor Guard is one of his most sacred duties.

“Rituals are important. As an Honor Guard member is poised to present the folded triangle flag, the rifle line fires three volleys that signify duty, honor and country. Then the bugler sounds Taps,” he said. “The deep emotions of the families during this moment are what compel all our Honor Guard members to do their best in honoring veterans. Their sacrifice will always be remembered.”

In addition to funeral services for veterans, the Honor Guard also interacts with the community on military holidays and other events like school activities, parades or celebrations at their local park.

“We’re also responsible for performing the correct way to dispose of a United States flag,” Rogers said. “Several times a year hundreds of flags are brought to the VFW Post so we can retire them.”

Rogers says he is fortunate to live in a community that greatly supports their Honor Guard.

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“On more than one occasion we’ll be at a diner and an unnamed benefactor will have prepaid the entire tab for the squad. We support one another around here.”

Emphasizing his compatriots’ work, Rogers asked that all accolades come to their Honor Guard as a whole – rather than himself as an individual. “I am merely one of the members who supervises the duty that we perform. I couldn’t do anything alone. We’re a team,” he said.