

TRANSITIONS

VOL 9.4 • OCT '26

why we celebrate life at a funeral

by Andrea Ruggieri

Someone died. We mourn, but why are we also celebrating?! None of it makes sense. In the grand scheme of things, those of us left behind now have an empty space where that person once was. Suffering the loss of a loved one forces us to tour the land of grief. It causes pain and sorrow... why would we want to celebrate?

Our feelings of sadness may not be eradicated, but celebration of life is an important first step in acknowledging the person who has left this earth. This opens the door to begin healing. Though it may be uncomfortable, celebrate who they were in life, remember the special times as well as your unique connection to them. Tears often meet laughter as you reflect. It's all right to think about your loved one and smile as they made you smile in life.

What are ways we observe the things that made our loved one so special at a celebration of life service? Words: sharing readings, poems, special memories – they all pay homage. Playing meaningful music – whether it was meaningful to them, or to you. Photographs and videos are a beautiful tribute that also help guests that may not have known them personally to learn about the type of person they were. Build their story by adding tangible things. Dad was a woodworker, Aunt Beth was a musician – display those significant items that celebrate their individuality.

Celebrating their life can endure even after the services are over. Be thoughtful in approaching holidays, birthdays or anniversaries. Find ways to honor them. Make their signature dish at a holiday, play their favorite music on their birthday, donate time or money to the causes that were important to them. Be creative; there are many ways to keep your loved one close to your heart.

It may not seem possible and it's hard at first, but the transition from seeing your person face-to-face to a spiritual relationship will someday feel okay. Celebrating their life doesn't negate your sadness over losing them, it simply honors their life. It allows and teaches you to occasionally shift your focus to the most meaningful thing you possess – memories. So consider this perspective as you move through times of grief – it will help to maintain the sparkle that made their life special to you.

Helpful Links:

bartolomeo.com/life-story-services/
centerforloss.com/grief/funerals-and-ceremonies/




Bartolomeo & Perotto
FUNERAL HOME, INC.
A Life Remembered, Lives On.
bartolomeo.com

Greece, NY
(585) 720-6000


Walker Brothers
FUNERAL HOME, INC.
A Life Celebrated, Lives On.
walkerbrothersfh.com

Spencerport, NY
Churchville, NY
(585) 352-1500

how u.s. military funeral customs came to be

by Andrea Ruggieri



We often become so accustomed to rituals that we don't stop and think about their origins and how they've evolved over the years to where they are today. How did military funeral services and traditions come into being?

In America's early days, some of the first deceased soldiers to be authorized by congress for a special burial location was in 1850 during the Mexican-American War. They were laid to rest in Mexico City.

Onset of National Cemeteries

From 1861-1865, the heavy combat in America's Civil War resulted in thousands of military deaths. Though attempts were made to bury the dead, often they did not have the resources to do so properly. It was well into the first year of the war before provisions were made to honor those who were killed in battle.

In 1862 the president was granted permission to purchase cemetery grounds. Twelve cemeteries were established for this purpose. By 1870, 300,000 fallen Union soldiers and sailors were buried in 73 national cemeteries. Early on, Confederate soldiers had to be buried in separate burial grounds, but that changed around 1906 where it was pronounced that all U.S. military killed in battle, veterans and Confederate military members could be buried in any established national cemetery. Interesting fact, if you are visiting a national cemetery with civil war graves, you'll notice that the confederate headstones were marked with a pointed instead of rounded top and were absent of the U.S. shield.

The **Act to Establish & Protect National Cemeteries** was initiated in 1867. This legislation was put in place with measures to keep these burial sites safe, requiring all national cemeteries to have: (1) an appointed superintendent, (2) a stone or iron fence, and (3) a marker to adorn each gravesite.

The National Cemetery Administration
of The Department of Veteran Affairs,
The Department of the Army of the
Department of Defense, and The
National Park Service of the
Department of the Interior,
are the 3 federal
organizations that

manage over 175 national cemeteries today. New National Cemeteries are still being established. In fact, the Western New York National Cemetery in Corfu, NY, is conveniently only an hour away from Rochester, NY. This cemetery was just dedicated and opened in 2020.

Playing "Taps" became a military funeral custom back in 1874. It officially became a funeral requirement in 1891 by the U.S. Department of Defense. In its most traditional version, it is played by a live bugler, however a recording of the song is allowed.

The **Presentation of the Flag** is a custom that was also mandated in military services by the U.S. Department of Defense. The American flag is precisely folded 13 times into a triangular shape so that only the blue background and white stars show on the outside. This is customarily given to a direct family member or an appointed recipient.

Many may confuse the 21-Gun Salute with the **3-Volley Salute**. The 3-Volley Salute gains its significance from early Roman funerals where honoring their fallen, the number 3 was symbolic. Funeral mourners would throw soil on the coffin 3 times, calling out the name of the deceased saying "Vale!" which meant "Farewell" in Latin.

The **21-Gun Salute** is held specifically to recognize the nation's Commander in Chief, The President. The original custom is a centuries old Naval tradition. Ships would fire ammunition from their cannons 3 times to indicate peaceful intent. English vessels typically held 7 cannons, collectively making it a 21-gun salute.

Does anyone remember JFK's **Riderless Horse**? This is one of the more interesting traditions that was first seen around 1912 with the funeral of Ulysses S. Grant's son, Major General Frederick Grant. It was also done during George Washington's procession. This display was reserved for Army and Marine Corps officers graded colonel and up, including the President. It illustrates that the deceased will never ride again. Boots are placed backwards in the stirrups symbolizing their final look back at their troops.

Bartolomeo honors veteran wishes and the rich history with every military funeral we hold. We're always here for any questions you may have. We also love sharing all the burial benefits that military members may be eligible for. Join us on November 4 to learn all about it. See details on next page.

Resources:

- HISTORY.COM- www.history.com/articles/military-funeral-traditions-origins; May 21, 2026, Written by, Tim Ott
- NATIONAL PARK SERVICE- www.nps.gov/articles/000/national-cemeteries-history.htm; Written by, Kerry Merrifield

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VETERANS

LEARN ABOUT YOUR
EARNED BURIAL BENEFITS

Planning Ahead...
for Peace of Mind



Free

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Surviving Grief
during the holidays

November 4, 2026

10 a m - 12 p m

December 2, 2026

10 a m - 12 p m

Bartolomeo & Perotto Funeral Home thanks you for your service! Join us to learn about the benefits you may have earned and how to take the first step in pre-planning your funeral.

Getting your intentions on paper makes things easier for your survivors at an emotional time. It lightens the load for them and is truly a gift!

Check it off your list! It will be nice to know your personal wishes will be honored and it gives you great peace of mind. **Done!**
Enjoy life!



**Join us at Bartolomeo & Perotto
Funeral Home**

1411 Vintage Lane, Greece, NY



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Funeral Home**

1411 Vintage Lane, Greece, NY



Presented by Art Therapist,
Andrea Piccone, BFA, MS

To Reserve Your Spot

call 585.720.6000

email andrea@bartolomeo.com

website bartolomeo.com > click seminar link

*Request early • Seating is limited
RSVP by: 10/28/26

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an unexpected grief... death of a pet

by Carla Tanguay

I never expected the death of my dog Nugget to have such a profound effect on me. I remember every detail of that week, from how the vet's voice cracked when he told us the cancer was inoperable, to trying to make her last days as comfortable as possible, to the first morning when I woke up and didn't hear her nails clicking across the wood floors. I knew I was going to miss Nugget terribly, but I wasn't prepared for the impact of the grief that followed.

Our pets are our constant companions. They are the maintainers of ritual, the providers of unconditional love, and the recipients of our care and devotion. Each morning at 6am, my cat wakes me up by walking across my pillow. Each evening after dinner, Nugget would sit by the door and wait for our nighttime stroll around the neighborhood. Saturdays meant a trip to the dog park.

It wasn't until Nugget's death that I realized many of my social interactions were centered around my dog. I had even made several new friends at the dog park, and I looked forward to seeing them every week. On the street where I lived, I think more neighbors knew my dog's name than knew my own. I found myself wondering what would happen to those friendships. I couldn't just show up at the dog park alone.

The bond between humans and animals is profound, and the loss of a pet can be as significant as the death of a friend or family member. Yet, we often feel ashamed or embarrassed at the level of pain we feel over the death of our pets and shouldn't. It is important to acknowledge and accept the intense grief and the life changes that the death of a pet can bring. Just like when a loved one dies, experiencing your grief, sharing feelings with others, and honoring your loss are important steps towards healing.

Honoring Your Pet

When a beloved pet dies, there are many ways to honor and mark the significance of the loss. You may be able to choose what to do with your pet's remains. Many areas have pet cemeteries with gravesites and other markers to provide a sense of dignity and formality to your loss. Cremation may be another option, which allows for you to scatter ashes in a favorite spot, or to keep them with you.

Helpful Links:

Local pet loss support: petlossroc.com/

Children | Loss of a family pet:

vet.purdue.edu/hospital/client-services/client-counseling-and-support-services/children-and-pet-loss.php



Even without remains, there are ways to memorialize your pet. Writing down favorite memories, setting up a memorial social media account, holding a special service, making a donation to an organization, or planting a tree are all ways to pay tribute to your loss. You may choose to do these remembrances alone, or to invite friends and family. When Nugget died, it wasn't until I invited people to a service in my backyard that I realized I wasn't the only person who missed her. I felt less alone knowing that others were grieving too.

Helping Yourself and Your Family

Sometimes, the grief that accompanies the death of a pet is complicated by other factors. Feelings of guilt, memories of a previous loss, and social isolation can compound grief. It is important to have someone you can connect to and be honest with about your feelings. Some people find it helpful to connect with groups specifically for people who have lost a pet. The Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement is a helpful online resource.

Often, the death of a family pet is the first experience children have with death. Children need help understanding and processing their feelings and look to adults in their lives for guidance. While it may feel easier to protect children with stories or white lies, it is healthier to be honest and forthcoming. Involving children in rituals and allowing them to see your own sadness helps them learn how to normalize and manage their own feelings.

Lap of Love Veterinary Hospice is a nationwide network of mobile veterinarians dedicated exclusively to providing compassionate, in-home end-of-life care for pets.

lapoflove.com/

