

RITUAL 4 – RSL FUNERAL SERVICE FOR RETURNED MEMBERS

The ritual may only be used with the prior consent of the relatives of the deceased member.

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 says (address may be altered to suit circumstances):

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

“... (Name) ... came through the ordeal of war. How well he served will be known to his Unit comrades, some of whom are gathered here today; how he served their fellow man on their return is known to the members of the RSL, his family and friends who mourn with me the passing of a loyal friend.”

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

“Remembering his many qualities and the happy times we 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 ... (Name) ... 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 Heart, 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.”

Followed by (Speaker holds up poppy):

“The service of the day is over, and the hour has come for rest. This blood red poppy – the traditional emblem of sacrifice, the symbol of a life given for one’s country – links us with ... (Name). It is a token of our affectionate and proud remembrance. We place it here in abiding memory.”

The speaker drops or places his poppy on the casket and motions others to file past and follow suit.

The speaker says:

“Please stand and join with me, reverently, in a silent tribute to ... (Name) ...”

All present stand at attention with heads bowed.

The Last Post is then played.

The silence is broken by the speaker saying

“Lest we forget.”

(Repeated by all present.)

This is followed by Reveille.

This completes the service.