

BEYOND PLATITUDES: THE IMPORTANCE OF A PLAN

Law enforcement officers frequently deal with unspeakable, and often senseless, tragedy. On a daily basis, we witness the most gruesome, callous things human beings can do to one another, and, no matter how much we may empathize with the victims and their families, we must deal with these situations objectively and professionally.

But when one of the law enforcement agency's own is the victim, dealing with such a tragedy becomes extremely personal. *It's hard to remain objective and organized when you're grieving.*

A line of duty funeral involves myriad activities, events, tasks, services, and ceremonies. It typically involves over a hundred topics to be reviewed, evaluated, modified, applied, managed, and coordinated, all on a strict time line.

There will be little opportunity for in-depth discussions, revisions and preparations. A select strategic planning team may find themselves responsible for a staff of a hundred people on the day of the services, with events at several locations, and attendance in the thousands.

All of this occurs simultaneously with the criminal, traffic, or death investigation, as well as during a time of collective shock and grief for the agency.

The manager of the funeral planning should be as competent as the incident's lead investigator. The presence of an experienced funeral coordinator will provide the necessary guidance to insure a *dignified, respectful, and honorable traditional police funeral.*



SGT. JOHN COOLEY, L AP D (retired)