

What Do I Say at the Memorial Ceremony?

Memorial Ceremonies can be awkward; there is no getting around it. They can turn the most confident person into a nervous wreck because we just don't know what to say and do. It is equally as awkward for the person/people grieving as they are now in the position of trying to deal with all these emotions and in most cases a strange and unfamiliar military environment with many complete strangers.

Nonetheless, a family grieving will appreciate your show of support. In an overcrowded situation, it is important to sign the guest register that is provided. Be sure to include your first and last name and affiliation to the deceased Soldier since you will most likely not know the person grieving directly. This is most helpful to family afterward as the whole experience can seem a bit of a blur to them at the time.

When meeting with or attending the receiving line with the person/people grieving, take your cues from them wherever possible. The key is to keep it simple and sincere. You can use your own words to convey messages like:

- I am so sorry.
- I'm sorry for your loss.
- My sympathies to you.
- Please accept my condolences.
- My heart goes out to you in your time of sorrow.
- I/We are thinking of you. I/we wish there were words to comfort you.
- I/We are saddened by your loss.
- Please accept my sympathy for the loss of your Soldier.
- What you're going through must be very difficult.
- He/She will always be remembered.
- As you grieve know what we are remembering you and honoring his/her memory.
- I'm praying for you.
- Please accept my heartfelt sympathies for your loss.
- My thoughts are with you and your family during this difficult time.
- Your Soldier will be missed.
- Would you like a hug?
- My sympathy to you and your family.

It can be difficult to know what to do or say at a funeral. If you act in a respectful manner and offer some words and gestures of comfort, you'll do just fine.