

## **Honor Guard Presents Colors at NFC Championship Game**

January 16, 2013

On Sunday, January 13, 2013 five members of the Hall County Sheriff's Office Color Guard did something that they've done hundreds of times before: proudly presented The Colors with dignity, honor, and respect. But this time, they did it before a crowd of more than 71,000 at the NFC divisional playoff game in the Georgia Dome.

Deputy Jonathan Jackson bore the National Colors, while Deputies Charles Wallace and Michael Mount bore the State of Georgia and Hall County Sheriff's Office flags, respectively. Deputies Thomas Hyde and Mike Wester served as right and left color guards. Their performance was so well received that they have been invited back to the Georgia Dome to present the Colors again for this coming Sunday's NFC championship game.

Deputy Jonathan Jackson, who serves as the Honor Guard Commander, said of the experience, "It was a proud moment for us to have the opportunity to represent the department, the community, and our Atlanta Falcons. This was much more than just a handful of Deputies doing this; it was the culmination of the efforts of all of Honor Guard members since its inception."

The Honor Guard, consisting of Deputies volunteering from all divisions of the Sheriff's Office, serves as the department's ceremonial unit and provides a number of services to the local community. Originally formed in 1988 with 12 members, the unit now is comprised of 20 regular members, augmented by 5 field musicians. Those members are divided into a rifle detail, flag detail, mounted detail, and field music. The unit conducts services at a number of public functions every year such as parades and patriotic ceremonies. Among the most important events that the unit supports is the rendering of honors at the funerals of fallen or retired law enforcement officers and military veterans.

Perhaps the unit's most popular event is a special service held over the course of Memorial Day weekend every year to honor our country's veterans. During the 24 hour holiday period, members stand a ceremonial vigil in the veterans section of Memorial Park cemetery. The event features an around-the-clock marching guard replicating that of the U.S. Army's Old Guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery. Spectators appear at all hours of the day and night to observe the changing of the guard, and the event consistently gains media attention across the region.

The Honor Guard has an excellent working relationship with a number of law enforcement and veterans' organizations throughout the region, and has trained with the U.S. Army's Old Guard and the U.S. Marine Corps Color Guard and Silent Drill Platoon. Additionally, they collaborate regularly with the Georgia Army National Guard Burial Unit.

"The Honor Guard is simply an outstanding asset to the Sheriff's Office and our citizens," said Sheriff Gerald Couch of the unit. "These Deputies go above and beyond their normal duties to provide our community with a pure and honorable service. They earn no extra pay and take a tremendous amount of pride in what they do. I couldn't be more proud of these Deputies and the way they represent the Sheriff's Office."