

Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration

Standing Guard



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On the television show Jeopardy, the final question was “How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns”. All three contestants missed it! So if you are ever a contestant on Jeopardy... here is some facts about the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

- 1) How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns and why? 21 steps: It alludes to the twenty-one-gun salute which is the highest honor given any military or foreign dignitary.
- 2) How long does he hesitate after his about face to begin his return walk and why? 21 seconds for the same reason as answer number 1
- 3) Why are his gloves wet? His gloves are moistened to prevent his losing his grip on the rifle.
- 4) Does he carry his rifle on the same shoulder all the time and, if not, why not? He carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the tomb. After his march across the path, he executes an about face and moves the rifle to the outside shoulder.
- 5) How often are the guards changed? Guards are changed every thirty minutes, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year.
- 6) What are the physical traits of the guard limited to?
 - a) For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb, he must be between 5' 10" and 6' 2" tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30.
 - b) They must commit 2 years of life to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty for the rest of their lives.
 - c) They cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives and cannot disgrace the uniform or the tomb in any way. After two years, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapel signifying they served as guard of the tomb. There are only 400 presently worn. The guard must obey these rules for the rest of their lives or give up the wreath pin.
 - d) The shoes are specially made with very thick soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet. There are metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe in order to make the loud click as they come to a halt. There are no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform. Guards dress for duty in front of a full-length mirror.
 - e) The first six months of duty a guard cannot talk to anyone nor watch TV.
 - f) All off duty time is spent studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. A guard must memorize who they are and where they are interred. Among the notables are: President Taft, Joe Lewis {the boxer} Medal of Honor winner Audie L. Murphy, the most decorated soldier of WWII and of Hollywood fame.
 - g) Every guard spends five hours a day getting his uniforms ready for guard duty.

In 2003 as Hurricane Isabelle was approaching Washington, DC, our US Senate/House took 2 days off with anticipation of the storm. On the ABC evening news, it was reported that because of the dangers from the hurricane, the military members assigned the duty of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were given permission to suspend the assignment. They respectfully declined the offer, "No way, Sir!" Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of a tropical

storm, they said that guarding the Tomb was not just an assignment; it was the highest honor that can be afforded to a service person. The tomb has been patrolled continuously, 24/7, since 1930. God Bless and keep them.

Present in the Most Blessed Sacrament is Our Lord Jesus who gave His life that we may have Eternal life. Eucharistic Adoration is our opportunity to “stand guard” in prayerful adoration of Our Lord who is truly present. Our military brothers and sisters have shown us the value and importance of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Our Lord Jesus has shown us the value of each and every life by giving His own life for us. While standing guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier has some value, the importance of paying meticulous attention to Our Lord in prayerful adoration is of infinite value. May we seek to find real and meaningful ways to encounter the living Christ and His promise of eternal life. Please prayerfully consider spending an hour in adoration of Our Eucharistic King!

God Bless,
Fr. Don Kline