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## NFDA-sponsored Docuseries "Honor Guard" Debuted Christmas Day

**BROOKFIELD, WI**— Sharing the traditions, responsibilities and legacy of the third United States Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) in guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and performing full-honors military funerals in **Arlington National Cemetery**, the four-part docuseries "Honor Guard" premiered on Amazon

Prime on December 25. "Honor Guard" covers the training cycles of the third Infantry's Regimental Orientation Program, the United States Army's Caisson Platoon, the United States Army's Drill Team, and Delta Company's Full-Honors Casket Platoon. The docuseries was created by filmmakers *Neal Schrodetzki* and *Ethan Morse*,

both of whom are former members of The Old Guard, as a follow up to their first documentary, "The Unknowns."

Filmed in association with the U.S. Army, and narrated by Academy Award Nominated Actor *Sam Elliott*, this series highlights the timeless traditions preserved within this prestigious post.

"Since speaking about my experiences as a member of The Old Guard during the 2019 NFDA Convention in Chicago, I've come to greatly respect and appreciate the role funeral service plays in honoring our nation's veterans and serving families during their time of need," said Morse. "Neal and I are proud to have NFDA and its members as the main sponsor of this series."

"I have had the privilege of witnessing The Old Guard standing watch at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier many times at Arlington National Cemetery and have always been moved by their dedication to their solemn

work," said NFDA CEO **Christine Pepper, CAE**. "NFDA is honored to be the lead sponsor of 'Honor Guard' and help Americans understand the story behind this elite unit, including their rigorous training and the ways in which they help lay our nation's heroes to rest with dignity and respect."

In addition to being released on Amazon Prime, "Honor Guard" will be released to more than 50 other streaming services throughout 2021. To view the film's trailer, visit [https://youtu.be/bmCj6\\_xurqc](https://youtu.be/bmCj6_xurqc).

NFDA is the world's leading and largest funeral service association, serving more than 20,000 individual members who represent nearly 11,000 funeral homes in the United States and 49 countries around the world. NFDA is the trusted leader, beacon for ethics and the strongest advocate for the profession. NFDA is headquartered in Brookfield, WI, and has an office in Washington, DC. For more information, visit [www.nfda.org](http://www.nfda.org).

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## Powerhouse Marketing with Welton

By Welton Hong

### Is Voice Search Becoming Vital for Funeral Marketing?

If you've paid any attention to digital marketing over the past couple of years, you've heard about the rise of *voice search*. One recent study concluded that *half or more* of all searches are conducted by search at this very minute.

But has voice technology *really* started to take over, and what does it all mean for funeral home marketing? The answer you get depends on the data and niche you look at, which is something that many people regurgitating SEO facts and stats don't consider.

The way people search for the best local cheeseburger is obviously different from the way they research deathcare services. People are not calling out questions to Siri every time they have a passing thought about their own final arrangements. But that doesn't mean funeral homes should simply ignore voice search.

#### What is voice search?

It's when someone uses a voice-activated device to query the internet through voice assistants such as Siri, Cortana, and Alexa. While voice assistants originally "lived" primarily in smartphones, the technology is now available via computers, smart speakers, car infotainment systems, and even some household appliances.

#### How prevalent is it?

A best guess, based on numerous studies, is that somewhere between 40 and 50 percent of online U.S. adults use voice search. But not everyone who uses voice search does each time they want to find information online.

One prediction is that about a third of adults who use the internet engage with voice search at least once a month. Another puts the number of smartphone users who search via voice assistants at about 50 percent.

The Gartner management company predicted about 30 percent of all browsing sessions would

include voice search by now, but that's a difficult figure to pin down.

As you can see, the numbers on voice search are all over the place. Cut through the disparities, though, and you can find a trend. *At least* a third of people are using this technology at times, and adoption rates seem to be growing.

#### What's the bottom line for funeral homes?

The impact of voice search on deathcare marketing isn't likely to be life-changing anytime soon.

Adobe Analytics conducted a survey to find out how people used voice search. The results indicated that the majority of voice searches were for purposes such as finding music, checking the weather, and getting answers to fun or spontaneous questions such as "What was the name of the building in *Die Hard*?" (It's Nakatomi Plaza, for the record.)

Regardless, 47 percent of people used voice search at times to conduct *or start* general online searches or research.

For deathcare firms, the "or start" part is important. In 2021, it's unlikely most people will conduct all their research into funeral services, cremation, or burial via voice assistants. But some people might *start* on voice when they first consider the topic.

For example: "How much does cremation cost?" "What is the average cost of a funeral?" "What are the cemeteries in Lafayette, Indiana?" These are the types of questions someone might ask Siri.

So deathcare firms do need to understand voice search and attend to voice SEO needs in on-page content — particularly with regard to the types of things people might ask a voice assistant.

Voice SEO is similar to other forms of SEO. You must understand *how* and *why* people search so you can create content that meets those needs. Ensure you're using phrasing that's similar to how people talk.

You can also pose common questions about the topic and provide short, concise answers. Voice search results tend to be less than 40 words — after all, it needs to be something Siri or Alexa can audibly communicate to the user.

Another common use for voice search is getting directions. More than 30 percent of people use this function regularly.

Ensure the address for your funeral home, cemetery, or other location is listed on your website following consistent NAP (Name, Address, Phone number) data format. The more times this data appears online in the same format, the more *authority* it potentially has (authority = good for SEO).

So, place NAP data on your website in appropriate places (Contact Us pages, About Us pages, and in footers on all other pages) and use markup language to notify search bots that it's NAP data. Then claim your listings on other sites and profiles, including social media and Google My Business, and ensure your NAP data is consistent.

These small steps can help position deathcare firms to perform well in voice search when applicable. It's just one of many SEO tasks that can help you attract new clientele online.

Welton Hong is the founder of Ring Ring Marketing® and a leading expert in creating case generation from online to the phone line. He is the author of *Making Your Phone Ring with Internet Marketing for Funeral Homes*. For more information, visit [www.FuneralHomeProfits.com](http://www.FuneralHomeProfits.com).

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