



Honor duty: Clio resident to serve as pallbearer for Ford

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Seaman Sean Griffith wasn't born when former President Gerald R. Ford was in office but he'll be there to lay to rest the nation's 38th president.

The Clio High School graduate, now stationed in Washington, D.C., was selected while in boot camp to serve on the elite Ceremonial Guard, a 25-year-old unit whose primary mission is to represent the Navy in official and public ceremonies such as state funerals.

Now Griffith, 21, is slated to play a major role in the state funeral set for President Ford on Saturday, as a casket bearer.

Griffith caught the attention of recruiters for the guard during boot camp at Naval Recruiting Center in Great Lakes, Ill., in 2003, when he joined the Navy right out of high school.

"I think he was selected because he was a former member of the Sea Cadets, a youth group that operates out of the Naval Reserve Center in Saginaw," said proud mom Julie Chappell of Clio. "All of the other boys would slouch like (typical) teenagers. He would stand straight at attention. He was always so serious."

Griffith remained resolute when speaking of the honor.

"It's my job," Griffith said of the solemn duty. "I think it's cool for my Navy career."

He already has participated in final honors for former President Ronald Reagan and Vice Adm. James Stockdale, the opening of the World War II Memorial, and President George W. Bush's inauguration ceremony to name a few.

Griffith is a twin whose brother is in the Army. Both have completed tours in Iraq.

Chappell said she plans to watch the proceedings on television, both to honor the late president and to get a glimpse of her son.

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