

SECTION TWO COLOR GUARD RULES

2.0 PURPOSE

The intent of the color guard classes composed of either members of The American Legion, American Legion family and/or mixed family is to honor the American flag. The flag is to be honored in a military manner with dignity, style and bearing associated with a military ceremonial color guard. It may be creative, innovative, and/or entertaining, while keeping the National Colors an integral part of the performance. The American Legion Competitive Flag Code is an essential part of the marching performance.

2.1 CLASS ELIGIBILITY

MILITARY CLASS

All unit members competing in this class must meet all the requirements for American Legion membership and be over 18 years of age.

This contest will be open to units composed of not less than four (4) or more than five (5) members including the Commanding Officer.

MILITARY-OPEN CLASS

All units must be members of The American Legion and/or Legion Family (i.e. Sons of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, or American Legion mixed participants). If competing for the Commander's Color Guard, all unit members competing in this class must meet all the requirements for American Legion membership and be over 18 years of age.

This contest will be open to units composed of seven (7) members or less including the Commanding Officer.

OPEN CLASS

All units must be members of The American Legion and/or Legion Family (i.e. Sons of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, or American Legion mixed participants). There is not an age limit for this class.

This contest will be open to all units composed of not less than four (4) or more than seventeen (17) members including Commanding Officer, Bugler and/or Drummer. The use of recorded or live music is allowed and needs to be communicated to the CC, Chief Judge and Director of National Convention & Meetings two weeks in advance of competition. If live music is used, the number of performers is limited to six (6) and considered as a part of the unit proper.

ADVANCING/RETIRING OF COLORS CLASS

All units must be members of The American Legion and/or Legion Family (i.e. Sons of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, or American Legion mixed participants). If competing for the Commander's Color Guard, all unit members competing in this class must meet all the requirements for American Legion membership and be over 18 years of age.

This contest will be open to units composed of not less than four (4) members. If the color guard consists of only four (4) members, the American Flag bearer will give all color guard commands.

Units competing in the Advancing/Retiring of Colors Class may also compete in other American Legion Color Guard Contests.

2.2 INSPECTION

The inspections will certify that all units have the required number of personnel for competition; the required equipment is being carried onto the field of competition, and to ensure personal appearances and condition of uniforms and equipment is in accordance with a precise military inspection. At the request of the inspection judge, unit members will be required to show their current American Legion Family membership cards.

2.3 UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

The style and color of uniform will be optional for each unit provided they are within the dignity and propriety required when carrying the National Colors. Headgear is required on the National Color bearer.

Required authorized equipment will consist of National Colors* and at least one weapon and one American Legion Organizational Banner. Additional authorized equipment, such as flags, sidearm, sabers and swords may be carried and in some classes simulated.

RIFLES:

Rifles are defined as weapons that are hand operated and designed to be fired primarily from the shoulder. The surface of the rifle must have bore lands and grooves to impart rotary motion to the projectile, which conform to the original design of military rifles, past or present. Sights, slings, barrels, triggers and trigger housings are optional, however rifles cannot be loaded.

"Replica rifles" may be used, as long as they have the same weight as the real rifle, including the bolt mechanism.

"Simulated rifles" (rifles of lesser weight with or without simulated bolt mechanism) may be used in **OPEN CLASS ONLY**.

"Simulated rifles" cannot be used in the **MILITARY, MILITARY OPEN CLASS or ADVANCING/RETIRING OF COLORS CLASS** when competing for the Commander's Color Guard Award.

Side arms are defined as weapons, which are hand held and fired by means of a primer, percussion cap, or cartridge enclosed igniter.

Sabers (swords) are defined as weapons which are designed to be hand held for cutting, thrusting or slashing an enemy, with either a curved (saber) blade or straight (sword) blade which may be constructed of any material and must have a hand guard.

*DEFINITION – The Institute of Heraldry, Washington, D.C., has specified in Title 4 of the U.S. Flag Code that the 50-Star American Flag is the Flag of our Country (U.S. Colors); therefore, all others shall be treated as banners. All banners and flags shall be dipped at a reviewing stand except the 50-Star Flag of our Country.

Use of National Color staff head finial piece, as defined by flag code, is mandatory. If a directional piece is used, it will be judged on the directions of the bearer, and not the direction of the staff head.

All other staff heads on other banners, when used, are optional.

Minimum size of U.S. Colors is 3 feet by 5 feet. No flag shall be larger in size than the U.S. Colors.

2.4 PERFORMANCE TIMES

MILITARY AND MILITARY-OPEN CLASS

Performance time shall not be less than four (4) minutes or more than six (6) minutes. Timing and judging will start for a unit with the first step across the starting line by a member of the unit proper, excluding the Commanding Officer. A warning signal will be given at the expiration of four (4) minutes. However, timing and all judging will continue until the last member of the unit proper crosses the finish line, including the Commanding Officer.

OPEN CLASS

Performance time shall not be less than five (5) minutes or more than seven (7) minutes. Timing and judging will start for a unit with the first step across the starting line by a member of the unit proper, excluding the Commanding Officer. A warning signal will be given at the expiration of five (5) minutes. However, timing and all judging will continue until the last member of the unit proper crosses the finish line, including the Commanding Officer.

ADVANCING/RETIRING OF COLORS CLASS

Each color guard will have a maximum of four (4) minutes for their advancing/retiring of colors performance. Timing and judging will start for a unit with the first step across the starting line by **any** member of the unit. A warning signal will be given at the expiration of four (4) minutes. However, timing and all judging will continue until the last member of the unit proper crosses the finish line, including the Commanding Officer.

Any violation of the minimum or maximum times for each class shall result in a one-tenth (0.1) point penalty for each three (3) seconds, or fraction thereof.

2.5 REQUIRED MANEUVERS

(a). PASS IN REVIEW

The area of Pass-In-Review shall be ninety (90) inches before and ninety (90) inches after the Saluting Point. This area will be clearly marked. The unit shall be in a company front with the placement of the Commanding Officer at the discretion of the unit. All members, including the Commanding Officer may start the Pass-In-Review with the salute or first step over the line of the Pass-In-Review area. All members of the unit must render the proper salute by displaying "Eyes Right" except: The U.S. Flag bearer shall not dip, but may at the discretion of the unit, render "Eyes Right." The extreme right element of the unit renders no eyes right, but does render the proper salute unless it is the Commander, in which case an "Eyes Right" is required.

Any violation of Pass-In-Review shall result in a one point (1.0) penalty.

(b). PRESENTATION OF COLORS

This maneuver shall be done at a halt, at attention, facing the saluting point. The American Legion organization banner shall dip at least momentarily to the saluting point. All weapons must render the proper "present arms" at least momentarily. All salutes shall be rendered simultaneously at some point in the presentation.

Any violation of Presentation of Colors shall result in a one point (1.0) penalty.

(c). POST AND RETRIEVE

This maneuver includes the U.S. Flag and The American Legion organizational banner. The U.S. Flag is to be posted to the right of the saluting point with its front facing the field. Colors must be properly guarded at all times; for guarding purposes, weapons shall be in the possession of the guarding member at all times. During the ceremony of Posting and Retrieving, two (2) salutes are required, to be executed simultaneously by all members; one directly following posting and one salute directly prior to retrieving colors.

Colors must not be posted for more than sixty (60) seconds. Time shall commence upon the release of the first pike and shall terminate upon the grasp of the last pike. A color is deemed posted immediately upon the release of the pike. A color is deemed retrieved upon the intentional grasp of the pike. The U.S. Flag and Banner may be posted simultaneously, if not so posted, the U.S. Flag must be posted last. The U.S. Flag and Banner may be retrieved simultaneously. However, if not so retrieved, the U.S. Flag must be retrieved first.

The U.S. Flag must be guarded at all times. The U.S. Flag is considered as being properly guarded during maneuvers if the guard is within three (3) paces of the U.S. Flag.

Any violation of Presentation of Colors shall result in a one point (1.0) penalty.

MILITARY AND MILITARY OPEN CLASS

Each unit must execute, in any order, the following maneuvers at the saluting point: Pass-In-Review, Presentation of Colors, Post and Retrieve. In addition, a unit may execute any other "appropriate" maneuvers during their performance.

OPEN CLASS

Each unit must execute, at least **one** of the following maneuvers at the saluting point: Pass-In-Review, Presentation of Colors, Post and Retrieve. In addition, a unit may execute any other "appropriate" maneuvers during their performance.

ADVANCING/RETIRING OF COLORS CLASS

The following are examples of an advancing/retiring of colors routine:

ADVANCING COLORS

Color Guard consisting of minimum number of four (4) is formed at the rear of the contest area in a rank or file, whichever may suit the situation best, formation facing the Commander's station.

In forming a rank, the National Color is to the right of the Post Color and the two Guards are on the respective flanks. In forming a file, the National Color is second in file, preceded by a Rifle Guard and followed respectively by the Post Color and a Rifle Guard.

To properly form the Guard, the following sequence of Commands may be used: "Fall In"- "Dress Right Dress"- "Ready Front"- "Right or Left Shoulder Arms"- (Color Bearers should assume the position of carry or any other suitable position at this command) "Forward March." The above-mentioned commands put the Guard in a forward motion.

Upon arriving at a position in front of the Commander's station, the following commands may be used: "Guard Halt-Post Colors" (The National Color Bearer steps off in the direction of the flag receptacle to the right of the Commander's station, halting and facing front upon arriving in front of same). The Post Color Bearer follows the same procedure to the flag receptacle to the left of the Commander's station. During this procedure, the Rifle Guards will assume the position of Port Arms. The next command may be "Place Colors." Colors may be placed by stepping forward with one foot and placing Colors into the receptacles, making sure any top ornament on each respective color is facing the assemblage. It must be remembered that the Colors may be posted simultaneously, or the Post Color is posted first followed by the National Color. The Color Bearers then return to the position of attention. The next command may be "Present Arms." The Rifle Guards should render the prescribed salute with their pieces and the Color Bearers should render a right-hand salute. Post Color Bearer should either face the National Color or turn toward the American flag while executing the salute.

The next command sequence may be "Right Shoulder Arms" (Color Bearers recovering from hand salute on same), "Assemble March" (Color Bearers may face the center and step off respectively in the direction from which they came and assume their positions in the formation facing the rear of the competition area). The Rifle Guards may execute

an about-face on command and be prepared to move out on the next command with Guard intact.

The next command may be "Forward March" and upon arriving at the starting point, the Guard should be halted with the command of "Guard Halt" and then the Guard may be given "Fall Out."

RETIRING COLORS

Retrieving the Colors may be executed in nearly the same manner except substituting the command of "Retrieve Colors" for "Post Colors," and giving the command "Present Arms" upon the Color Bearers arrival in front of their respective colors (Color Bearers will salute at this time).

The next sequence of commands may be "Right Shoulder Arms" (Color Bearers will assume position of attention) "Take Colors" (Color Bearers putting one foot forward to take Colors and assuming position of attention, after securing same). It must be remembered that the Colors may be retrieved simultaneously, or the National Color is retrieved first followed by the Post Color. The next commands may be "Assemble, March" (Color Bearers executing same marching as in returning from Posting). The Rifle Guards will execute about-face after Colors have arrived in respective positions. The Guard may be retired in the same manner as it was in Posting, with the exception of the last command, which should be "Dismissed."

2.6 CONDUCT OF COLOR GUARD/PENALTIES

(a). The contest will be held on a floor 40 feet wide and 60 feet long with the outside lines and center line marked. A 90-inch (7ft. 6in.) line will be marked on each side of the centerline for the Pass-in-Review area.

(b). Each Color Guard will have a designated competition time. Following inspection, the unit will remain available to proceed to the starting line for competition.

The failure of any unit to report at the designated competition time will result in a one-half (0.5) point penalty. For each 15 minutes or part thereof and up to the conclusion of the contest, another one-half (0.5) point will be assessed.

(c). Once a unit reports to the starting official that the unit is ready, the unit must start within sixty (60) seconds or less.

Failure to start within 60 seconds or less will result in a one point (1) penalty.

(d). Each Color Guard shall only enter the floor over the designated "starting line" to the left of the saluting point, and exit over the designated "finish line" at the opposite end of the field, to the right of the saluting point. After timing has commenced, there will be no penalty for marking time at the starting line. The saluting point shall be the

center of that sideline of the floor that is to the right of the traditional starting line. The use of colors must be with dignity and propriety. All boundary lines are inviolate at all times except for unit entrance, exit, or for members involved in set up prior to the start of the performance or tear down at the end of the performance.

A one-tenth-- (0.1) point penalty will be assessed for each starting line, exit line, or other boundary line violation.

(e). The Commanding Officer and any guard members playing musical instruments shall be judged as a part of the unit proper. All musical instruments must be played within the boundaries of the competition floor.

(f). Each Color Guard shall be subject to the rulings of the Chief Judge of Contests with respect to entry on, exit from, conduct on the field, and in the immediate area.

(g). The Banner of The American Legion sponsor shall be accorded proper respect at all times.

(h). The current competitive flag code, as adopted by The American Legion National Headquarters, will be the rules for proper use in all matters not covered herein. A Bugler and/or Drummer will be judged on the proficiency of the playing or drumming under the General Effect caption. Bugling shall be limited to standard bugle calls.

(i). No pyrotechnic, discharge of arms, pressurized canisters, dangerous materials, inflammable liquids, powders, or live animals will be permitted.

OTHER PENALTIES

(a). A unit violating any rule, or part of a rule for which no specific penalty is provided.

Any color guard breaching standard contest etiquette or failing to comply with directions from contest personnel for which no specific penalty is provided, shall be penalized for each such violation, not less than 0.1 point up to disqualification at the discretion of the Chief Judge and Assistant Chief Judge.

(b). Any infraction of flag etiquette. The authority adopted for flag etiquette is the "American Legion Competitive Flag Code," adopted by The American Legion.

One point (1.0) for each offense

(c). Each piece of dropped equipment or uniform.

Assessment is one-tenth (0.1) penalty for each infraction

(d). Retrieval by any member of each piece of dropped equipment or uniform.

Assessment is one point (1.0) for each retrieval of dropped equipment or uniform

(e). Deliberate grounding of equipment is not permitted in this class.

Assessment is one point (1.0) penalty for each infraction

2.8 PROTESTS

Any protest regarding these contests will in all respects conform to and will be disposed of according to these rules. Protests must be filed with the Chief Judge of Contests, no later than thirty (30) minutes following the conclusion of the contest. Copies of the protest must have been given to any other units involved or affected by the protesting group. The protesting unit must be represented by a proper officer at a meeting on said date, time and place announced by the Chief Judge of Contests. Copies of protests, reviews of decisions and rulings may be obtained from the National Convention & Meetings Office.

Audio-visual recording equipment may be allowed in the area of competition at the discretion of the Chief Judge of Contests; however, no such evidence will be admissible at a protest meeting.

2.9 AWARDS and RECOGNITION

The units with the highest score in each class will be declared the winner of that class. Prize money will be allocated at the discretion of the Convention Commission as authorized by the National Executive Committee.

The awards will be a National Champion Guidon and Trophy.

2.10 TIE BREAKER

In case of a tie for first place, the color guard with the highest general effect score will be declared the winner.

2.11 NATIONAL COMMANDER'S COLOR GUARD

To be considered for the official National Commander's Champion Color Guard of The American Legion, those units consisting of full Legion members must have competed in either the Military or Military Open Class and the Advancing/Retiring of Colors Class. The total scores received from each class will be averaged and the unit with the highest score will be awarded the Commander's Color Guard.