

Air Force and Space Force Junior ROTC COLOR GUARD



AFJROTC Drill and Ceremony Pamphlet

1 November 2024

PRECEDENCE OF FLAGS

1. Precedence of Flags

1.1. National Flags. There are no written international regulations on flag etiquette. There are, however, some time-honored customs that are generally accepted. First and foremost, treat all flags with respect. National flags should never be displayed in a way inferior to any other flag. The laws that govern displaying the U.S. Flag can be found in the U.S. Code. This code is based on time-honored customs.

1.1.1. On the following holidays, the flag should fly at half-staff: Peace Officer Memorial Day (unless this day is also Armed Forces Day), Memorial Day (until noon), Patriot Day, and Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

1.2. Stage Flags are placed in the order that a state entered the union. See Figure 1.

Facts and Pictures of the 50 State Flags in order of precedence		
Names of States	State Flags	50 State Flags in order of precedence dates of statehood
1 Delaware		1. Delaware: December 7, 1787
2 Pennsylvania		2. Pennsylvania: December 12, 1787
3 New Jersey		3. New Jersey: December 18, 1787
4 Georgia		4. Georgia: January 2, 1788
5 Connecticut		5. Connecticut: January 9, 1788
6 Massachusetts		6. Massachusetts: February 6, 1788
7 Maryland		7 Maryland: April 28, 1788
8 South Carolina		8. South Carolina: May 23, 1788
9 New Hampshire		9. New Hampshire: June 21, 1788
10 Virginia		10. Virginia: June 25, 1788
11 New York		11. New York: July 26, 1788
12 North Carolina		12. North Carolina: November 21, 1789
13 Rhode Island		13. Rhode Island: May 29, 1790
14 Vermont		14. Vermont: March 4, 1791
15 Kentucky		15. Kentucky: June 1, 1792
16 Tennessee		16. Tennessee: June 1, 1796
17 Ohio		17. Ohio: March 1, 1803
18 Louisiana		18. Louisiana April 30, 1812

19	Indiana		19. Indiana: December 11, 1816
20	Mississippi		20. Mississippi: December 10, 1817
21	Illinois		21. Illinois: December 3, 1818
22	Alabama		22. Alabama: December 14, 1819
23	Maine		23. Maine: March 15, 1820
24	Missouri		24. Missouri: August 10, 1821
25	Arkansas		25. Arkansas: June 15, 1836
26	Michigan		26. Michigan: January 26, 1837
27	Florida		27. Florida: March 3, 1845
28	Texas		28. Texas: December 29, 1845
29	Iowa		29. Iowa: December 28, 1846
30	Wisconsin		30. Wisconsin: May 29, 1848
31	California		31. California: September 9, 1850
32	Minnesota		32. Minnesota: May 11, 1858
33	Oregon		33. Oregon: February 14, 1859
34	Kansas		34. Kansas: January 29, 1861
35	West Virginia		35. West Virginia: June 20, 1863
36	Nevada		36. Nevada: October 31, 1864

37	Nebraska		37. Nebraska: March 1, 1867
38	Colorado		38. Colorado: August 1, 1876
39	North Dakota		39. North Dakota: November 2, 1889
40	South Dakota		40. South Dakota: November 2, 1889
41	Montana		41. Montana: November 8, 1889
42	Washington		42. Washington: November 11, 1889
43	Idaho		43. Idaho: July 3, 1890
44	Wyoming		44. Wyoming: July 10, 1890
45	Utah		45. Utah: January 4, 1896
46	Oklahoma		46. Oklahoma: November 16, 1907
47	New Mexico		47. New Mexico: January 6, 1912
48	Arizona		48. Arizona: February 14, 1912
49	Alaska		49. Alaska: January 3, 1959
50	Hawaii		50. Hawaii: 21 August 1959

Figure 1 – Facts and Pictures of the 50 State Flags in Order of Precedence

1.3. Service Flags. In general, the order of precedence (from viewer's left to right) when displaying flags together in a military context is to display the U.S. national flag (also known as "the Colors"), followed by the flags of the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Space Force, and U.S. Coast Guard. If the U.S. Coast Guard is transferred to the Department of the Navy, the U.S. Coast Guard flag would precede the U.S. Air Force flag. See Figure 2.



Figure 2 – Flag Display Order

1.4. Organizational Flags. Arrange in order of seniority. AFI 34-1201, (25 Jan 2013) states "The POW/MIA flag will always be the last flag in any display, except on the six national observances for which Congress has ordered display of the POW/MIA flag. On these days, it is flown immediately below or adjacent to the United States flag as second in order of precedence. The six national observances are National POW/MIA Recognition Day (third Friday of September), Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, and Veterans Day." Religious flags are normally displayed only with the US flag (US flag takes the position of honor).

1.5. The VFW Flag takes precedence over the American Legions Flag.

1.6. The **flag of the Navajo Nation** is the official flag of the [Navajo Nation](#), a [Native American](#) governed nation in the [Four Corners states](#) of [Arizona](#), [New Mexico](#), and [Utah](#). If used this flag will be displayed after the Arizona, state flag and before the service flag.

1.6.1. On 21 May 1968, the flag was adopted for the [Navajo Nation](#), a [reservation](#) in the [Southwestern United States](#). This flag was designed by Jay R. Degroat, a student from Mariano Lake, New Mexico and was initially selected from 140 entries for the Navajo Flag Competition. It incorporates elements of the tribal seal designed by Amos Frank Singer and John Claw, Jr. adopted earlier, on 18 January 1952.



Procedures for the Color Guard

2. The Color Guard. General Information.

2.1. The Color Guard is a highly professional and patriotic team that combines precision drill and proper flag courtesies. Their primary functions are casing and uncasing, presenting, folding, posting, and retiring the Colors. Team members must be dedicated to learning the Manual of Arms and flag etiquette.

2.1.1. The uniqueness of Air Force and Space Force Junior ROTC (AFJROTC and SFJROTC) units performing Color Guards, either ceremonial or for drill competitions, it is necessary to standardize how units perform at these events. The key reference for this publication is the Army TC 3-21.5, Manual of Arms. Since, no Air Force publication has any guidance for rifle movements and very little information on Color Guard movements, all AFJROTC and SFJROTC units will defer to the Army TC 3-21.5 for Color Guard movements. This publication captures the guidance in the Army TC 3-21.5.

2.2. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag manner of delivery. "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." When not in uniform cadets should stand at attention facing the flag with the right hand over their heart. Also, male cadets should remove any non-religious headdress with their right hand and hold it in their left hand. Cadets in uniform outdoors should remain silent, face the flag, and render the proper military salute. Cadets in uniform indoors should remain silent, face the flag, and stand at attention.

2.3. Parades. On patriotic occasions a Color Guard should lead the parade, even before banners which mark the celebration. In the parade, the U.S. flag should be in one or two positions. Either Old Glory leads the parade alone, or it is placed at the right of the Color Guard while it faces forward. The U.S. flag, therefore, is to the left from an onlooker's perspective. The flag should never be dipped to any other flag. The flag may be joined by the state flag, service flags and organizational flags in the Color Guard. The state and service flags are best placed on the same line as the U.S. flag.

2.4. The POW/MIA flag is not carried or displayed in parades or review. The POW/MIA flag will always be the last flag in any display or flown immediately below or adjacent to the United States Flag as second in order of precedence (however, it still would be flown after other national flags).

2.5. If you have any questions regarding Color Guard, please send correspondence to jrotc.ldr@au.af.edu.

3. Posting and Retrieving/Retiring the Colors

3.1. Formal assemblies conducted indoors begin with the presentation of the Colors, referred to as posting the Colors, and end with the retirement of the Colors. The following instructions outline the procedures for posting and retiring the Colors. Since indoor areas vary in size, configuration, and intended purpose, these instructions do not apply to all situations.

3.2. Posting the Colors. The Color Guard forms outside the entrance to the dining area, auditorium, or meeting hall. **The audience is directed to stand until the Colors are posted.** If the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" (or other appropriate music) and the invocation are scheduled, the audience will remain standing until they are completed.

3.3. The Color Guard enters at the cadence of slow time (60 bpm), unless executing a movement that is or contains a facing movement. The Color Guard is in a line formation, or forms in a line immediately inside the room and moves to a position centered on stage or area in which has been predesignated. Color Guards will always **lead in with the American Flag** before any other flag. See Figure 3.



Figure 3 - Entering in Line Formation



Entering When the Entry Way is Too Low

3.3.1. When the Colors arrive at the predesignated position, the National Colors Bearer (NCB) directs the Color Guard. One option would be executing "Colors, HALT" and cadets make a "Left, FACE" to face the audience. Cadets may also elect to do a marching in place maneuver, by executing a "Mark Time, MARCH" and then cadets would execute a 4-count turn to the left.

3.3.2. Once the Color Guard is centered on the flag stand, they mark time and the NCB calls "Colors, HALT" and "Right, FACE". The Color Guard should approach the flag stands from the right to position the NCB in front of the flag holder on the right, facing the audience.

3.3.3. The Color bearers, without command, place the Colors in the stand.

3.4. Posting (if necessary). Posting the Colors in stands is accomplished when the Colors are required for static display in certain ceremonies. The color team itself may also display the Colors by carrying them throughout the duration of a ceremony.

3.5. Retrieval (if necessary). Retrieving the Colors from stands is accomplished when formal retirement of posted (in stands) Colors is required for certain ceremonies.

3.6. Dismissal and Retirement. Dismissal of the Colors occurs with every ceremony. It describes the Colors departure from the forefront and return to the pre-ceremony area for fallout. Formal retirement of the Colors occurs within the context of the ceremony and describes the honors rendered to the flags before they are dismissed and secured.

3.7. Posting/Retrieving In/From Stands. The following sequences can be performed during ceremonies that include, but are not limited to Air Force Indoor Retirements, Awards Banquets, Luncheons, Promotions and Graduation Ceremonies. Posting the Colors in stands is common for indoor ceremonies and is usually not performed outdoors. Retrieving the Colors is at the discretion of the POC of the ceremony/event and is not necessary. See Figure 4.

3.7.1. Posting. There are 10 segments to the posting sequence, beginning at Port Arms and facing the audience after the presentation of the Colors.

3.7.1.1. The first segment is executed by performing a 3-count about face; during this sequence (initiated by the flagbearer furthest to the left) the third count is a step-off. All flagbearers execute the movement simultaneously using their peripheral vision.

3.7.1.2. Next, the flagbearers take the appropriate number of steps to their respective stands, moving with the NCB. These step counts are predetermined.

3.7.1.3. Once in position in front of the stands, each flagbearer's head will drop as the Colors are centered above the stand and simultaneously slid into the stand in a slow fluid motion. The flagbearers then raise their heads and hands to begin the dressing sequence.

3.7.1.4. Dress the flags with the top edge to the right, both hands holding the flag at shoulder width and shoulder height. Place the "fringe" of the flag to the right and the flags should be in a "diamond" or "triangle" shape. Dress the flags towards the audience.

3.7.1.5. Slightly tugging the flag, the NCB initiates a 3-second head raise looking at the spade/fennel.

3.7. Note 1. For more than two flagbearers, the middle bearer tugs the flag to initiate the head-raise.

3.7.1.6. Immediately after the flagbearers raise their heads, they will bring their right hand behind the flag in a 3-second cadence and grasp the staff while maintaining their grip on the flag. Use the right hand to adjust and "flatten" the spades towards the audience.

3.7.1.7. When all movements have ceased, flagbearers will return their right hands in a 3-second cadence to the dress position.

3.7.1.8. The NCB slightly tugs the flag to initiate the team's 3-second head-drop to face forward and re-dress the flags.

3.7.1.9. When all movements have ceased, both arms are extended forward, palms down, parallel to the ground with a 3-second count, hands flared and brought back to the position of Attention, with another 3-second count.

3.7.1.10. The flagbearers take half a step back together and execute a 3-count about face or face each other depending on the placement of the stands, and return to the team without closing the feet, stepping off and taking the appropriate amount of steps to return to the team.

3.7. Note 2. When stepping off to post the Colors, the number of steps needed for posting should be the same amount when returning to the team after the posting is complete.

3.7. Note 3. The rifle guards stand fast throughout the posting sequence. The NCB always waits for the other flagbearers to complete their movements before beginning the next step.

3.8. Retrieving. Retrieving flags from stands involves the same fundamental steps as posting, without the dressing sequence. The flags are removed from the stands in and brought back to the Color Guard team in unison. See Figure 5.

3.8.1. Once the flags have been retrieved from the stands and held at straight port the flagbearers will take half a step back with the left foot, execute a 3-count about face, or face each other depending on the placement of the stands, and return to the team.



Figure 4 - Posting the Colors in Stands



Figure 5 - Retrieving the Colors from Stands

4. Equipment

4.1. The following is a list of uniform items for Color Guard teams to consider. The following uniform items are approved by Chapter 7, Uniform and Awards, Operational Supplement.

4.1.1. Berets (Blue, black or white)

4.1.2. Gloves

4.1.3. Shoulder Cords and shoulder tabs (no more than one each)

4.1.4. Web Belts

4.1.5. Ascots

4.1.6. Service Caps (aka Wheel Hats)

4.1.7. Chrome Helmets **will not** be worn.

4.2. The following is a list of items of equipment items Color Guard teams may consider. Flagstaffs and flag casings may be made of any material and may contain any personalized markings (school name, color, service, etc.) and are not regulated and is left to your discretion.

4.2.1. Cases

4.2.2. Flag poles and ornaments (fennels). There is no mandated height of the flag pole and the spade ornaments are preferred.

4.2.3. Flag types (indoor and/or outdoor, fringed and/or non-fringed, etc.)

3.10.4. Harnesses

4.2.2. **Sabers and Swords will not be used** for Color Guards only replica rifles can be used for Color Guards.

4.3. AFJROTC and SFJROTC Color Guards are special teams just like a drill team, saber team, etc. Many of these teams are Armed. All weapons are the property of the Air Force. Color Guard teams must have a zero-tolerance policy regarding any horseplay with any weapon. Units will follow the uniform requirements as outline in Chapter 7, Uniform and Awards, Operational Supplement.

5. How to Execute Color Guard Movements.

5.1. Units are prohibited from doing fancy foot movements, facing movements and other creative flag and rifle maneuvers (exhibition type Color Guards).

5.1.1. The Color Guard is formed and marched in one rank at CLOSE INTERVAL, the flag bearers are in the center. See Figure 6.

5.1.1. The guards march at Right Shoulder.

5.1.2. The Color Guard executes facing movements by wheeling to the right or left.

5.1.2.1. To execute a wheeling movement the guard nearest the direction of turn serves as the pivot point and executes the movement by marching in place and simultaneously turning in the new direction.

5.1.2.2. Other members shorten their steps and turn in an arc keeping abreast of each other to maintain alignment.

5.1.2.3. When the movement has been completed each member automatically marches in place until the command “HALT” or “Forward, MARCH” is given.



Figure 6 – Marching at Close Interval

6. Command Movement

6.1. Order Colors

6.1.1. The Command is either “FALL IN” or “ORDER COLORS”. The Color Guard is formed and marched in one rank at Close Interval. See Figure 7.



Figure 7 - Order Colors

6.2. Flag Position.

6.2.1. Rest the base of the staff on the marching surface touching the outside of the right footgear opposite the ball of the right foot.

6.2.2. Hold the staff in the right hand with the back of the hand facing outward. Hold the staff in the “U” formed by the thumb and forefinger with the fingers joined. Also known as the “Taco Grip.”

6.2.3. The thumb and fingers should be pointed to the marching surface.

6.2.4. Rest the staff against the hollow of the shoulder.

6.3. Rifle Position. (See Figure 7)

6.3.1. Place the butt of the rifle on the marching surface, centered on the right foot with the sights to the rear.

6.3.2. The toe of the rifle is on-line with the front of the right foot.

6.3.3. Secure the rifle with the right hand in a “U” formed by the fingers (extended and joined) and thumb. Also known as the “Taco Grip.”

6.3.4. Hold the rifle above the upper band so that the thumb is pointing at the ground and on the seam of the pants with the fingers extended and joined pointing to the ground.

6.4. Parade Rest

6.4.1. Flag position. Parade Rest with the Colors is executed with staffs vertical. See Figure 8.

6.4.1.1. Rest the base of the staff on the marching surface touching the outside of the right footgear opposite the ball of the right foot.

6.4.1.2. Hold the staff in the right hand with the back of the hand facing outward. Hold the staff in the “U” formed by the thumb and forefinger with the fingers joined. Also known as the “Taco Grip.”

6.4.1.3. The thumb and fingers should be pointed to the marching surface.

6.4.1.4. Rest the staff against the hollow of the shoulder.



Figure 8 – Parade Rest

6.4.2. Rifle Position.

6.4.2.1. On the command of execution thrust the muzzle forward while sliding the hand upward to grab the upper part of the stock just below the upper sling swivel.

6.4.2.2. Keep the toe of the butt online with the front of the right foot.

6.4.2.3. Keep the right arm straight.

6.4.2.4. Feet and Hand Positions.

6.4.2.5. Feet will be 12-inches apart.

6.4.2.6. The left arm will be placed behind you with the hand placed in the small of the back with fingers extended and joined. See Figure 9.



Figure 9 – Parade Rest – Feet and Hands Positions (as pictured from the rear)

6.5. Carry Colors

6.5.1. Flag Position. See Figure 10.

6.5.1.1. Rest the ferrule (bottom of flag staff) in the socket of the sling.

6.5.1.2. The socket is below the waist and adjusted to ensure that the finial (spear) of both colors is of equal height.

6.5.1.3. Grasp the staff with the right hand even with the mouth.

6.5.1.4. Incline the staff slightly to the front.

6.5.1.5. With the left hand secure the staff in the socket.

6.5.1.6. The elbow of the right arm will descend at approximately a 45-degree angle from the shoulder.



Figure 10 – Carry Colors

6.5.2. Rifle Position.

6.5.2.1. Guards march at Right Shoulder.

6.6. Present Arms. See Figure 11.

6.6.1. Flags

6.6.1.1. The national flag does not change positions.

6.6.1.2. Organizational and/or state flag assumes present colors by sliding the **right hand upward about 4-inches**.

6.6.1.3. Thrust the right arm forward, shoulder high until the arm is fully extended and horizontal to the marching surface.

6.6.1.4. The flag staff should form approximately a 45-degree angle.



Figure 11 – Present Arms (Colors Salute)

6.6.2. Rifles

6.6.2.1. The rifles will execute a present arms movement on the command Arms. See Figure 11.

6.6.2.2. The movement is executed in three counts.

6.6.2.2.1. On count one the rifles move to port arms

6.6.2.2.2. On count two, complete port arms. The rifle is about 4-inches from the chest.

6.6.2.2.3. On count three assume the position of Present Arms by twisting the rifle with the right hand so that the sights are to the rear and move the rifle to a vertical position about 4-inches in front and centered on the body. Lower the rifle until the left forearm is horizontal; keep the elbows in at the sides.

6.6.3. The next and only command that can be given is **Order, Arms**.

6.6.3.1. Thrust the organizational and/or state flag backwards from the Present, Arms position to the position of Carry Colors and slide the **right hand downward about 4-inches**.

6.6.3.2. Rifles will return to Right Shoulder using Right Shoulder Arms movement.

7. Eyes Right

7.1. Flags

7.1.1. The command is “EYES, RIGHT”, given as the right heel touches the marching surface.

7.1.2. The flag bearers will turn their heads sharply 45-degrees to the right. See Figure 12.

7.1.3. The organizational and/or state flag will execute a color salute on the command Right by moving their right hand about 4-inches upward on the flag staff and sharply thrusting the staff forward until the right arm is straight and shoulder high.

7.2. Rifles

7.2.1. The rifles will remain at Right Shoulder.

7.2.2. The Left Guard will execute Eyes Right by turning his/her head 45-degrees to the right. See Figure 12.

7.2.3. The Right Guard will continue marching with their head forward.

7.2.4. Both guards will continue marching with arm swing. The swing of the arms will measure 6-inches to the front (measured from the rear of the hand to the front of the thigh) and 3-inches to the rear (measured from the front of the hand to the back of the thigh).



Figure 12 – Eyes Right

8. Ready Front

8.1. Flags

8.1.1. The command is “READY, FRONT” and is given as the left heel touches the marching surface.

8.1.1.1. The flag bearers will return their heads sharply to the front on the command “FRONT”.

8.1.1.2. The organizational and/or state flag will return the flag to the carry position by returning their flag staffs to an upright position and sliding their right hand down the flagstaff about 4-inches until the hand is even with the mouth. The elbow of the right arm will form approximately a 45-degree angle from the shoulder.

9. Cadence and Step Length

9.1. A 24-inch step will be taken while marching. A 24-inch step, measured from heel to heel; 12-inch step, measured from heel to heel and place the heel of the foot down first.

9.2. Cadence of 105 to 115 step per minute will be used while marching, i.e., parades, competitions, home football games. **No slow march (60 BMP) will be used, unless the Color Guard is formally posting/retrieving/retiring the Colors.**

10. Marching Movements of a Color Guard (90° Turn)

10.1. Left Wheel or Right Wheel. The Color Guard will maintain the same cadence they used while marching. **During the wheeling movements the Color Guard members WILL NOT speed up or stomp.**

10.2. The Color Guard executes facing movements by wheeling to the right or left.

10.2.1. To execute a wheeling movement the guard nearest the direction of turn serves as the pivot point and executes the movement by marching in place and simultaneously turning in the new direction, done in 8 steps.

10.2.2. Other members shorten their steps and turn in an arc keeping abreast of each other to maintain alignment.

10.2.3. When the movement has been completed each member automatically marches in place until the command “HALT” or “Forward, MARCH” is given.

11. Colors Reverse (180° Turn)

11.1. Colors Reverse. Any deviations, or unusual delays, by Color Guard members are considered exhibition and are not allowed.

11.1.1. NCB executes first facing movement in marching. This member **does not just perform two left face movements.**

11.2. Executing Colors Reverse. See Figure 13.

11.2.1. Colors reverse may be executed from either the Halt or while marching.

11.2.1.1. If the Color Guard is marching the command “COLORS REVERSE, MARCH” is given as the left foot contacts the marching surface.

11.2.1.2. If executed from the Halt each member simultaneously executes the following movements on the command, “COLORS REVERSE, MARCH”.

11.2.1.3. The NCB faces to the left in marching and faces to the left again while mark timing.

11.2.1.4. The organizational and/or state flag bearer takes one step forward with the left foot and executes a face to the right in marching, takes two half steps, faces to the right in marching and takes one step in the new direction.

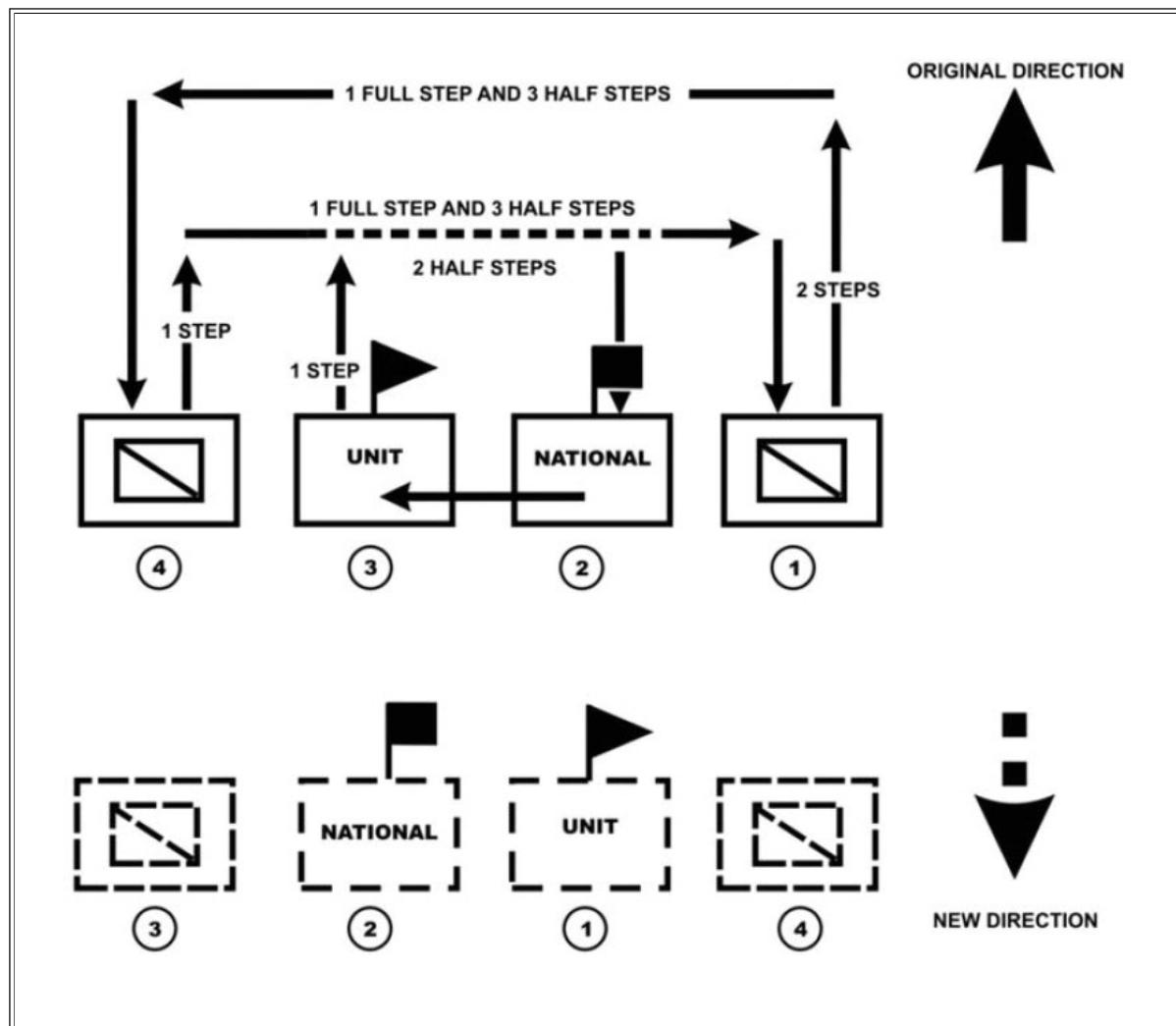


Figure 13 – Colors Reverse

11.2.1.5. They will then continue to mark time dressed to the National Color.

11.2.1.6. The right guard takes one right step after the command **MARCH** is called and then two steps forward, faces to the left in marching, takes one full step and three half steps, faces to the left in marching, and takes two steps in the new direction.

11.2.1.7. The Left Guard takes one step forward, faces to the right in marching, takes one full step and three half steps, faces to the right in marching and takes one step forward in the new direction.

11.2.1.8. All members will mark time after executing their movements and will dress to the National Colors until the NCB directs either of them to move forward or halt.

12. Casing and Uncasing the Colors (Sequence Only) See Paragraph 12.10 for a Video Example of Uncasing the Colors

12.1. This sequence is to be performed strictly by the regulation. The regulation leaves very little room for interpretation. There will be no exhibition maneuvers, i.e., rifle spinning, “Queen Anne” salutes, etc. Areas of emphasis are addressed below.

12.2. The Color Guard forms in a line formation with the cased Colors at the Carry Position (Order Position when indoors). “SLING, ARMS”. This is to be done at the position of Attention. There will be no kneeling or stepping forward with one foot, etc. Position of the rifle will be on the right hip, not right thigh.

12.3. The NCB commands “SLING, ARMS”. The Color Guards immediately adjust their slings and assume Sling Arms. Sling Arms, the rifle must be CRADLED in the crook of the arm. Not grasped, held, etc.

12.4. The NCB commands “POST” from line abreast formation. Guards execute a Face in Marching to the Left/Right and March 45° away (out) from their respective positions four paces. They halt and execute an about face.

12.5. The NCB commands “UNCASE THE COLORS”. The flag bearers remove the flags from their harnesses and lower them (same as Present Guidon). The Two guards move forward and untie and uncase the Colors. The Color bearers unfurl and immediately return the Colors to the Carry Position. There should be no extended delays waiting on the Guards to fold their cases. While the Colors are being unfurled, the guards fold the cases and secure them in their left hand.

12.5.1. Present Guidon, is found in the Army TC 3-21.5. On the command of execution, lower the organization/state flag to the front using the right hand, keeping the left hand in the same position, until the flag is in the horizontal position resting under the arm pit. As soon as the staff is horizontal, return the left hand sharply to the left side. Optional – Due to the weight of the Colors, rather than returning the hand sharply to the side, units may opt to grasp the staff with the left hand immediately forward of the right for stability.

12.6. The NCB commands “PRESENT ARMS” following uncasing, and prior to casing, of the Colors is done from the position of attention. No exhibition salutes. On the command Present Arms, the guards will place their left hands (with cases) over the rifle strap at their shoulder. They will then render a standard salute with their right hand. On the command “ORDER ARMS”, the guards will drop their salute and grasp the rifle sling with their right hand then return their left arm to their side resuming the position of attention.

12.6.1. Present Arms at the position of Sling Arms, this is a two-count movement to salute and a three-count movement to Order Arms.

12.7. Following uncasing, the cases are to be secured in the Guard’s left hand. The Guards are at attention; therefore, the cases should not be held out in the palm of the hand as if “offering them” to someone. They are also not placed under the left armpit. The same goes for the casing routine.

12.8. The NCB commands “POST”. On the command of execution POST, the Guards move to the rear of the formation and place the folded canvas cases inside the web belts (center rear of the back) of the Color bearers. The guard WILL NOT execute a half-left/right face, but will step directly in their line of march. The guards then move back to assume their original positions, adjust their slings, and return to Right Shoulder Arms.

12.9. To case the Colors, the procedures are basically the same except Present Arms is given before the Colors are lowered to be cased.

12.10. Below is a video link that is an example of many of the Color Guard movements used by AFJROTC units. This video is the complete Nationals sequence – and can be exceptionally helpful in preparing your Color Guards to compete at the top level.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQukGCd4doo>

Black Hawks Color Guard
East Paulding High School
2019 - Nationals Color Guard

12.11. Below is a video link that focuses only on uncasing the Colors. This video can be exceptionally helpful in teaching your Color Guard team the fine details of “UNCASE the COLORS.”

<https://youtu.be/v34Kj0g434A>

Black Hawks Color Guard
East Paulding High School
2019 - Nationals Color Guard

ABBREVIATIONS

NCB – National Colors Bearer

COLOR GUARD PROHIBITED ACTIONS

1. Butt slamming the rifle or flagstaff (viewed as equipment abuse)
2. Either color touching the ground (Team disqualification)
3. Organizational and/or state flag on a staff higher than the National Flag.
4. Exhibition routines, rifle spinning, “Queen Anne” salutes, fancy colors reverse, etc.

REFERENCES

- 1. AFJROTCI 36-2010**
- 2. Army TC 3-21.5**
- 3. United States Air Force Honor Guard Manual and Maxwell Air Force Base Honor Guard**
- 4. Flag Protocol. Title 4, United States Code (USC), Chapter 1**
- 5. <https://www.carrot-top.com/blog/how-to-properly-display-military-branch-flags>**