

# CONDUCTING YOUR FLAG CEREMONY

## *Introduction*



- Congratulations on being asked to present the colors at your Unit's ceremony!
- When your Unit (Pack, Troop, Team or Crew) is asked to fulfill this important duty, the following steps will help you get ready to do a ceremony in accordance with the United States Flag Code.
- Since federal law governs the display of our national flag, this insures that it will be treated with the respect it is due.

# CONDUCTING YOUR FLAG CEREMONY

## *Be Prepared!*



- Find out where and when the ceremony will take place. Visit the location to see what problems might occur. If possible, take the Color Guard with you so they can also see the area.
- Check the room height and width of the aisle the Color Guard must travel.
- How many flags do they want you to carry? What types of flags are they?
- Make sure the flag is in respectable condition before you display it. A torn, tattered, badly faded or dirty flag should not be displayed.

# CONDUCTING YOUR FLAG CEREMONY

## *Setting Up Your Color Guard*



- This assumes you will present one American flag and one other flag, and that the aisle is wide enough for two people to walk abreast.
- The minimum size Color Guard is 4 persons with a maximum of 6. Before the ceremony starts, have each person do a uniform check to see that all are alike.

- Be sure all Scouts start from a position out of sight of the audience. The 2 or 4-member Honor Guard will follow the flag holders, split in equal number. Make sure the flagstuffs will not hit a ceiling, overhead light, curtain or doorway along the way.



# CONDUCTING YOUR FLAG CEREMONY

## *Carrying the Flag*

- If the ceiling is very low, the flags can be carried "In Trail." This means the flagstaff is held to the right side of the body with the butt of the staff just above the ground or floor. The left hand is placed at the bottom of the hoist -- where the lower edge of the flag meets the staff. The right hand holds both corners of the flag and is placed as low on the staff as the Color Guard can comfortably reach.
- This should form a belly in the now "bloused" flag and should keep the flag from dragging. All flags should be carried in the same manner. The American flag is held the highest.



# CONDUCTING YOUR FLAG CEREMONY

## *Presenting the Colors*



**Command:** "Audience, please rise. Unit, attention."

**Command:** "Color Guard, prepare to present the colors."

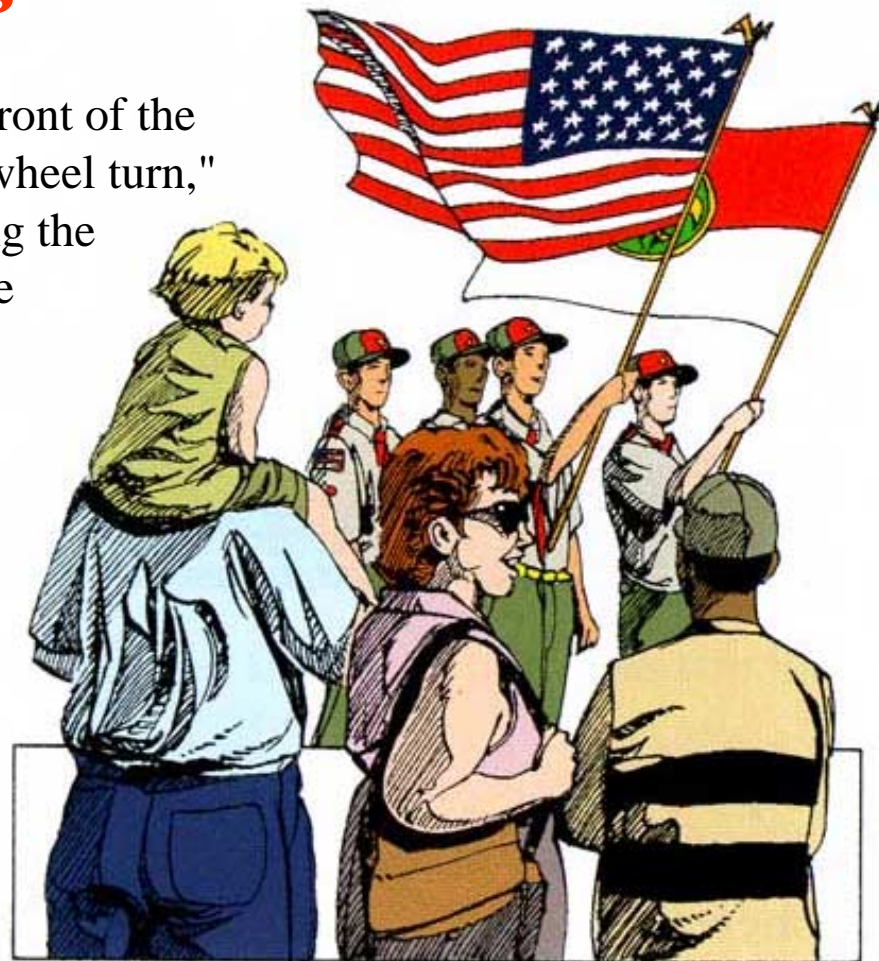
- When carrying the flag, the bottom of the flagstaff should generally be at waist level. Make sure that the American flag is the highest flag. The other flags can be equal in height but not above.
- The Color Guard starts to move forward with all flags raised as high as possible. The American flag always leads the procession. If both flags move together, the American flag is always on the marching right of the Color Guard.



# CONDUCTING YOUR FLAG CEREMONY

## *Presenting the Colors*

- When the Color Guard reaches the front of the audience, the Color Guard should "wheel turn," if possible. If not, the person carrying the American flag should go alone to the center, stop and face the audience.
- As the American flag is moving, the other flag(s) should follow and station itself so that the American flag is always on its own right. The Honor Guard will move to split themselves around the flags.



# CONDUCTING YOUR FLAG CEREMONY

## *The Salute*



**Command:** (immediately) "Unit, salute."

- The Color Guard and Honor Guard stand still until the audience says the Pledge of Allegiance. It should be recited by standing at attention, facing the flag and saluting. All flags except the American flag must be dipped (lowered slightly from the height at which it was carried).



- To salute, all persons should be at attention. Those in uniform give the appropriate formal salute. Citizens not in uniform salute by placing their right hand over their heart. Men with headgear should remove it and hold it to their left shoulder so that their hand is over their heart.



# CONDUCTING YOUR FLAG CEREMONY

## *Pledge of Allegiance / National Anthem*

**Command:** (when Color Guard is in place) "Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance (or our National Anthem). Begin."

- Recite the Pledge of Allegiance or sing National Anthem.
- If the National Anthem is played, all flags except the American flag are dipped.
- Salutes are held until the last note is played or last word is spoken.

**Command:** (after completion) "To."



# CONDUCTING YOUR FLAG CEREMONY

## *Posting the Colors*

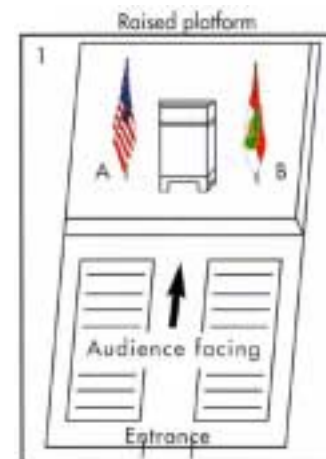
**Command:** "Color Guard, post the colors."

- The American flag is accorded the place of honor, always positioned on the speaker's right. Other flags are placed on the speaker's left.
- After all flags are put in their flag holders, the Color Guard meets in the center and marches out.

**Command:** "Color Guard, regroup."

**Command:** "Color Guard, dismissed."

**Command:** "Unit, at ease."



# CONDUCTING YOUR FLAG CEREMONY

## *Retiring the Colors*

**Command**: "Unit, attention."

**Command**: "Color Guard, advance."

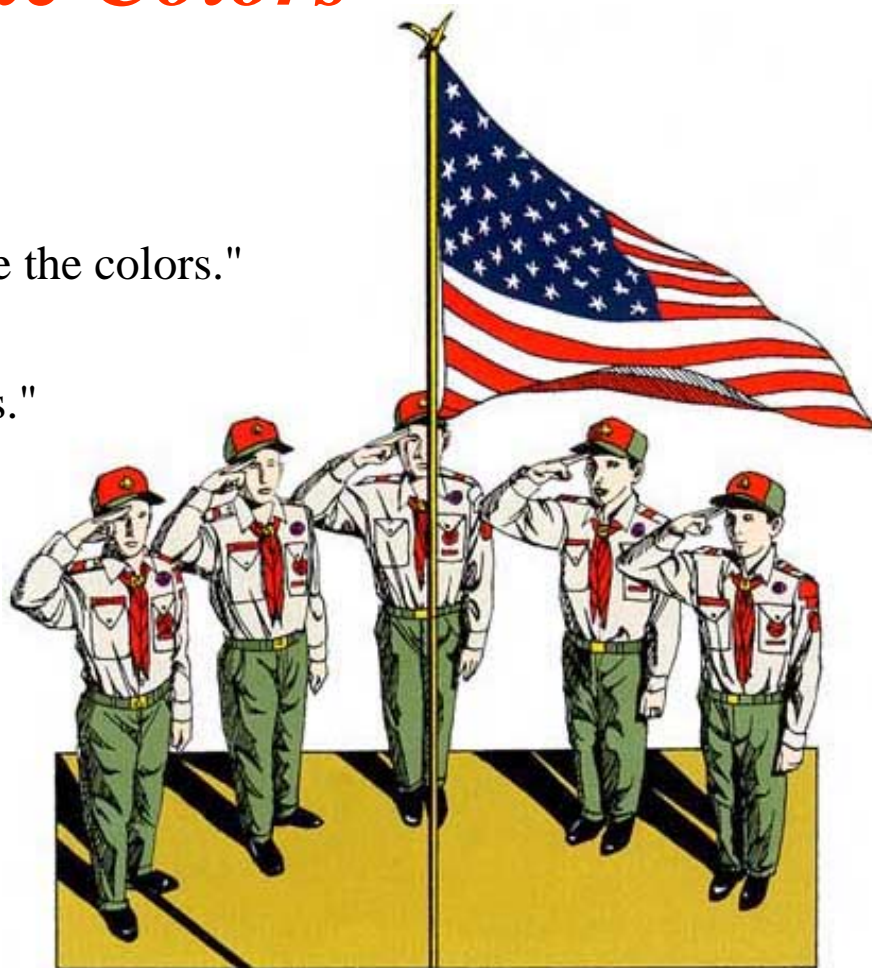
**Command**: "Color Guard, prepare to retire the colors."

**Command**: "Unit, salute."

**Command**: "Color Guard, retire the colors."

**Command**: (after completion) "To."

- Color Guard marches back to the center front of the audience, stops momentarily and then goes to each flag, lifting them up at the same time.



# CONDUCTING YOUR FLAG CEREMONY

## *Dismissing the Color Guard*



**Command:** "Color Guard, regroup."

**Command:** "Color Guard, dismissed."

- Color Guard marches back to the center, and then marches out in the manner in which they had marched in.



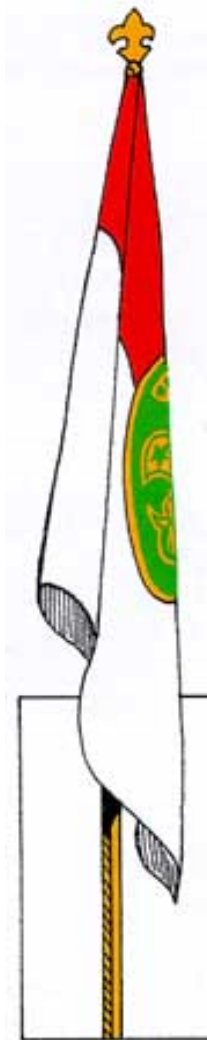
**Command:** "Unit, at ease."



# COLOR GUARD COMMAND SHORT CUTS

## *Posting the Colors*

- Unit, attention.
- Color Guard, prepare to present the colors.
- Color Guard, post the colors.
- Unit, salute.
- Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Begin.
- To.
- Color Guard, regroup.
- Color Guard, dismissed.
- Unit, at ease.



# COLOR GUARD COMMAND SHORT CUTS

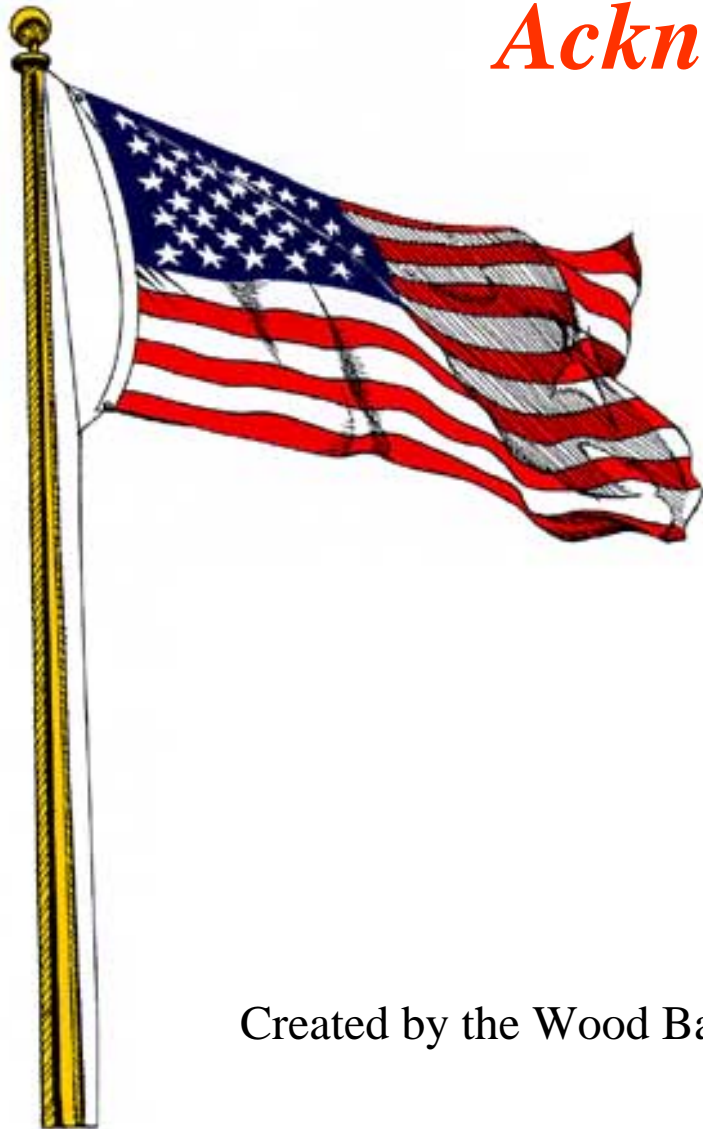
## *Retiring the Colors*

- Unit, attention.
- Color Guard, advance.
- Color Guard, prepare to retire the colors.
- Unit, salute.
- Color Guard, retire the colors.
- To.
- Color Guard, regroup.
- Color Guard, dismissed.
- Unit, at ease.



# CONDUCTING YOUR FLAG CEREMONY

## *Acknowledgements*



- "Your Flag - Boy Scouts of America"  
© 1986 Boy Scouts of America
- CITE 36 USC, Sections 4, 7, 9, 170-189, US Code Revised 1/6/97
- [www.usflag.org](http://www.usflag.org)
- "How To Display the Flag of the United States," US Navy Recruiting Command

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