

THE AMERICAN LEGION  
CONTEST RULES  
COLOR GUARD  
AMERICAN LEGION ADVANCING/RETIRING COLORS CLASS

1. PURPOSE

To present the Color Guard, composed of bonafide members of The American Legion Family, in a military manner with dignity, style and bearing associated with a military ceremonial Color Guard Unit that advances the colors to open a meeting and retires the colors to close a meeting.

2. TIME AND PLACE

The Posting and Retiring Color Guard Contest will be held in the National Convention City starting at a time to be designated by the National Convention Commission (NCC). The contest site will be in an appropriate location designated by the NCC.

3. SUPERVISION

Competition will be under the supervision of the NCC. All interpretations and rulings made by the NCC are made within the framework of the national rules. These rules, properly mandated by the National Executive Committee (NEC), are not subject to review, correction or waiver, unless the NEC, properly constituted, in proper session, makes such review, correction or waiver.

4. ENTRY FORMS

American Legion sponsored COLOR GUARDS, AMERICAN LEGION ADVANCING/RETIRING COLORS CLASS, who are qualified for participation may receive the forms by requesting them from the Director, National Convention and Meetings, The American Legion, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206. The entry form must be certified by the Adjutant of the unit's sponsoring Department and sent to the Director, National Convention and Meetings.

5. ENTRY

All competing units shall, not later than 30 days prior to the date of competition, forward their contest via their Department Adjutant to the Director, National Convention and Meetings, The American Legion, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206. No award will be made to any unit until the National Organization of the American has approved its eligibility.

## 6. ELIGIBILITY

All competitors must be bonafide members of the American Legion Family over 18 years of age (Family Organizations, i.e. Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and American Legion mixed participants). Each competing unit must have participated in its Department contest and parade (or parade only if no contest is held) within the current year. In the event that a Department conducts neither contest nor parade, units affected may still qualify for entry into the National Contest by obtaining written verification of this fact from its Department Adjutant and include it with the entry form. Units competing in this class may also compete in the American Legion Color Guard Contest.

All contest participants 19 years of age or older are **REQUIRED** to register for the National Convention as **GUESTS** of their respective Department. This may be accomplished by sending a by name list (please ensure all names are spelled correctly) of participants to the Department Adjutant or by registering on-site at the National Convention. All competing members will be expected to wear their registration credentials during the inspection portion of the contest. Registration is \$15.00 per attendee and allows access to all venues of the National Convention. Those participants who are 18 years of age and younger must go to the on-site registration booth prior to the contest, to register for their complimentary registration.

**Participating units with members not registered for the National Convention will not be eligible for any contest awards.**

**COLOR GUARD:** This contest will be open to all 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.

**INSPECTION:** Will consist of a certification that the required number of personnel are available for competition, that each has registered for the National Convention (the registration credentials **must be** worn during the inspection portion of the contest), that required equipment is being carried onto the field of competition, and to insure that basic 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.

## 7. PARADE

All competing personnel of each unit entering the contest must participate in the Convention Parade except when special written permission to be excused has been obtained from the NCC Chairman, the Chief Judge of the Contests and the Director, National Convention and Meetings. Further, these Advancing/Retiring Colors Color Guards must parade with their respective Department unless excused by their Department Adjutant and the NCC Chairman.

## 8. MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES

One representative of each competing unit will meet with the Chief Judge of Contests prior to the contest at a time and place to be designated by the Chief Judge, to receive instructions and transact any business, which may properly come before such meeting.

Declarations, in triplicate, must be handed in at the Meeting of Representatives.

Order of appearance in the contest will be in reverse order of receipt of entry form with earliest postmark.

## 9. JUDGES

Seven judges will be provided: One Chief Judge, two General Effect Judges, two Marching and Maneuvering Judges, one Timing and Penalty Judge and one Inspection Judge shall be provided by the National Convention Commission. The judges, tabulators, contest chairman and staff are selected each year based upon their experience, caring and nurturing attitude, consistency, professionalism and communication skills and the understanding and ability to uphold the rules and regulations as outlined in the manual. The judges are to rank and rate the unit participants. They must never exhibit rude, sarcastic or hurtful dialogue or to convey boredom or indifference. A judge relates to all participants at three levels, that of teacher, counselor, and critic. They must judge with their "head, conscience and heart."

## 10. POINTS

Awards will be made on the following points:

Execution:

Dignity and Military Bearing:		
Commanding Officer	20	
Unit Members	20	
Marching and Maneuvering	<u>20</u>	
Subtotal		<u>60</u>

General Effect:		
Dignity and Military Bearing	20	
Showmanship	<u>20</u>	
Subtotal		<u>40</u>
TOTAL		100

This contest will be judged using a build up (subjective) process.

## 11. UNIFORM & EQUIPMENT

The style and color of uniform will be optional with each unit provided they are within the dignity and propriety required when carrying the National Colors. Headgear is required to be worn by all members of the unit.

Required authorized equipment will consist of National Colors\*, American Legion Organizational Banner, and at least two weapons. Additional authorized equipment, such as flags, sidearm, sabers and swords may be carried and can be simulated. **“Simulated rifles” cannot be used in this class.**

\*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, care should be taken to make sure the directional piece is facing the assemblage. This is how flags with directional pieces will be judged.

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.

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, trigger and trigger housing are optional. Bolts or simulated bolts are required.

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 hand guard.

## 12. 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 marked. A Commander's Station will be placed at some point on the floor that best suits the color guards advancing/retiring of colors.

(b). 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 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 maximum time shall result in a one tenth (0.1) point penalty for each three- (3) seconds, or fraction thereof.**

(c). 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.**

(d). 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.**

(e). Each Color Guard shall only enter and exit the floor over the designated "starting point. After timing has commenced, there will be no penalty for marking time at the 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 point, exit point, or other boundary line violation.**

## 13: ADVANCING COLORS

(a). Cadence will be between 128 and 132 steps and will be checked twice during the advancing of the colors performance.

**A five-tenth (0.5) penalty will be assessed for cadence outside the 128/132 range.**

**The following is an example of an advancing of colors routine:**

(b). 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."

#### 14. RETIRING COLORS

(a). Cadence will be between 128 and 132 steps and will be checked twice during the retiring of the colors performance.

**A five-tenth (0.5) penalty will be assessed for cadence outside the 128/132 range.**

**The following is an example of a retiring of colors routine:**

(b). 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.”

#### 15. OTHER PENALTIES

(a). A unit violating any requirement of Rule 6 will be disqualified and its position and standing in the contest will be forfeited.

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

**Each violation not less than one-tenth (0.1) point or more than disqualification, at the discretion of the Chief Judge of Contests**

(c). 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**

(d). Any unit violating Rule 8.

**Assessment is a two point (2.0) penalty**

(e). Any unit violating Rule 12, Section (i).

**Assessment is a One Point (1.0) penalty for each infraction**

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

**Assessment will be a one tenth (0.1) penalty for each infraction**

(g). 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**

Only judges may retrieve dropped equipment or uniform items.

## 16. AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

The awards will be a National Champion Guidon and a Trophy.

## 17. TIE BREAKER

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