

*National Society
Sons of the American Revolution*



*Originally titled Yankee Doodle, later known as The Spirit of '76
by Archibald M. Willard, 1836-1918*

COLOR GUARD HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide general information about Color Guards, and especially for the Color Guard of the National Society, Sons of the American Revolution. Much of the information in this handbook was published in various issues of *The SAR Guardsman* magazine, beginning in the year 2000. Some material has been obtained from the *NSSAR Handbook*, the *NSSAR History, Volume III (1983-2000)*. Some material has been borrowed from Color Guard handbooks prepared by various SAR state societies and chapters across the country.

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The National Color Guard Committee also wishes to acknowledge Mark C. Anthony of the South Carolina Society for reviewing old issues of *The SAR Guardsman*, and finding other sources of information that allowed Mark to compile the baseline draft of the NSSAR Color Guard Handbook.

HISTORY OF THE COLOR GUARD

The Color Guard of the 21st century is primarily ceremonial in terms of purpose and duty. However, the origins of the Color Guard are based in military practicality. The following is a concise history of the origin of the Color Guard.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, flags were commonly referred to as “the Colors.” These colors were of primary importance to the military regiment or brigade as the line of battle was formed around the colors of the unit which were placed at the center of the line. These colors were easily seen through the smoke of battle. If the colors advanced, the line would advance. If the colors retired, the line would retire. As battles would progress and casualties mounted, the line would contract to the colors. In effect, the colors would serve as a rallying point if the line was broken or the men became dispersed. Thus, success in battle was often dependent on the handling of the colors.

The importance of the colors was so significant that a ceremony was performed before battle called “The Trooping of the Colors.” The men of the regiment or brigade were assembled on the parade ground in camp and the colors were paraded before them. This way, each man would see and thus be certain of *his* colors before taking the field of battle.

Likewise, while there could be many diverse objectives in a battle, one of the most important was capturing of the colors of the enemy unit. This would deprive the enemy of their primary means of control and rallying point during the battle. To prevent this, regiments and

brigades would select the most valiant men to protect the colors and color bearer. These men comprised the “Color’s Guard,” a posting of great honor and source of pride. As in years past, this posting continues to be a position of honor.

WHAT IS THE NSSAR COLOR GUARD?

The NSSAR Color Guard is made up of those Compatriots who come to SAR meetings and events properly uniformed as either Continental Soldiers or Militiamen, or attired as Revolution-era clergymen.

These men seek to visibly promote the stated objectives of the SAR which are declared to be Historical, Patriotic and Educational. Therefore, it is important that a Revolutionary War uniformed Color Guard fielded by the NSSAR to be historically correct so as to not compromise these objectives.

Every time an SAR Color Guard makes a public appearance, the members are fulfilling all three objectives. In fact, the Color Guard is one of the most effective public relations tools available to the SAR.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NSSAR COLOR GUARD

The NSSAR Color Guard was first formed in 1989 during the term of President General James R. Westlake (GA) as the NSSAR Color Guard Committee under the chairmanship of Compatriots David Judson Gray and Donald Norman Moran. This first Color Guard consisted of six compatriots representing five state societies. The initial purposes of the Color Guard were:

- To provide guidance to and coordination of the activities of the various State Chapter Color Guards at National Congresses and Trustee meetings, and
- To provide assistance to the various State and Chapter Color Guards in establishing their own Color Guards.

Since its beginnings in 1989, the NSSAR Color Guard grew to 32 members representing fourteen state societies in 2000 and now regularly has over 50 men representing over twenty-five state societies participate in the three annual meetings of the NSSAR.

Today, the NSSAR Color Guard is the most visible public face of the Sons of the American Revolution. Color Guardsmen provide an easily identifiable and colorful focal point at parades and memorial events. The variety of uniforms and flags invite children, spectators, and potential members to come forward and ask questions about the American Revolution.

THE NSSAR COLOR GUARD COMMITTEE

The Color Guard Committee meets at each Congress and Trustees meeting. The primary order of business at each meeting is to organize the Color Guard for the various events that it must participate in during that meeting.

Other items of business include reporting on events the Color Guard has participated in since the previous meeting as well as discussing upcoming events. In addition to this, the Color Guard elects the Color Guardsman of the Year during the Spring Leadership/Trustees Meeting.

The Color Guard Committee works closely with the National Historic Sites & Celebrations Committee in the determination of the battle commemoration or celebration events that are designated as National Events for the purpose of earning points toward Color Guard Medals and which take priority in terms of attendance.

Coordination with the Chaplain General occurs in terms of planning the National Memorial Service as well as with the Surgeon General and Medical Committee in terms of safety and health regulations.

COMMAND STRUCTURE OF THE NSSAR COLOR GUARD

The NSSAR Color Guard Commander shall be the head of the NSSAR Color Guard, and shall also be the Chairman of the NSSAR Color Guard Committee. Due to extraordinary circumstances, one NSSAR Color Guard Commander served for only one year; another Commander served for ten years. The standard term of service as the NSSAR Color Guard Commander shall be two years.

The NSSAR Color Guard Commander shall be assisted by a Vice Commander, and at least one but no more than two Adjutants. The Vice Commander and Adjutants shall also serve as Vice Chairman of the NSSAR Color Guard Committee.

When the NSSAR Color Guard Commander steps down, he shall be succeeded by the Vice Commander, and the Adjutant shall become Vice Commander. If the out-going Commander had named two Adjutants, only one of these shall become Vice Commander. The new Commander shall name a new Adjutant or Adjutants. (See section on *Change of Command*.)

In making his selection for new Adjutants, the new Commander should consider geographic diversity. For the good of the SAR and as much as it may be practicable, it is recommended that the command structure of the NSSAR Color Guard include men from across the country.

The President General may designate other compatriots as Vice Chairmen of the NSSAR Color Guard Committee, but these Vice Chairmen do not serve as Vice Commander or Adjutant, unless so named by the NSSAR Color Guard Commander. Vice Chairmen named by the

President General serve as Vice Chairmen of the Committee only during the term of the President General who named them as Vice Chairmen, and do not proceed up the ranks to Vice Commander or Commander, unless the NSSAR Color Guard Commander has previously designated them as Vice Commander or Adjutant.

FORMATION OF A COLOR GUARD UNIT

Minimum Number in a Color Guard Unit

The optimum minimum number of men that form a Color Guard unit consists of four (4) men:

- Two (2) Color Bearers who carry the United States National Flag and the State or SAR Flag;
- Two (2) Musketeers or Riflemen who escort the Color Bearers.

(It is understood that many state and chapter Color Guards do not have Musketeers or Riflemen.)

A Color Guard may consist of a minimum of three (3) members with at least one Musketeer or Rifleman marching to the right of the National Colors. The left side of the National Colors should be covered either by a second Musketeer or Rifleman or another Color Bearer who would carry another flag (most often the state flag).

In either situation, the Commander of the Color Guard will either be the Musketeer guarding the National Colors or the Guardsman carrying the National Colors. As the Color Guard grows, the Commander will march ahead of the National Colors separate from any other rank.

Equipment

Flags, poles, indoor flag stands, and related items are available through varied sources. Color Guard units are encouraged to purchase as much of equipment as possible from local sources. Since events are conducted both indoors and outdoors, the Color Guard should endeavor to purchase flags that can withstand the elements when used at outdoor events such as parades and grave markings.

In addition to indoor flag stands, the Color Guard should purchase or fabricate outdoor spike stands. These ground spike type may be fabricated from local sources using Rebar and pipe lengths of a diameter to allow insertion of the flag staff. When a Color Guard is participating in an outdoor event, they are responsible for bringing outdoor ground spike stands for each flag that is brought.

At formal national events such as Congress, the Leadership Meetings, and the National Memorial Service, the National Color Guard will provide all flags and equipment necessary for the event.

At state and/or chapter sponsored events, the host society or chapter is responsible for providing the National and State flags and the related equipment. For the sake of uniformity, all chapters within a state must purchase flag poles of the same height as those used by the state society. The most common flag pole length is seven (7) feet. While flag poles can be up to nine (9) feet, this length can become too difficult to carry outside in a moderate wind.

Financing the Unit

In most cases, funding of the following Color Guard equipment should come from either the chapter or society through an allocation within the annual budget or through donations:

- Flags;
- Flag Poles;
- Flag Stands;
- Parade Banner;
- Medals and other awards to recognize individual service;
- Streamers to be presented for participation in an event. (In general, streamers should only be presented for participation in events that are exceptionally significant, such as the 250th anniversary of a Revolution-era event.)

In general, items such as uniforms and uniform accessories are purchased by the individual Color Guardsman.

Continental or Militia Uniform

There are two types of Color Guard units that can be formed based on the type of uniform that the unit primarily uses. The first and most recognizable is the Continental Unit. This unit is comprised of men who are uniformed in the familiar tricorne hat, blue coat and knee breeches or fall-front trousers identified with the soldiers of the regular army during the Revolution.

The second type of unit is the Militia Unit. There is no set uniform associated with the Militia. As in the time of the Revolution, the Militia consisted of everyday men who wore the clothes that they wore in normal everyday activity when called to service. As such, there is more leeway in the type of clothing that the Militia Color Guard wears.

Please note, that while the above references separate units based on the type of uniform, this does not preclude having a mixture of uniform types in a single unit. As a matter of fact, most national events will have color guard members in a variety of uniforms – both continental and militia. The common practice in this situation is that those wearing continental uniforms will be towards the front of the unit while those wearing militia attire will be toward the rear.

With respect to the uniform that is worn, many Color Guardsmen choose to wear a uniform similar to that worn by their patriot ancestor(s). However, this requires that the Color Guard member have performed the necessary research to determine the details of the uniform. This is necessary since, while the blue coat was predominate, the coat could have a different facing color on the cuffs and collar, depending where the soldier was from and the hat could vary from unit to unit.

With respect to the Continental uniform, the basic uniform consists of the following:

- A tricorne hat;
- A blue coat with either a buff, red or white facing and trim;
- White shirt and waistcoat;
- White or buff knee britches or fall-front trousers;
- Buckle shoes;
- A pair of white gloves.

With respect to the Militia uniform, the basic uniform consists of the following:

- A hat – either tricorne or round;
- A hunting shirt;
- A white or checkered shirt;
- Long britches or fall-front trousers;
- Shoes (not necessarily buckle since the long pants leg will cover the buckle area).

While these are the basics for each uniform, variations will exist and participation will not be discouraged based on these variations. Another important consideration of the uniform is the type of fabric used in making the uniform and the accessories that accompany the uniform. A discussion of these fabric and accessories will follow below.

Due to the time and expense of obtaining an uniform made from natural and more authentic material, many color guard members chose to obtain a less expensive uniform made from modern fabric, most often polyester or gabardine. These uniforms made from modern fabric are perfectly acceptable for all events except for those where the guardsman will fire a musket. For safety reasons, the SAR does not allow guardsmen in modern fabric uniforms to fire a weapon due the danger of melting fabric causing severe burns.

For those guardsmen who wish to fire a musket, the uniform should be made out of natural fiber material such as wool and linen. If a spark from a fired musket lands on uniforms made of these materials, the fibers will smolder and can be easily extinguished before causing injury instead of melting quickly.

In addition to the uniform, many guardsmen seek to add to their appearance by adding equipment and other accoutrements. What follows is a brief discussion of common items:

Headwear: While many in the general public identify the tricorne hat as the exclusive headwear of the Revolutionary era, this was not the case. Many different types of headwear were worn including helmets (predominately cavalry units), woven caps, and flat round hats. If wearing a specific unit's uniform, the correct headwear must be worn. For purposes of the SAR Color Guard, a simple black tricorne will suffice.

Footwear: During the Revolution, most shoes were made to fit either foot with the determination of right and left coming only after long wear where the shoe molded to the foot. Obtaining period, buckled shoes can be expensive. As such, many guardsmen elect to purchase buckles that can slide over modern shoes and give the appearance of buckle shoes. Another

option is to have the either gaiters made (secured with buttons and garters just above the calf) that cover the lower leg and tops of the shoes thus hiding the fact the shoes have no buckles or by having long pants made as part of the uniform that have facings that extend over the face of the shoe and are secured using either elastic or leather straps below the shoe that also obscure the lack of a buckle of the shoe. An important consideration is both the comfort and safety of the guardsmen in walking or marching in a parade since period correct footwear can cause blisters or may not provide appropriate traction on modern surfaces.

Rank Insignia: A variety of items were used to denote rank within the Revolutionary army. Most common were sashes, gorgets, hat cockades, and epaulettes. As a matter of note, the private in the army did not have any sashes or epaulettes on his uniform coat. Epaulettes denoted rank through both color and placement on a specific shoulder. If the guardsman wishes to include rank insignia, it is highly recommended that this be researched so that historical correctness is maintained.

Gorget: This ornamental metal device is worn suspended from the neck. This alludes back to its original purpose as the component of metal armor that protected the neck of the wearer from swords and other non-projectile weapons. By the time of the Revolution, this had become an ornamental accessory to a military uniform denoting a certain rank or as an indication of performing a certain duty. As such, research should determine if wearing a gorget is appropriate with the type of uniform that is worn. For purposes of the SAR, the gorget is most often worn by either a Color Guard Commander or a past commander.

Belts & Straps: When in the Continental uniform, all belts and straps used for carrying other equipment should be made of white leather or heavy white canvas. Equipment that was supported by a belt or strap including the cartridge box, the haversack, bayonets and canteens.

Cartridge Box: Continental soldiers used a cartridge box when in battle. The cartridge box should be made of black leather attached to a hanger.

Haversack: The haversack carried the basic necessities of the soldier including rations, smaller mess kit items, wallet, etc. Today, it is an ideal place for the guardsman to carry his wallet, cell phone, glasses or other necessary items. It should be made of linen or some similar material. It should be worn on the left of the uniform.

Canteens: Authentic Revolution-era canteens can be made of metal or wood.

Knapsacks: These should be made of linen, canvas or similar material and worn using white leather or canvas straps. While part of the Continental uniform, these are not commonly worn by members of the SAR Color Guard.

Powder Horn / Tomahawks / Knives: These items are not parts of the Continental uniform. They are identified with the Militia uniform and should only be worn or carried by those guardsmen in that uniform. These items can be carried using rawhide or leather strings or other materials. They can also be inserted in belts or other woven sashes. As a matter of

personal and corporate safety, edged weapons (including swords above) must have the blades covered or secured within an appropriate scabbard.

The final issue to be discussed with respect to the uniform is that of the side arms carried by the Color Guard. For the most part, the majority of the color guard should not carry side arms as their primary duty will be in bearing the various colors for presentation.

Swords (28 to 36 inches in length): Except for officers such as the Commander or Vice Commander, no guardsman should wear a sword. The wearing of a sword was a symbol of rank and social standing. With respect to the primary duty of the SAR Color Guard, wearing a sword is impractical and a matter of personal safety. It is impractical to wear a sword since both hands are used to carry the flag during a parade and one hand is needed to secure the sword so that it does not cause the wearer to trip. Likewise, a longer sword may be impractical when presenting colors in a smaller space such as a meeting room.

Hangers (25 inches in length): This is a specific type of sword that is suspended from a shoulder belt. It is a safer alternative for those guardsmen who wish to carry an edged weapon while bearing colors. Of note is that many historical belts contain carriers for both bayonets and hangers within the same belt.

Spontoons: Evolved from the much longer pike, the spontoon was used by sergeants or other noncommissioned officers as a both a symbol of rank as well as a signaling device to control the movements of a rank of men. With its edged blade, it was also a means of defending the colors as well as a means of personal defense. As such, only the Commander of the unit should carry this sidearm.

Musket / Rifle: When using a primarily Continental unit, the Brown Bess or French Chevelle Musket is preferred to maintain historical accuracy. The musket can be either a nonfunctioning reproduction (usually less expensive) or a functioning reproduction. In either case, the guardsman should also have a bayonet on their person when carrying a musket as the bayonet was an essential part of that weapon system. Reproductions of rifles can be carried but this is primarily done by those guardsmen in militia attire. When carrying a rifle, the guardsman should not have a bayonet as these were not used with rifles (unless it was a plug bayonet). The usage of vintage heirlooms or antiques is strongly discouraged.

Pistols: Since these were primarily a weapon used exclusively by cavalry or mounted units, pistols should never be carried. Holsters for pistols were attached to the saddle and there are no known examples of belts or other devices for carrying a pistol related to foot soldiers.

FLAGS CARRIED BY THE COLOR GUARD

At a minimum, the Color Guard should carry the United States National Flag and the flag of the state in which the Color Guard resides or the SAR flag. Other flags can be added as the Color Guard grows. The question becomes one of what flags to add. While there is no set

answer to this question other than the Color Guard should follow proper protocol when carrying the flags.

Proper protocol provides that flags should be carried in a specific order. The SAR has adopted the following protocol with respect to established flag regulations for usage by a single Color Guard unit.

- United States National Flag;
- Betsy Ross Flag;
- State Flag of the Color Guard Unit;
- SAR Flag;
- Other historical flags of the Revolution.

Since the Color Guard participates in many events (such as Cowpens or Yorktown) where the Color Guard will be made up of a combination of guardsmen from multiple states or units, the protocol is slightly different.

- United States National Flag;
- State Flag of the Host State Society;
- State Flags of other State Societies (carried in order of the date of the state's admission to the union);
- Betsy Ross Flag;
- SAR Flags (state society flags first, chapter flags last);
- Other historical flags of the Revolution.

If the President General is in attendance, *and if the flag of his state is available*, it is carried prior to the state flag of the host state society.

COLOR GUARD PARTICIPATION AT EVENTS

Existing Events

There are many established events in which the SAR Color Guard participates. At these events, the event coordinator or host society will issue a formal invitation to other state societies. These invitations are then disseminated within the respective societies and chapters.

On the date of the event, the Color Guard is formed under the command of the National Color Guard Commander, his designee, or the commander of the host society Color Guard. Given that many of these events are similar in nature, a generic outline of a program can be found in the NSSAR Handbook and is not replicated here.

Creating an Event

For those Color Guards who do not have a Revolutionary War site within their service area, an alternative to undertaking expensive and time-consuming travel is to create a unique event in their area. Two specific examples of this are the California Massing of Colors in Los Angeles that celebrates George Washington's Birthday and the George Washington Parade in

Laredo, TX where the local color guard has joined in with an established parade and expanded into hosting other events in conjunction with this event.

Taking the example of the Massing of Colors, the following process was followed:

- Pick an individual or event to celebrate;
- Pick a date and time that does not conflict with other possible events already established to celebrate the individual or event (for example, if a Sunday is chosen, have the event at mid-afternoon to allow members and the general public to attend church and have lunch);
- Pick a central location such as a local Memorial Park where the general public is already used to gathering to celebrate or commemorate events;
- Invite other heritage, lineage, and military organizations to participate;
- Provide some recognition to participants – most commonly a certificate of appreciation or participation or presenting a streamer that can be attached to the organizations flag;
- Acknowledge as many participants as possible in a printed program;
- If possible and if the event is outside, reserve an indoor location in case of rain;
- Invite local speakers in addition to NSSAR General Officers;
- Be willing to evolve so that the program does not become stagnant.

Publicity

A key component to any Color Guard or other event is publicity. Publicity is very easy since the Color Guard uniform is unique and not often seen by the general public except on television and film. A common occurrence is for children and the general public to request guardsmen to appear in photographs or talk about the uniform. To build on this natural tendency, the Color Guard should be prepared to both promote a public appearance both before and after the fact.

Prior to an event, the Commander or his designee may coordinate with the host state society or chapter in developing a press release that includes photographs of color guard participation from previous years. This photograph is more likely to be used than a static picture of people in front of wreaths or monuments.

Similarly, after an event is completed (and in line with preparing the documentation required to be submitted with nominations for Color Guard Medals), a press release may be provided to local media if none attends the event.

In both cases, a press release may provide information on date, place, time and reason for the event. All pictures should have a caption identifying color guard members by name and city of residence. Finally, the press release should have a statement at the end providing basic information on the SAR and Color Guard with contact names and numbers.

During events, the Color Guard should be prepared to talk about the event, their uniform, the color guard and the SAR. In many organizations, a single guardsman should be identified as the primary media contact at the event.

COMMANDS

While many members of the SAR have a military background, some do not. Accordingly, this section is intended to familiarize all Guardsmen with the standard commands. The commands given below are a mixture of both modern commands and those commands used during the Revolutionary War. Some units may prefer to use all modern commands while some will use a mixture and some will exclusively use those commands outlined in the Revolutionary War Drill Manual. A specific policy has not been adopted as of the writing of this manual.

Posting the Colors & Other Indoor Events

The most common activity of any Color Guard will be the posting of the Colors at a meeting or some other public event that occurs indoors. Given the wide variety of locations, meetings, and other details, there is no specific program that can be provided as an example. However, the basic commands that will be used in such an event are provided. In all commands where direction is given, the command should be timed so that the execution of the command begins on the left foot.

- *Color Guard, Attention.* With this command, the color guard should come to attention with flags and firearms on the floor to their right.
- *Carry Arms.* With this command, the flags and firearms are lifted into position so that they can be carried.
- *Color Guard, Mark Time March.* With this command, the color guard marches in place starting with the left foot so that tempo for subsequent commands can be established.
- *Color Guard, Forward March.* With this command, the color guard moves forward starting on their left foot.
- *Color Guard, Mark Time March.* With this command, the front rank halts their forward progress and continues to march in place allowing for subsequent ranks to catch up to the final position if necessary.
- *Color Guard, Halt.* With this command, all marching should cease within two beats or steps.
- *Color Guard, Left / Right Face.* With this command, all members face the appropriate direction as ordered by the Commander.
- *Present Colors.* With this command, all flags except the National are dipped and firearms are brought to the Present Arms position for pledges and the National Anthem.
- *Color Bearers, About Face.* With this command, all color bearers will turn to face toward the flag stands.
- *Post the Colors.* With this command, the color bearers place the flags in the flag stands and dress the flags appropriately. Color bearers are free to move forward and back one step as necessary. Musketeers continue to maintain the present arms position.
- *Present Arms.* With this command, color bearers will salute the posted Colors.
- *Order Arms.* With this command, all color guardsmen return to the attention position.
- *Color Guard, Center Face.* With this command, all members face the appropriate direction to move out of the room in a single column or in double column.
- *Color Guard, Post (or To your post).* With this command, all members move to a previously designated location, or post

Additional notes for indoor events:

- Musketeers will not fix bayonets for obvious safety reasons;
- The Commander must make all guardsmen aware of obstacles such as lighting fixtures;
- A drummer can be used to provide timing for commands;
- The National Colors should always either lead a column or process on the right of any rank;
- If ranks are used, a cross-over maneuver will be necessary after the Color Guard halts since the National Colors are always placed on the left (speaker's right);
- The same series of commands can be used for the Retiring of Colors at the end of the meeting except that there will be no Present Colors command and the Post the Colors command would be replaced by a Retrieve the Colors command.

Graveside / Outdoor / Other Outdoor Events

There are two common types of outdoor ceremonies in which the Color Guard most often participate:

- The commemoration or celebration of the anniversary of a Revolutionary War battle or event; and,
- The wreath-laying and/or marker dedication at the grave of a Revolutionary War patriot or a compatriot member of the SAR. The commands used at these ceremonies are the same as those outlined above.

The differences between the indoor posting of colors and the outdoor ceremony are that there are more program elements associated with the outdoor event, and the Color Guard will often remain in place after the presentation of Colors due to the lack of outdoor flag stands.

If the Color Guard remains in place, the Commander should issue the following commands after the presentation of Colors:

- *Order Arms.* With this command, all guardsmen return flags and muskets to the carry position.
- *Color Guard, Rest.* With this command, flags and muskets are lowered to rest on the ground and the guardsmen are able to stand without being at attention.

If the program includes an honorary firing of muskets and/or the playing of Taps, the Commander should bring the Color Guard to attention and order the Color Guard to Present Arms using the appropriate commands. In most cases, the master of ceremonies will ask for the Retirement of Colors shortly after this event, so the Color Guard should remain at attention and be prepared for further commands.

Parades

Given that most parades will only entail simple movements, the commands associated with parades are:

- *Color Guard, Attention.* With this command, the color guard should come to attention with flags and firearms on the floor to their right.

- *Order Arms.* With this command, the flags and firearms are lifted into position so that they can be carried.
- *Color Guard, Mark Time March.* With this command, the color guard marches in place starting with the left foot so that tempo for subsequent commands can be established.
- *Color Guard, Forward March.* With this command, the color guard moves forward starting on their left foot.
- *Color Guard, Mark Time March.* With this command, the front rank halts their forward progress and continues to march in place allowing for subsequent ranks to catch up to the final position if necessary.
- *Color Guard, Halt.* With this command, all marching should cease within two beats or steps.

If there is a Reviewing Stand during the parade, the Commander should brief the Color Guard of the following additional commands that will be used:

- *Present Arms.* With this command, all flags are dipped except the National Colors and all guardsmen will turn their heads 45 degrees towards the review stand)
- *Carry Arms.* With this command, all flags are returned to the carry position and heads face straight ahead.

COLOR GUARD BEHAVIOR AT EVENTS

Hand Salutes

As with current military custom, only the Commander of the Color Guard and those members carrying muskets will Present Arms when called to salute. No Color Bearer ever renders a hand salute, unless specifically ordered immediately after the posting of colors, since the Commander is understood to present the salute for the entire unit.

Prayers

Likewise, during prayers, Color Guard members only close their eyes. At no time is does the Guardsman bow his head or remove his hat.

Wearing Medals

If a Color Guardsman insists on wearing SAR medals on his uniform because he would not otherwise have an opportunity to wear them, then they may be worn only during SAR internal events such as chapter, state and national meetings where the general public is not present. In any case, the Color Guard Commander in charge makes the final decision on the permission to wear medals on the Color Guard uniform during SAR internal events.

NSSAR COLOR GUARD MEDALS

The following language should be identical to the section in the NSSAR Handbook pertaining to NSSAR Color Guard Medals. There may be some discrepancy since the NSSAR Handbook is usually updated only once a year, generally after a National Congress, and this NSSAR Color Guard Handbook may be updated a few times a year, depending on the actions of the NSSAR Color Guard Committee. In the event there is a discrepancy between the NSSAR Handbook and NSSAR Color Guard Handbook, the NSSAR Color Guard Handbook shall be deemed to be more current, and therefore correct.

The SAR Color Guard Medal, authorized in 1998, may be awarded for SAR Color Guard service at the National, District, State and Chapter levels. Recipients may be awarded the Bronze, Silver and/or Gold Color Guard Medal only once each. Oak leaf clusters are not allowed. Each medal is awarded for at least three years of service at the applicable level. The three years may be broken, not continuous. Award of each medal may be for retroactive service, so that any living compatriot may receive it, even if he cannot march anymore.

Each State Society shall determine for itself whether to employ one of the following systems for earning the Bronze and Silver Color Guard Medals. The first system is based on points; the second system is based on the number of events in which a Guardsman participates.

I. Earning the Bronze Color Guard Medal

The Bronze Color Guard Medal is for service at the State and/or Chapter levels. Award of the Bronze Color Guard Medal is authorized by the State awarding authority, and should be presented by the State or Chapter President as appropriate.

A. Point System

To earn an SAR Bronze Color Guard Medal, a Color Guardsman must accrue at least three hundred (300) points by participating in uniform at qualifying Chapter and/or State Color Guard events.

A Color Guardsman shall earn five (5) points for his participation in uniform in each Chapter event. A Chapter event shall be defined as an event in which a Chapter participates, but to which an invitation has not been extended to the State Color Guard. Examples include, but are not limited to: participation at schools, civic clubs, churches and other public organizations, Chapter meetings, flag retirement ceremonies, local veterans events, local Revolutionary War event celebrations, proclamation ceremonies by local governments, and similar local events. The Chapter President should approve a Chapter event before the event may be counted.

A Color Guardsman shall earn ten (10) points for his participation in uniform in each State event. A State event is an event in which the State Color Guard has been requested to participate. Examples include, but are not limited to: Revolutionary battle and historic sites celebrations, grave markings, parades, State Society meetings. The State President should approve a State event before the event may be counted.

A Color Guardsman must keep track of the events in which he has participated, and must prove that he has accrued 300 points to the State President or State Color Guard Commander, or to such other appropriate State authority.

B. Events System

To earn an SAR Bronze Color Guard Medal, a Color Guardsman must participate in at least 50% of the scheduled Color Guard activities for his State and/or Chapter in each of three years, which do not need to be continuous. A year shall be any period of twelve consecutive months.

II. *Earning the Silver Color Guard Medal*

The Silver Color Guard Medal is for service at the District and National levels. An SAR Color Guardsman must have the Bronze Color Guard Medal before he can be awarded the Silver Color Guard Medal.

SAR Color Guardsmen who believe they qualify for the Silver Color Guard Medal must complete the appropriate form, setting forth their qualifications. This form is available on the SAR website, and must be submitted to the State or District Color Guard Commander for review and recommendation, and to the National Color Guard Commander for final authorization to award the Silver Color Guard Medal.

The Silver Color Guard Medal should be presented, as appropriate, by the District Vice President General, by the State President, or by the District or State Color Guard Commander. Under special circumstances, the Silver Color Guard Medal may also be presented by the President General or the National Color Guard Commander.

The SAR National Congress and semi-annual Leadership Meetings are National events, and Color Guardsmen are strongly encouraged to participate in them. Other qualifying events which may be substituted for National Congresses and Leadership Meetings shall include:

- An historic commemoration recognized by the NSSAR Historic Sites and Celebrations Committee, e.g. Point Pleasant, the Cowpens, Yorktown, etc.;
- An Annual State Meeting at which the President General is present;
- An Annual District Meeting or Annual District Conference;
- Any National or District event at which the President General is present;
- Any event specifically determined by the National Color Guard Committee to be a qualifying event, including Washington's Birthday Parade in Laredo, Texas, and the George Washington Massing of the Colors in Los Angeles, California.
- See *National Color Guard Events* under MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION at the back of this Handbook. Other events may be determined by the National Color Guard Committee to be qualifying events on a case-by-case basis.

A. Point System

To earn an SAR Silver Color Guard Medal, a Color Guardsman must have participated in at least nine (9) District and/or National events. In addition, the Color Guardsman should earn a minimum of 500 points (i.e. 200 points for participation in District and/or National events in addition to the 300 points required for the Bronze Color Guard Medal). For those events that are both state and National events (e.g. Kettle Creek, Guilford Courthouse or Yorktown), it is the policy of the NSSAR Color Guard Committee that any such event can be counted only once each year toward either the Bronze or Silver Color Guard Medal. The Color Guardsman will determine toward which medal his participation in an event will be counted.

A Color Guardsman shall earn twenty (20) points for his participation in uniform in each District or National event.

B. Events System

To earn an SAR Silver Color Guard Medal, a Color Guardsman must participate in at least three District and/or National events in each of three years, which do not need to be continuous. A year shall be any period of twelve consecutive months.

III. *Mileage*

For Color Guardsmen whose State societies employ the point system, they may also earn points based on mileage, whether such miles are traveled by driving or by flying.

- Up to 100 miles, no points;
- From 101 to 200 miles, 5 points;
- From 201 to 999 miles, 10 points;
- From 1,000 miles and over, 20 points.

IV. *The Gold Color Guard Medal*

The Gold Color Guard Medal is awarded to the SAR Color Guardsman of the Year. Each year, there shall be no more than one SAR Color Guardsman of the Year, and he shall be selected pursuant to procedures set forth by the National Color Guard Committee. An SAR Color Guardsman must have both the Bronze and Silver Color Guard Medals before he can be considered for SAR Color Guardsman of the Year. The Gold Color Guard Medal should be presented by the President General during the Annual Congress Awards Night Program. To be considered for SAR Color Guardsman of the Year, a Color Guardsman must have completed three years of service at the National level. Each State Society and Chapter Color Guard may nominate one compatriot each year for the SAR Color Guardsman of the Year. State Societies and Chapters should consider that Compatriot who best exemplifies both the spirit of the Sons of the American Revolution and the use of Color Guards to display that spirit. The SAR Color Guardsman of the Year must attend the SAR National Congress at which he is awarded the Gold Color Guard Medal, and is expected to attend the subsequent National Congress as well.

The Gold Color Guard Medal is also awarded for service in a leadership capacity at the National level. The Gold Color Guard Medal is usually presented to the outgoing National Color Guard Commander by the President General at the Color Guard Change-of-Command Ceremony. To qualify for the Gold Color Guard Medal for service in a leadership capacity, a Color Guardsman must have served at least one year as Vice Commander and two years as Commander of the SAR National Color Guard. If the National Color Guard Commander has not served at least one year as Vice Commander, he must serve at least three years as Commander in order to qualify for the Gold Color Guard Medal.

The National Color Guard Committee will be the final judge of who is qualified to be awarded the Gold Color Guard Medal. Waivers to these requirements will be granted only under very special circumstances, and requests for such waivers must be submitted in writing to the National Color Guard Commander for committee consideration.

ELECTION OF THE SAR COLOR GUARDSMAN OF THE YEAR

Nominations for SAR Color Guardsman of the Year must be submitted to the NSSAR Color Guard Commander by e-mail or U.S. Mail no later than the December 31 preceding the National Congress at which the SAR Color Guardsman of the Year is to be awarded the SAR Gold Color Guard Medal.

To be considered for SAR Color Guardsman of the Year, a Color Guardsman must have completed three years of service at the National level. Each State Society and Chapter Color Guard may nominate one compatriot each year for the SAR Color Guardsman of the Year. State Societies and Chapters should consider that Compatriot who best exemplifies both the spirit of the Sons of the American Revolution and the use of Color Guards to display that spirit.

From among all nominations, the SAR Color Guardsman of the Year is elected by the eligible voters attending the Spring meeting of the NSSAR Color Guard Committee. Eligible voters shall include:

- All previous recipients of the Gold Color Guard Medal;
- One representative from each state society. This representative shall be selected by either the state society President or the state society Color Guard Commander. In the event the state society has not formally selected a voting representative, the Color Guardsmen from a given state who are attending the Spring meeting of the NSSAR Color Guard Committee may decide among themselves who shall vote for the SAR Color Guardsman of the Year.

For additional information about the Gold Color Guard Medal, please refer to the section on *The Gold Color Guard Medal* under NSSAR COLOR GUARD MEDALS.

CHANGE OF COMMAND

The following ceremony is to be observed at the Change of Command for the NSSAR Color Guard. State societies and chapters may also use this ceremony, or revise it for their specific circumstances.

Color Guard processes in, led by the Outgoing Commander carrying a Halberd.

Invocation, Pledges, National Anthem. Color Guard posts Colors.

Outgoing Commander: "Color Guard: Post."

Color Guard marches to line both sides of main aisle. Ideally, and if possible, the entire Color Guard will have formed up on the main aisle.

Outgoing Commander - "Color Guard: Center Face." Color Guard faces inward to aisle.

The President General, the Outgoing Commander, the Outgoing Adjutant, the Incoming Commander and the Incoming Adjutant take positions. The Outgoing Commander, with the Outgoing Adjutant by his side, is on the left facing the Incoming Commander, with the Incoming Adjutant by his side. The President General stands in the middle, with his back to the head table.

The Outgoing Adjutant reads, "The Command of the National Society, Sons of the American Revolution Color Guard is transferred from Compatriot _____ to Compatriot _____, effective the ___th of ____ 20__.

Halberd is slowly and with much dignity passed from the Outgoing Commander to the President General, and then from the President General to the Incoming Commander. The Incoming Commander shall carry the Halberd for the remainder of the ceremony, and shall carry it out of the room.

Outgoing NSSAR Adjutant reads, "The NSSAR Gold Color Guard Medal is hereby awarded to Compatriot _____.

The President General presents the Gold Color Guard Medal to the Outgoing Commander.

The Outgoing Commander passes Medal and/or case and Certificate back to the Outgoing Adjutant to carry items out.

Outgoing Commander faces Color Guard and draws saber silently.

Incoming Commander orders "Color Guard: Present Arms." Color Guard presents arms.

The Outgoing Commander, slowly and with much dignity, marches to the end of the rows of Color Guardsmen. As he passes each Color Guardsman, that Color Guardsman salutes him. When the Outgoing Commander reaches the end of the rows of Color Guardsmen, he about

faces, salutes the Color Guard with a saber salute, about faces, and waits to leads Color Guard slowly out of Dining Room.

The Incoming Commander commands, "Color Guard: Order Arms. Forward March." He then leads the Color Guard out, following the Outgoing Commander out of the Dining Room.

The Color Guardsmen remain facing center until passed by the Color Guardsmen from closer to the head table, whereupon they will turn and follow the other departing Color Guardsmen out of the Dining Room.

The Color Guard follows the New Commander out of the Dining Room.

The Color Guard returns to the Dining Room.

(If the President General wishes to make any remarks about the NSSAR Color Guard Change of Command, he should do so at this time.)

HEALTH & SAFETY REGULATIONS

The following regulations were enacted for the health and safety of the Guardsmen participating in the various SAR sponsored outdoor events.

- The Color Guard Commander at the event (assisted by the Event Coordinator) shall be responsible for enforcing these regulations as much as practicable, but each individual Guardsman is ultimately responsible for his own health and safety including, but not limited to, obtaining the necessary liability insurance.
- It shall be the responsibility of individual Guardsman to be aware of their own physical limitations and to excuse themselves from parades or events that will exceed their capabilities. They should also advise the Commander of this situation so appropriate arrangements can be made. In participating in a parade, each Guardsman is expected to maintain the set pace.
- The Commander shall be responsible to inform Guardsmen of the expected physical activity required at any event including, but not limited to, the length of any march, the route of march, expected maneuvers and obstacles. The Commander, or his designee shall be responsible for arranging transportation both to and from parades
- The Commander, or his designee, shall be responsible for ensuring that adequate water or other appropriate liquid refreshments are available for the participants.
- In the event of a review by the President General, it is advised that this review occur inside in an air conditioned or heated environment prior to the event depending on the time of year.
- When participating in a re-enactment event not directly sponsored by the SAR, the Guardsman must make themselves subordinate to the effective rules and regulations of the sponsoring organization. An SAR Safety Officer can be appointed by the Commander for such events.
- Only re-enactor quality uniforms may be worn when participating in a firing squad or when the color guard will be in close proximity of a firing squad. If a Guardsmen is

wearing a polyester uniform, he will be asked to move to a safe location or asked to defer in direct participation at that time (credit for attendance will still accrue towards medals).

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

National Color Guard Events

The National SAR events listed below count toward earning the SAR Silver Color Guard Medal. Please see *Earning the Silver Color Guard Medal* under NSSAR COLOR GUARD MEDALS for more information.

Dates are approximate. SAR Color Guardsmen, other SAR Compatriots and other interested persons should confirm the actual date of the event listed below with the calendar on the NSSAR website or with the host state society.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>
January 16	Battle of Cowpens	Chesnee, SC
February 14	Battle of Kettle Creek	Washington, GA
February 14	Crossing of the Dan	South Boston, VA
February 22	Washington's Birthday Parade	Laredo, TX
February 22	California Massing of Colors	Los Angeles, CA
early March	NSSAR Spring Leadership Meeting	Louisville, KY
March 5	Last Naval Battle of the Revolution	Cape Canaveral, FL
March 12	Battle of Guilford Courthouse	Greensboro, NC
April 18	Battles of Lexington & Concord	Concord, MA
late April	Pegasus Parade (Kentucky Derby)	Louisville, KY
May 28	Spirit of Vincennes Rendezvous	Vincennes, IN
May 30	National Memorial Day Parade	Washington, DC
June 11	Battle of Ramsour's Mill	Lincolnton, NC
June 17	Battle of Bunker Hill	Bunker Hill, MA
early July	NSSAR National Congress	various
late July	Battle of Fort Laurens	Bolivar, OH
August	National American Legion Parade	various
mid-September	Gathering at Sycamore Shoals	Elizabethton, TN
September 19	Battle of Saratoga	Stillwater, NY
late September	NSSAR Fall Leadership Meeting	Louisville, KY
October 1	Point Pleasant Battle Days	Point Pleasant, WV
October 7	Battle of Kings Mountain	Blacksburg, SC
October 19	Yorktown Day Parade	Yorktown, VA
various	Wreaths Across America	various
various	Field of Honor / Healing Field	various

NSSAR Color Guardsmen of the Year

The NSSAR Color Guardsman of the Year is elected by the eligible voters attending the Spring meeting of the NSSAR Color Guard Committee. The Gold Color Guard Medal is presented at the subsequent National Congress.

1998	Lowell Nichols	Indiana Society
1999	Edgar Grover	Kansas Society
2000	Robert Grover	Missouri Society
2001	George Lamp	West Virginia Society
2002	James McCafferty	Maryland Society
2003	Ray Zimmerman	Maryland Society
2004	CDR Charles R. Lampman, USN (Ret)	California Society
2005	Lester Foster	Maryland Society
2006	COL Andrew M. Johnson, USA (Ret)	Virginia Society
2007	George Thurmond	Georgia Society
2008	Charles F. Bragg	Indiana Society
2009	Charles Newcomer	Georgia Society
2010	John H. Franklin	Ohio Society
2011	Paul I. Prescott	Georgia Society

NSSAR Color Guard Commanders

1989 – 1990	Donald N. Moran	California Society
1990 – 2000	CAPT David J. Gray, USN (Ret)	Massachusetts Society
2000 – 2002	Garrett Jackson	California Society
2002 – 2004	Edgar Grover	Kansas Society
2004 – 2006	COL Peter K. Goebel, USA	Empire State Society (New York)
2006 – 2007	CDR Charles R. Lampman, USN (Ret)	California Society
2007 – 2009	Larry Perkins	Ohio Society
2009 – 2011	Joseph W. Dooley	Virginia Society
2011 – present	J. Michael Tomme	Georgia Society

REVISION HISTORY

As the NSSAR Color Guard Handbook is updated, a brief notation may be made below so as to track revisions made to the Handbook.

July 10, 2011

(1) Addition of Color Guard Reporting Form. (2) Revision to language pertaining to the wearing of medals on SAR Color Guard uniforms. The commander in charge of an SAR event now determines whether SAR Color Guardsmen shall be permitted to wear medals. (3) Approval of National Von Steuben Medal for Sustained Achievement, pending approval by the NSSAR Medals & Awards Committee. (4) Added Field of Honor and Healing Field programs to list of events that count toward earning the SAR Silver Color Guard Medal.

March 11, 2011

Revision to language pertaining to SAR Color Guard Medals. State societies may now choose a 'point system' in lieu of an 'event system.' Proposal made by George E. Thurmond and Edward P. Rigel, Sr. of the Georgia Society.

September 24, 2010

Approval of baseline version of NSSAR Color Guard Handbook.

National Society, Sons of the American Revolution

Color Guard Reporting Form

Name of Guardsman _____ State Society _____
 Chapter _____ District _____
 National Number _____ State Number _____
 Rank (if applicable) _____ Are you the State Color Guard Commander? _____
 This report covers Color Guard service from _____ to _____

Does your State Society use the 'Point System' _____ or the 'Event System' _____ ?
(Please place an 'X' on the appropriate space. If you are unsure, please consult the NSSAR Color Guard Handbook, and ask your State Society President or Color Guard Commander.)

Record of Service

Place and Date of Service	District	National	No. of Points (if applicable)

Please print legibly. Place an 'X' in the appropriate box, 'District' or 'National.'
 Use additional Forms, if necessary.

State President or Color Guard Commander *(please circle whichever is correct):*
 I, _____, do hereby affirm that the above record is accurate, and recommend that the **National Color Guard Commander** authorize the awarding of the SAR Silver Color Guard Medal to SAR Color Guardsman _____.

National Color Guard Commander: I, _____, do hereby affirm that the above SAR Color Guardsman _____, qualifies for the Silver Color Guard Medal, and do hereby authorize him to purchase and wear the aforementioned Medal.

National Merchandise: Rec'd by _____; Date Rec'd _____; Medal Sent _____

