

# STANDARD ELEMENTS OF FLAG CEREMONIES

A flag ceremony may be done in any manner, as long as it is done in good taste and follows proper flag etiquette. One of the main reasons for doing a Flag Ceremony is to give you a way to express loyalty to your country. It may include as many girls as needed for the size of the flag, etc. Color guards do not take part in the ceremony (pledges, oaths, songs, or salute). They stand at attention through the proceedings.

***When raising and lowering the flag on a flag pole-*** Raise the flag briskly, lower it slowly.

***When to greet the flag (By salute or hand over heart):***

- You see it raised or lowered
- You pass it or it passes you
- When reciting the Pledge of Allegiance
- During the National Anthem

***How to carry the flag-*** Always carry the flag aloft and flying free. Never dip the flag for anything or anyone.

**FLAG BEARER:** The person who carries the flag - one flag per person. Hold the staff at a slight angle in front of the body, or hold the folded Flag in front of the body at waist level. The Flag Bearer stands silent and at attention throughout the ceremony and does not repeat the Pledge of Allegiance nor sing the National Anthem.

**COLOR GUARD:** They guard the honor of the flag and watch to see that the Flag does not touch the ground. They stand behind the Flag bearer or to each side if in a line of more than one flag. Two per flag is traditional, but any number may be used. They stand silent and at attention throughout the ceremony and do not repeat the Pledge of Allegiance nor sing the National Anthem.

**COLOR GUARD COMMANDER:** The designated girl who “calls out” the parts of the ceremony. Stands in front and to one side of audience.

Caller Commands:

**“Color Guard, Attention.”** (Flag Bearers stand abreast with the U.S. Flag Bearer on the right. The Color Guards for abreast or behind the Flag Bearers.)

**“Troop, Attention.”**

**“Troop, Salute.”**

**“Audience, please rise.. Those not in uniform, please place your right hand over your heart. Please remove your hats.”**

**“Color Guard, Forward, March.”**  
(Wait for Color Guard to reach the front position.)

**“Color Guard, Halt!”**

**“Color Guard, Advance the Colors!”**  
(The U.S. Flag Bearer crosses from the right side of the aisle to the leftmost flag stand, and faces the audience. Immediately after the U.S. flag passes the Troop



## POSTING THE COLORS

Flag Bearer, the Troop flag crosses from the left side of the aisle to the rightmost flag stand, and faces the audience. The Color Guards follow the flag they are guarding and come to attention at the outside of the Flag Bearers, and facing the audience.)

**"Color Guard, Prepare to post the colors."** (The Flag Bearers hover the flag poles over the hole in the flag stands and waits for the command to post the colors.)

**"Color Guard, Post the Colors."** (Both, or all, flags should be placed in the stands at the same time. There should be one thump. Immediately, the Flag Bearers grasp the flags with both hands and pulls flag out to both sides of the pole to display the flag for a silent count of about three seconds and then the Flag Bearers come back to the position of attention.)

**"Color Guard, Salute."** (Color Guard holds salute until the Pledge is done.)

**"Please recite the Pledge of Allegiance!"**

**"Ready, Two!"** (All salutes are dropped.)

**"AHG Sign!"**

(Everyone, except Color Guard, makes the AHG Sign.)

**"Please join us in reciting American Heritage Girls Oath. *I promise to love God, cherish my family, honor my country, and serve in my community.***

**Please join us in reciting the American Heritage Girls Creed.**

***As an American Heritage Girl, I promise to be: Compassionate, Helpful, Honest, Loyal, Perseverant, Pure, Resourceful, Respectful, Responsible, and Reverent."***

**"Ready, Two!"** (AHG Sign is dropped.)

**"Color Guard, Reform."** (The Flag Bearers step out and the Color Guard follows them as they march back to the front position.)

**"Color Guard, Forward, March."**

**"Color Guard, Halt."**

**"Please join in prayer..."**

**"Color Guard, Dismissed. Troop, At Ease."**

**"Audience, Please be seated!"**

## RETIRING THE COLORS

**"Color Guard, Attention. Troop, Attention"**

**"Audience, Please rise for the retiring of the Colors."**

**"Color Guard, Forward March."** (Wait until the Color Guard reaches the front position before giving the next command.)

**"Color Guard, Halt."**

**"Color Guard, Advance."** (U.S. Flag Bearer crosses from the right side of the aisle to the leftmost flag stand, and faces the audience. Immediately after the U.S. flag bearer passes the Troop Flag Bearer, the Troop flag Bearer crosses from the left side of the aisle to the rightmost flag stand, and faces the audience. The U.S. flag Color Guard crosses from the right side of the aisle to the outside of the U.S. Flag Bearer, and the Troop flag Color Guard crosses from the left side of the aisle to the outside of the Troop flag Bearer. Both Color Guards face the audience.)

**"Color Guard, Salute."** (The Color Guard renders honors to the Colors.)

**"Color Guard, Prepare to Retire the Colors."**  
(Flag Bearers take hold of their flags with their hand in correct position for carrying the flags, and waits for the next command.)

**"Retire the Colors."** (Both, or all, flags should be pulled out of the flag stands and brought up immediately, in a smooth motion, to the carry position.)

**"Troop salute. Those not in uniform, please place your right hand over your heart."**

**"Color Guard, Reform."** (Flag Bearers should always turn to their left when turning around in order for the U.S. flag to always be on its own right. Wait for Color Guard to return to formation at the front position.)

**"Color Guard, Forward, March."** (Flag Bearers step out and the Color Guard follows behind as they march to the **rear of the audience.**)

**"Color Guard, Halt."**

**"Troop, Two."** (All salutes are dropped.)

**"Please bow your heads and join in prayer...."**

**"Color Guard, Dismissed."** (No commands are given, but the flags should immediately be secured and placed back in storage, whether they are rolled on the poles or removed from the poles and folded.)

**"Audience, thank you for joining us."**