

COMMANDS FOR A FLAG CEREMONY PRESENTING THE COLORS

This is a fairly detailed command sequence. Some of these steps can be omitted, or "assumed" [the Color Guard does multiple steps from one command.] These can also be made more detailed, as in:

"Prepare to... [post colors &etc]."

Remember that there is NOT any "one correct way" to run a flag ceremony. If it's done with respect, and the flags end up where they should, then you did it correctly.

Bold type is said by the Color Guard Commander.
Italics are notes as to what actions follow the command.

"Please stand for the presentation of the Colors."

--Said before flags enter the room or begin motion.

"Audience Attention"

"Scouts, Attention."

--All Scouts stand at attention.

"Color Guard, Attention."

--The term "Color Guard" includes the both the Color Guard and the Flag Bearers during a flag ceremony.

"Color Guard, Advance."

--Flag Bearers & Color Guard advance to stage or flag pole, U.S. Flag is first in line or on it's own right.

"Scouts, Salute."

--This should be said as the flags appear or begin to move. The salute should be held until the Color Guard Commander releases it.

--The Color Guard Commander and Scouts salute. Those not in uniform place their right hand over their heart.

"Color Guard, Halt."

-- The Flag Bearers & Color Guard stand at attention. The Flag Bearers are still holding the flags.

"Color Guard, Cross-over."

-- The Flag Bearers cross or change position, switching the U. S. Flag from the audience's right to the speaker's right. The U. S. Flag should cross first.

"Will the audience please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance."

-- Color Guard does not salute or recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Nor do they sing the National Anthem. They stand at attention and guard the flags.

-- Some Flag Ceremonies state that the Commander should just start saying the Pledge, without announcing it, and the audience will join in.

"Two"

-- After completion of the Pledge, Color Guard Commander gives the Command "Two." Upon this command, scouts lower their arm smartly to their side from the salute, but remain at attention.

-- A salute has 2 steps: the first step is the gesture, the second step [two] is the release of the gesture.

"Color Guard, Post the Colors."

-- The Flag Bearers place the flags into the stands or raise the flags up the poles.

"Color Guard, Honor Your Colors"

-- Once the flags are posted into the flag stands, or properly raised, the Flag Bearers and Color Guard step back, salute the flag and then stand at attention.

"Color Guard, Reform Ranks."

"Color Guard, About Face"

"Color Guard, Forward."

"Color Guard, Halt."

"Color Guard, At Ease."

"Audience, At Ease... you may be seated."

COMMANDS FOR A FLAG CEREMONY RETIRING THE COLORS

This is a fairly detailed command sequence. Some of these steps can be omitted, or "assumed" [the Color Guard does multiple steps from one command.] These can also be made more detailed, as in:

"Prepare to... [post colors &etc]."

Remember that there is NOT any "one correct way" to run a flag ceremony. If it's done with respect, and the flags end up where they should, then you did it correctly.

Bold type is said by the Color Guard Commander.
Italics are notes as to what actions follow the command.

"Please stand for the retiring of the Colors."

"Audience, Attention."

"Scouts, Attention."

-- All Scouts stand at attention.

"Color Guard, Attention."

-- The term "Color Guard" includes the both the Color Guard and the Flag Bearers during a flag ceremony.

"Color Guard, Advance."

-- Flag Bearers & Color Guard advance to stage or flag pole.

"Color Guard, Halt."

"Color Guard, Honor Your Colors"

-- The Flag Bearers and Color Guard salute the flag and then return to attention.

"Scouts, Salute."

-- The Color Guard Commander and Scouts salute. Those not in uniform place their right hand over their heart.

-- The salute should be held until the Color Guard Commander releases it.

-- The Flag Bearers & Color Guard do not salute at this point.

"Color Guard, Retrieve the Colors."

-- The Flag Bearers remove the flags from the stands or lower the flags on the poles.

-- If flags are on a pole, this command would include removing the flags from the halyards, and possibly folding the flags.

-- I found no mention of what to do with State or other flags. They should obviously be folded, but I don't know if the tri-fold is reserved for the U.S. Flag or not. Some may find it disrespectful to fold other flags in that manner.

"Color Guard, Reform Ranks."

"Color Guard, About Face"

"Color Guard, Forward."

-- The U. S. Flag NEVER "retreats" during a flag ceremony.

"Color Guard, Halt."

"Color Guard, Dismissed."

"Two"

"Scouts and Audience, Dismissed"