

Message to the Guard

Nr. 6

April 3rd, 2023

Subject: Training Workshops

Guardsmen,

We are off to a strong start this year with ten new recruits who have joined the Guard. Welcome aboard, gentlemen!

I want to bring you up to speed on a few policy items.

First, following up from our “townhall” color guard workshop back in February. A few of you expressed concerns about requesting Certificates of Insurance (COIs) from non-VASSAR color guard participants. I took that input onboard. Wearing my other hat as the VASSAR Insurance Committee Chairman I reached out to several SAR state color guard commanders and arranged mutual COI exchanges – and I now have several on hand. What this means to you is that requesting a COI from another state society is the VASSAR Insurance Committee’s responsibility – not you, the individual Guardsman – however, color guard leadership *must* be informed when non-VASSAR individuals plan to participate in one of our black powder firing events. The earlier we know, the better. The bottom line: if VASSAR doesn’t have a COI on file indicating the individual (or group) who wants to shoot with us, then he (or the group) will not be permitted to do so. Obtaining a COI is relatively easy process.

Please note that the way in which we document color guard related activities in the *Dispatch*, and specifically black powder firing, permits more accurate auditing for the annual VASSAR policy renewal process.

Second, and related to the above, are continuing improvements to our training structure – specifically, the safe handling of firelocks and black powder. Let me review these so you may better understand the foundational aspects as we begin training workshops this month.

- ★ I have designated eight VASSAR Firelock Safety Instructors. They are:
 - Dale E. Corey, Vice-Commander/Adjutant (CJWII)
 - Brett W. Osborn, Color Guard Commander Northern Region (CJWII)
 - John W. Gullion, Color Guard Commander Southwest Region (GWC)
 - Edward K. Thompson, Color Guard Commander Eastern Region (NOR)
 - Kenneth L. Bonner, Color Guard Training Officer (SMJC)
 - William L. Schwetke (CMM)

Marc E. Robinson (CJWII)
Barry F. Schworer (SMJC)

- ★ Firelock training standards established by our Training Officer were reviewed by the Color Guard Committee and approved (see attachment to the cover email). Please take time to look over them as they will be referred to during training workshops.
- ★ The Safety Annexes in our *Color Guard Handbook* were reviewed and approved by the Color Guard Committee (see version 9.1 attached to the cover email). I ask that you read Annexes A, B, C, (and D) carefully.
- ★ I have issued blank Firelock Safety Certification wallet cards to each of the Regional Color Guard Commanders. These will be signed *only* by the Regional Color Guard Commanders (with recommendations from the designated Instructors), and the commanders will maintain records. If you are interested in what the wallet card looks like, see attached JPEG file.
- ★ The following VASSAR color guardsmen are certified safe to handle and fire firelocks (per input from the Regional Color Guard Commanders). This will facilitate record keeping moving forward in our new program, the effective baseline qualification date is January 1, 2023. Obviously, this list will be updated after each training workshop when a guardsman obtains his certification. (Note: If you feel that you should be included on the list, I ask that you contact your respective Regional Color Guard Commander for resolution):

State

State Color Guard Commander – Chris Melhuish (JHQ)

Northern Region

Region Color Guard Commander – Brett Osborn (CJWII)

Ken Bonner (SMJC)

Sean Carrigan (CJWII)

Paul Christensen (CJWII)

David Cook (FR)

Jim Cordes (FR)

Dale Corey (CJWII)

Forrest Crain (FR)

Thomas “Chip” Daniel (CJWII)

Peter Davenport (GM)

Mike Dennis (CMM)

Kelly Ford (CJWII)

John Hamilton (CFL)

Erick Moore (CJWII)
Dennis Parmerter (CJWII)
Allan Phillips (CJWII)
Will Reynolds (CJWII)
Eric Robinson (CJWII)
Marc Robinson (CJWII)
Bill Schwetke (CMM)
Doug Schwetke (CMM)
Barry Schwoerer (SMJC)
Mark Sink (SMJC)
Mike St Jacques (CJWII)

Eastern Region

Region Color Guard Commander – Kimball Thompson (NOR)
Gary Dunaway (WMB)
John Lynch (WMB)

Central Region

Region Color Guard Commander – Gary Hall (DR)
Mark Day (PH)
Mike Geisinger (DR)
Pat Kelly (TJ)
Paul Parish (GDM)

Frontier Region

Region Color Guard Commander – John Gullion (GWC)
Tom Coker (MS)
Fred Gent (GWC)
Mac Johnson (GWC)
Tom Vaughn (GWC)

The VASSAR Color Guard Committee will continue to monitor progress of the training and certification process, and when needed, make improvements.

Safety First!

Yours in Patriotism,

Chris Melhuish
VASSAR CG Commander