

Message to the Guard

Nr. 7

June 9th, 2023

Subject: Color Guard Policy Revisions

Guardsmen,

This is to pass along some policy items that were recently discussed and approved by the VASSAR Color Guard Committee. There are two color guard medal items; and one concerning firelock firing frequency.

Issue #1: The Billy Flora Medal.

The question was posed whether, under the current eligibility requirements, it is too easy to earn the Billy Flora Medal. (25 Billy Flora Medals/Oak Leaf Clusters were awarded in 2022.) The current requirements are:

- Any three of the events listed below (in a year):
 - The Virginia SAR Annual Meeting.
 - The Virginia SAR Semi-Annual Meeting.
 - Any Special Membership Meeting of the Virginia SAR.
 - Any of the designated SAR National Events hosted by the Virginia SAR, including Crossing of the Dan, Raid at Martin's Station, Yorktown Victory Day, Battle of Great Bridge, or any event subsequently so designated.
 - Virginia SAR events declared as state sponsored or designated.
 - Virginia SAR events declared as such by Presidential Initiatives.

The Committee voted to amend the above to reflect the following revision:

- Require at least 6 events, with at least 1 from each of the 3 categories listed below. This would increase if the number of State Events from Presidential Initiatives, or National events that are sponsored by Virginia State Society are counted.
- Categories:
 - Meetings: Annual, Semi-Annual.
 - National: Crossing the Dan, Raid at Martin's Station, Yorktown Monument, Great Bridge.
 - State: Peter Muhlenberg's Last Sermon, Daniel Morgan's Beeline March, Wayne's Crossing, Fairfax Resolves Commemoration, Culpeper Minuteman Muster, Abingdon Muster, Battle of Spencer's Ordinary.

Policy in effect as of June 1st, 2023.

Issue #2: The Color Guard Bronze Medal.

The question was posed about how to make earning the Color Guard Bronze Medal more equitable, given the differences in the VASSAR's event-based system. The current requirements state that:

- A Compatriot must participate in at least 50% of State and/or Chapter events a year, for three years – which do not have to be consecutive.

It was noted that there are 9 VASSAR State level annual events scheduled, not counting State-sponsored National events (which count towards the Silver Color Guard Medal). There is an expectation that Chapters will conduct enough events that would offer sufficient opportunities for a color guardsman's participation.

However, the Committee noted that a redefinition of the minimum requirements may help clarify what VASSAR color guardsmen would need to qualify for the Bronze Medal and present a more equitable criterion for all VASSAR color guardsmen, regardless of regional location, while preserving the intent of the award. The Committee discussion agreed on the following factors:

- Adopt a finite number, vice percentage criterion.
- The minimum number of events should be at least six (6) State/Chapter events in a year, for three years.
- The three-year period requirement to remain unchanged.

The Committee voted to amend the current Color Guard Bronze Medal from participating in at least 50% State/Chapter level events to a fixed annual minimum number (six).

If you have questions specific to your own progress towards obtaining these awards, please contact the VASSAR Color Guard Adjutant, Dale Corey at dale.corey@comcast.net

Issue #3: Firelock Firing Frequency.

The question was posed about defining an effective firelock firing frequency to maintain proficiency among VASSAR color guardsmen who are certified safe to handle and fire black powder.

Currently, on designation from one of the approved VASSAR CG Instructors (reference *Message to the Guard* #6) a VASSAR guardsman is considered safe to

handle and fire black powder for one year. However, the Committee noted that to maintain proficiency, a certified guardsman should participate in controlled black powder firing events periodically during the year. These should be conducted in a static line formation (i.e., like that used in VASSAR firing volleys), to reinforce correct sequence, timing, and safety awareness.

The Committee voted to reflect the following:

- A certified guardsman should:
 - Participate in four (4) firing events per calendar year, one of which must be at a color guard workshop.

Policy in effect as of June 1st, 2023.

Safety first!

Yours in Patriotism,

Chris Melhuish
VASSAR CG Commander