



# **THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

## COLOR GUARD STANDARD PRACTICE AND REFERENCE HANDBOOK



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## Purpose

The *Virginia SAR (VASSAR) Color Guard Standard Practice and Reference Handbook* provides information and guidance to chapter color guard (CG) leaders and members of the Virginia CG. This amplifies the current *NSSAR Color Guard Handbook*. The senior CG member will always be in command and take responsibility for the conduct of the CG. This material is guidance except for flag protocol, which is subject to U.S. Code. **Adherence to correct safety procedures is mandatory.**

The manager/editor of this handbook is Compatriot Chris Melhuish of the Jamestown HQ Chapter. Suggestions or corrections should be brought to his attention at: [CAMelhuish@aol.com](mailto:CAMelhuish@aol.com)

The VASSAR Color Guard Safety Officer is Compatriot Paul Christensen of the Colonel James Wood II Chapter. Any questions concerning the safety annexes of this Handbook should be brought to his attention at: [pchristensen3@mac.com](mailto:pchristensen3@mac.com).

## Standard Virginia SAR Color Guard

The standard minimum composition of a Virginia SAR CG consists of four SAR compatriots. Two will be designated as color bearers and the other two as color guards (hereafter referred to as 'musketmen'). The composition of a CG may be expanded as necessary to include additional color bearers (state and organizational flags). In this case, it may be more practicable for the CG commander to be separate from the core CG formation to provide the best oversight.

## Use of Commands

Whether to give contemporary, period, or 'hybrid' commands to a color guard is debatable. In general, the VASSAR preference is to use modern commands as described in this handbook and use period commands where period weapons are fired. The insertion of period commands such as 'Advance Arms' and 'Support Arms' are noted where appropriate. However, if a color guard consists of period re-enactors and is proficient in period drill, then period commands may be preferable. This handbook is mindful of the fact that the VASSAR color guard represents a civilian heritage society, not a particular reenacting group, and the potential that not all VASSAR CG members are conversant with reenacting conventions and details. In any event, the color guard commander will determine which drill commands to employ and then discuss with the color guard. This may require a brief review of the commands that will be given to ensure that the color guard understands what will be expected. The overall intent is to keep things simple and consistent with best practice.

## Flag Precedence

The National, state, and organizational flags the color guard carries are called the Colors. When used singly, the term Color refers to the National flag.<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with U.S. Flag Code, and as amplified by the *NSSAR Color Guard Handbook*, the National Color (i.e., U.S. 50-star flag) will always be carried and posted to the right of any flag or flags carried (e.g., the state flag or the SAR flag).<sup>2</sup> If a period (historic) U.S. flag is to be carried in addition to the current 50-star flag, it will be carried immediately next in precedence to the 50-star flag.<sup>3</sup> If more than one historic U.S. flag is carried, the order of precedence shall be as noted in the *NSSAR Color Guard Handbook* (i.e., the Hopkinson flag takes precedence over the Betsy Ross flag).<sup>4</sup> See Figure 1: *Correct Positions of Displaying Flags*.

On rare occasions where a foreign national flag is to be displayed, it shall be carried and posted in deference to the U.S. 50-star flag, that is, to the immediate left of the U.S. flag. If carried in a parade, the appropriate protocol is for the foreign flag to be carried separately and with its own color guardsmen flanking it.<sup>5</sup> Consideration should be given to displaying period versus contemporary national flags. For example, if the color guard carries the U.S. 50-star flag in a parade, the most proper French flag should be the modern French Tricolor. If the pre-French revolution Bourbon White Fleur-de-Lis flag is to be carried instead, then the appropriate U.S. counterpart would be a period U.S. national flag.



**Figure 1: Correct Positions of Displaying Flags**

<sup>1</sup> Per U.S. Army *Drill and Ceremonies Manual*, TC 3-21.5.

<sup>2</sup> Title 4 U. S. Code §6 refers.

<sup>3</sup> *NSSAR Color Guard Handbook*, p.9.

<sup>4</sup> *NSSAR Color Guard Handbook*, p.9.

<sup>5</sup> Per U.S. Marine Corps *Drill and Ceremonies Manual*, paragraph 7004.5.

## CG Commander's Advance Preparations

- *Liaise with the event coordinator:* The CG commander will discuss CG support with the event coordinator. This will include how the Colors will be paraded, posted, and retrieved, music (live or recorded), etc. Other details, such as the timing of the National Anthem and/or the Pledge of Allegiance, etc., will be discussed. Ideally, advance preparations should occur before the date to ensure the event coordinator's schedule of events is as seamless as possible.
- *Liaise with other participating organizations (as applicable):* The CG commander will determine expectations if participation with the SAR CG is desired.
- *Site safety review:* The CG commander must evaluate the event site safety (obstructions, weather, topography, need for road guards, etc.). If necessary, the CG commander has the authority to modify or cancel CG participation in an event if he deems the situation unsafe (e.g., proximity of lightning during an outdoor event).
- *Muster CG members:* The CG commander will muster the CG members at a mutually agreed time before the ceremony commences. He will verify adequate support for the event (numbers of color bearers and musketmen), adjust plans as necessary, and keep the event coordinator informed.
- *Conduct weapons safety check:* The CG commander must ensure that a safety check of all firearms is conducted in accordance with Annex B (Safety Checklist) of this handbook. This may be delegated to the VASSAR CG Safety Officer.
- *Check CG uniforms and related CG gear:* The CG commander will inspect CG participants' uniforms and related CG gear. This will include white gloves for those wearing regimental uniform; proper lay of flag harnesses; bayonet and cartridge box straps; proper alignment of tricorns; and adjustment of flagpoles to ensure proper height alignment (all set at an equal height, including the U.S. flagpole).
- *Brief the CG on the scheme of maneuver:* The CG commander will brief the CG on the planned movement of the CG during the event. He will review verbal commands with members of the CG to ensure familiarity with the terminology—essential if non-SAR CG members are included in the CG.
- *Conduct a walk-through with the CG:* The CG commander should rehearse the CG's planned movement before the event commences to ensure all members of the CG understand their roles and movements. The walk-through is important and should always be performed whenever possible.
- *Assess special needs:* The CG commander will assess any special needs of any CG participants.
- *Confirm documentation arrangements:* The CG commander will ensure, where feasible, that arrangements for photographs of the CG's participation are in place prior to the event. Photographs will be submitted after the event to the Virginia SAR CG

commander, or his designated representative. The CG commander may designate someone to record the names of CG participants.

- *Communicate to the event coordinator when the CG is ready:* This is usually accomplished by a prearranged signal (e.g., unsheathing of the CG commander's sword, or by calling the CG to 'Attention').
- The CG commander should consider delegating some of the above responsibilities – such as weapon safety checks – to appropriately trained members of the CG. This frees up the CG commander to allow him to maintain better overall situational awareness.

## Indoor Ceremonies

Indoor ceremonies typically involve the CG parading the Colors. The Colors may or may not be posted. For example, if flagpole stands are not available, or if a U.S. flag is already in place (properly, to the speaker's right), then posting the Colors may be omitted. If the Colors are posted, there is no requirement to retrieve them before the event concludes, and they may be left in the stands. Sometimes this arrangement offers a backdrop for post-event photographs, as desired. Bayonets will not be fixed for indoor events. For events conducted in a religious place of worship, the CG commander should ascertain if carrying arms is permissible or not and adjust the CG composition accordingly. Generally, carrying arms in places of worship is not an issue, however, it should be noted that the Military Services do not parade armed CGs in places of worship. Finally, the CG commander should be attentive to any overhead obstructions such as beams, light fixtures, etc., and ensure the CG participants are fully briefed on their location. If necessary, Colors and firelocks can be carried at the 'Trail'.

## Outdoor Ceremonies

Outdoor ceremonies generally offer more room to maneuver the CG. The CG commander should be sensitive to practical issues involving outdoor activities. The most obvious is the weather and temperature. It does not take long for a guardsman in full woolen regimental uniform to overheat in an outdoor ceremony, particularly if made to stand in full sun during a long ceremony. CG commanders will review the event program to determine how long the CG may be required to stand, and if necessary, consult with the event coordinator to modify the CG's movements. When lightning is near, the CG commander should suspend CG participation.

### Street Parades

Parades present one of the most visible and colorful events for VASSAR CG participation. The CG commander needs to be mindful that the CG is under public scrutiny. He should be attentive to details such as uniform flagpole height, proper lay of harnesses and straps, uniforms, and the correct flag precedence.

The basic marching unit is the CG itself. This is bounded in size by the number of participating color bearers and musketeers. The CG commander is solely responsible for this unit. Other

components may also form up around the CG unit. A SAR dignitary component (that may include the NSSAR President General) will march six paces in front of the CG. A second unit consisting of uniformed guardsmen carrying flags and firelocks may be employed. This unit is called the Honor Guard and will be run by the Honor Guard commander. The Honor Guard shall march six paces behind the CG.

- If the NSSAR President General is marching at the head of the SAR unit, his personal flag shall be carried 1<sup>1/2</sup> paces to his rear and 1 pace to his right. The personal flag bearer will dip this flag when EYES RIGHT/LEFT commands are given.

The CG commander should review the parade route in advance and being mindful of anyone in his CG that may require special needs, or physical limitations. He shall note any overhead obstructions that might interfere with the carrying of the Colors and muskets carried at 'Shoulder Arms'. Equipping the CG with harnesses to carry flags is strongly encouraged. The CG commander should also review the drill commands of SUPPORT ARMS and ADVANCE ARMS, and practice these with the CG musketmen prior to the parade step-off.

- It can be challenging to establish a regular measured marching step. As noted later in this handbook, the preferred cadence is the 'Common Step', which is 75 paces to the minute. More importantly, the length of stride needs to take into consideration the different heights of guardsmen. Therefore, taking a slightly shorter step will help keep the unit aligned. The CG commander should concentrate on maintaining a steady and regular pace. Guardsmen shall refrain from stamping feet while marching. None of the U.S. military services do this.
- In cases where the size of the marching unit is large, the CG commander may deputize a knowledgeable and experienced member present to assist in marshalling the group into correct marching order.
- The CG commander should ensure that the interval between guardsmen is 'Close', not 'Normal'. This will help keep ranks in line during the parade.
- Bayonets are fixed in formation before the parade commences. Bayonets will be unfixed on completion of the parade and while guardsmen are still in formation.

Standard CG commands used during the parade include:

**ATTENTION:** Color guard comes to attention, stands with heels about two inches apart. Color bearers will hold their flags at their right side with the bottom of the flagpole resting on the ground next to the right foot. Musketmen will assume the same position but with the butt of their firelocks resting on the ground next to the right foot.

**CARRY ARMS:** Color bearers hoist the flagpoles in one movement and insert the bottom of the flagpole into the flag harness. The right hand grasps the flagpole at eye level; the left hand drops to the left side. If flag harnesses are not used the left hand grasps the bottom of the

flagpole. In windy weather, both hands may grasp the flagpole at eye level (only if flag harnesses are used). Musketmen shall go to 'Shoulder Arms' when CARRY ARMS is ordered.

**FIX BAYONETS:** Formally, the command to FIX BAYONETS is given from the 'Shoulder Arms' position. On completion, the guardsmen will have their closed right palm in front of the musket barrel, right forearm parallel to the ground. The next command will be SHOULDER ARMS, when muskets return to the 'Shoulder Arms' position.

**MARK TIME MARCH:** All start this movement with the left foot. Without moving their heads, CG members glance down to ensure steps are synchronized. The MARK TIME MARCH command may be omitted by the CG commander if desired.

**FORWARD MARCH:** The CG will march forward, stepping off with the left foot. Arms are not swung, but instead kept loosely at the sides with fingers extended, not curled.

**ADVANCE ARMS:** This command is given from the 'Shoulder Arms' position and is a drill movement in four counts. On completion the musket is carried on the right side with the lock facing to the right, and the fingers of the right hand curled around the stock and trigger guard.<sup>6</sup> The command after ADVANCE ARMS is SHOULDER ARMS and is a drill movement in four counts to return to the shoulder arms position.

**SUPPORT ARMS:** As with ADVANCE ARMS this command is given from the 'Shoulder Arms' position and is a drill movement in two counts. On completion, the left arm is folded horizontally across the body, parallel to the ground, with the musket's lock resting in the crook of the elbow. The right arm is folded under the left, with the right hand grasping the stock under the trigger guard (i.e., the swell).<sup>7</sup> The command after SUPPORT ARMS is SHOULDER ARMS and is a drill movement in two counts to return to the shoulder arms position.

**EYES RIGHT/LEFT:** The command is given when the front of the marching unit is six paces from the Reviewing Official. Everyone except the guardsmen in the inboard column closest to the Reviewing Official executes an 'Eyes Right or Left', which involves moving the head to the direction indicated.<sup>8</sup>

All flags -- except for the U.S. 50-star flag, any historic U.S. flags, and Foreign national flags -- will be dipped.

Compatriots marching in formation do not render salutes.

Sword salutes are carried out per modern sword drill, going from the 'Carry' to 'Present Arms'. Note: Hand salutes are not given in addition to a sword salute; the left hand is kept by the side.

Musketmen remain at 'Shoulder Arms' or 'Advance Arms', but not at 'Support Arms'.

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<sup>6</sup> Peterkin's *The Exercise of Arms in the Continental Infantry*, Chapter VIII

<sup>7</sup> Peterkin, Chapter IX.

<sup>8</sup> The Sea Service's policy states the Color Bearer carrying the National Color does not move his head. This differs from U.S. Army policy.



A Guardsman carrying a spontoon/halberd/pike will execute period-correct drill and salutes with this weapon.<sup>9</sup>

If the SAR marching unit has a group of VIPs marching in front of the CG (for example, the President General) then that group will decide how their members will salute the Reviewing Official (i.e., hand salute, or tipping the tricorn, or sword salute).

**READY FRONT:** The command will be given when the last rank of the marching unit is six paces past the Reviewing Official. All flags will be raised vertically. Drawn swords will go to the 'Carry' position.

**HALT:** To halt from marching, the command is HALT, given as either foot strikes the ground. On the command HALT one additional step is taken then the trailing foot is brought smartly alongside the leading foot. The CG formation will stand at 'Attention' waiting for the next command.

**UNFIX BAYONETS:** The command UNFIX BAYONETS is normally given from the 'Shoulder Arms' position. On completion, the guardsmen will have their closed right palm in front of the musket barrel, right forearm parallel to the ground. The next command will be SHOULDER ARMS, when muskets return to the 'Shoulder Arms' position.

**ORDER ARMS:** From 'Shoulder Arms' with the right hand, reach across and grasp the musket at the swell above the lock. Lower the musket while turning the lock to the right and so the butt of the musket comes to rest to the right of the right foot.

**FALL OUT:** The CG members will relax and retire as directed.

## Color Guard Standard Commands

The following portion of this handbook deals with standard commands to be used by the VASSAR CG Commander, where feasible. In consonance with the *NSSAR Color Guard Handbook*, these commands are not prescriptive. Individual CG units also are free to use commands authentic to the Revolutionary War period, if the overall effect is professional and dignified.<sup>10</sup> The commands articulated in this handbook are contemporary in the interest of simplicity. Given that the majority of SAR CG period uniforms are not related to the Sea Services (i.e., they are derived from the Continental Army or Militia), contemporary SAR CG commands should therefore be linked to the U.S. Army's *Drill and Ceremonies Manual* (TC 3-21.5), as modified by the *NSSAR Color Guard Handbook*.<sup>11</sup> In appreciation of the fact that some CG members have military backgrounds and who may recall different commands, it should be

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<sup>9</sup> Peterkin, Chapter XIII.

<sup>10</sup> Refer to Peterkin's "*The Exercise of Arms in the Continental Infantry*".

<sup>11</sup> There are differences in some CG related items between the Sea Services (USMC, USN and USCG) and the U.S. Army.

noted that there are minor differences between the Military Services drill manuals relating to Color Guards.



**Figure 2: Basic CG Commands**

## "PARADE THE COLORS" Sequence and Commands

This is generally the easiest and least complicated CG drill to perform. The Colors are paraded in front of an audience and remain through the playing of the National Anthem, Pledge of Allegiance (if part of the program), and Invocation. On completion of the opening activities, the Colors are then marched off. The order to the CG commander is given as **COLOR GUARD COMMANDER, PARADE [OR ADVANCE] THE COLORS!** The CG Commander then sequences through the following commands:

**ATTENTION:** Color guard comes to attention, stands with heels about two inches apart. Color Bearers will hold their flags at their right side with the bottom of the flagpole resting on the ground next to the right foot. Musketmen assume the same position but with the butt of their firelocks resting on the ground next to the right foot.

**CARRY ARMS:** Color Bearers hoist the flagpoles in one movement and insert the bottom of the flagpole into the flag harness. The right hand grasps the flagpole at eye level, the left hand drops to the left side. If flag harnesses are not used the left hand grasps the bottom of the

flagpole. In windy weather, both hands may grasp the flagpole at eye level (only if flag harnesses are used). Musketmen go to 'Shoulder Arms' when CARRY ARMS is ordered.

**MARK TIME MARCH:** All start this movement with the left foot. Without moving their heads, CG members glance down to ensure steps are synchronized. This drill movement may be omitted if the CG Commander opts to go directly to 'forward march'.

**FORWARD MARCH:** The CG will march forward, stepping off with the left foot.

**MARK TIME MARCH:** The CG immediately steps in place until the order HALT is given.

**HALT:** To halt from marching, the command is HALT, given as either foot strikes the ground. On the command HALT one additional step is taken then the trailing foot is brought smartly alongside the leading foot. The CG formation will stand at 'Attention' waiting for the next command.

**LEFT/RIGHT FACE:** The CG will perform a left/right facing turn towards the viewers. Heels are not clicked, and feet are not stamped.

**PRESENT ARMS:** All flag poles, except those carrying U.S. flags – 50-star and historic, are inclined to a 45-degree angle. Musketmen go to 'Present Arms' in a three-count movement. If carrying a sword, the CG commander will render the proper sword salute.

**ORDER ARMS:** The Color bearers will raise their flags to the vertical position. Musketmen will return to the 'Shoulder Arms' position. Sword bearers will return their swords to the 'Carry' position. Note: This command is directly cited from US Army's TC 3-21.5 *Drill and Ceremonies Manual*, and it is understood that the weapon bearers go to the "Shoulder Arms" position, and the Colors to the "Carry". However, since this may cause confusion with some CG members, the CG commander may choose to use the less ambiguous command SHOULDER ARMS instead. In any event, the CG should be briefed ahead of time what the commands will be.

**LEFT/RIGHT FACE:** The CG will face left/right to revert from line to column formation.

**MARK TIME MARCH:** The CG formation will stand, stepping in place.

**FORWARD MARCH:** The CG will march forward until the CG commander issues the next command which will usually be HALT.

**HALT:** To halt from marching, the command is HALT, given as either foot strikes the ground. On the command HALT one additional step is taken then the trailing foot is brought smartly alongside the leading foot. The CG formation will stand at 'Attention' waiting for the next command.

**FALL OUT:** The CG members will relax and retire as directed.

## "POST THE COLORS" Sequence and Commands

In this drill, the Colors are presented in front of the audience after the Invocation and remain through the playing of the National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance (if both are part of the

program). On completion of the Pledge of Allegiance and before the SAR Pledge, the flags are posted to their respective flag stands or stakes behind, or to the right of, the speaker.

The order to the CG commander is given as **COLOR GUARD COMMANDER, POST THE COLORS!** The CG commander then sequences through the following commands:

**ATTENTION:** Color guard comes to attention, stands with heels about two inches apart. Color Bearers will hold their flags at their right side with the bottom of the flagpole resting on the ground next to the right foot. Musketmen will assume the same position but with the butt of their firelocks resting on the ground next to the right foot.

**CARRY ARMS:** Color bearers hoist the flagpoles in one movement and insert the bottom of the flagpole into the flag harness. The right hand grasps the flagpole at eye level; the left hand drops to the left side. If flag harnesses are not used, the left hand grasps the bottom of the flagpole. In windy weather, both hands may grasp the flagpole at eye level (only if flag harnesses are used). Musketmen go to 'Shoulder Arms' when CARRY ARMS is ordered.

**MARK TIME MARCH:** All start this movement with the left foot. Without moving their heads, CG members glance down to ensure steps are synchronized. This drill movement may be omitted by the CG commander if desired.

**FORWARD MARCH:** The CG will march forward, stepping off with the left foot.

**MARK TIME MARCH:** The CG immediately steps in place until the order HALT is given.

**HALT:** The order is given when the right foot hits the ground.

**LEFT/RIGHT FACE:** The CG will perform a left/right facing turn towards the viewers. Heels are not clicked.

**PRESENT ARMS:** All flag poles, except those carrying U.S. flags – 50-star and historic, are inclined to a 45-degree angle. Musketmen go to 'Present Arms' in a three-count movement. If carrying a sword, the CG commander will render the proper sword salute.

**ORDER ARMS:** The color bearers will raise their flags to the vertical position. The musketmen will return to the 'Shoulder Arms' position. Sword bearers will return their swords to the 'Carry' position. Note: This command is directly cited from US Army's TC 3-21.5 *Drill and Ceremonies Manual*, and it is understood that the weapon bearers go to the "Shoulder Arms" position, and the Colors to the "Carry". However, since this may cause confusion with some CG members, the CG commander may choose to use the less ambiguous command SHOULDER ARMS instead. In any event, the CG should be briefed ahead of time what the commands will be.

**RIGHT ABOUT FACE:** All members of the CG conduct an 'Right About Face'.<sup>12</sup> It is poor protocol for a CG member to have his back towards the National Color, therefore all must turn to face the Colors.

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<sup>12</sup> US Military Color Guards do not conduct an "About Face", therefore this command varies from Service policy.

**POST THE COLORS:** All color bearers step forward (generally 1-2 paces) and place their flags at the same time<sup>13</sup> into the designated flag stands/stakes. The color bearer carrying the U.S. flag should look up to ensure the Eagle is facing in the proper direction. Without command, all color bearers step back to be aligned with the musketeers who have not moved.

**PRESENT ARMS:** All CG members go to 'Present Arms'. Musketeers go to 'Present Arms' in a three-count movement. Color bearers render a modern (i.e., closed palm) hand salute. However, if agreed by the CG Commander prior to the ceremony, the period salute (raising of the tricorne) may be substituted. In the interest of uniformity, either salute may be given by members of the CG but not both. (Sword salute is rendered if sword is carried and safe to do so.)

**ORDER ARMS:** Musketeers go to 'Shoulder Arms'; Color bearers drop their salutes (tricorne or hand); sword bearer to the 'Carry'. Note: This command is directly cited from US Army's TC 3-21.5 *Drill and Ceremonies Manual*, and it is understood that the weapon bearers go to the "Shoulder Arms" position, and the Colors to the "Carry". However, since this may cause confusion with some CG members, the CG commander may choose to use the less ambiguous command SHOULDER ARMS instead. In any event, the CG should be briefed ahead of time what the commands will be.

**RIGHT/LEFT FACE:** The CG formation do a right/left facing turn.

**MARK TIME MARCH:** The CG steps in place awaiting the next command.

**FORWARD MARCH:** The CG steps off.

**HALT:** To halt from marching, the command is HALT, given as either foot strikes the ground. On the command HALT one additional step is taken then the trailing foot is brought smartly alongside the leading foot. The CG formation will stand at 'Attention' waiting for the next command.

**FALL OUT:** The CG will relax and retire as directed.

## "RETIRE THE COLORS" Sequence of Commands

When the Colors have previously been posted and the event coordinator or CG commander deem it appropriate to formally retire the Colors as part of the overall ceremony, the CG may be directed to retire the Colors. The order to the CG commander is given as **COLOR GUARD COMMANDER, RETIRE THE COLORS!** The CG commander then sequences through the following commands:

**ATTENTION:** Color Guard comes to attention, stands with heels about two inches apart. Musketeers will have the butt of their firelocks resting on the ground next to the right foot.

**SHOULDER ARMS:** Musketeers go to 'Shoulder Arms'.

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<sup>13</sup> Consistent with U.S. Army policy. TC 3-21.5 refers.

**MARK TIME MARCH:** All start this movement with the left foot. Without moving their heads, CG members glance down to ensure steps are synchronized. This movement may be omitted by the CG Commander if desired.

**FORWARD MARCH:** The CG will march forward, stepping off with the left foot.

**MARK TIME MARCH:** The CG immediately steps in place until the order HALT is given.

**HALT:** The order is given when the right foot hits the ground.

**LEFT/RIGHT FACE:** The CG will perform a left/right facing turn towards the Colors. Heels are not clicked.

**PRESENT ARMS:** Musketmen go to 'Present Arms'; color bearers execute a salute (tricorn or hand); sword bearer renders the proper sword salute.

**ORDER ARMS:** Musketmen go to 'Shoulder Arms'; color bearers drop salutes (tricorn or hand); sword bearer goes to the 'Carry'.

**RETRIEVE THE COLORS:** The color bearers step forward; retrieve all flags at the same time; and lift flagpoles vertically into harnesses. The color bearer carrying the U.S. flag should glance up to ensure the Eagle is facing in the correct position.

**LEFT/RIGHT FACE:** The CG will execute a left/right facing turn.

**MARK TIME MARCH:** The CG will step in place awaiting the next command.

**FORWARD MARCH:** The CG will march forward following the CG commander until the next order, which is usually HALT.

**HALT:** To halt from marching, the command is HALT, given as either foot strikes the ground. On the command HALT one additional step is taken then the trailing foot is brought smartly alongside the leading foot. The CG formation will stand at 'Attention' waiting for the next command.

**FALL OUT:** The CG will relax and retire as directed.

## Additional Guidance

- *Cadence:* In line with period instruction, one second will be counted between each motion. For example: 'Present Arms' from 'Shoulder Arms' is a three-count movement.
- *Marching Step:* The Common Step (75 paces to the minute) should be used. Arms are not swung and are instead kept at the side. Feet should not be stamped when marching.
- *Sword Salutes:* Sword salutes are the same as contemporary U.S. military style.
- *Hand Salutes:* No hand salute is given with the sword salute. Hand salutes are the same as contemporary U.S. military style. Per NSSAR guidance the period salute is defined as raising the tricorn slightly and inclining the head (not bowing).

- *Sword Salutes*: Sword drill has remained essentially unchanged since the Revolutionary War. Basic sword commands and movements are simplified as follows<sup>14</sup>:
  - **DRAW SWORD**: Sword is withdrawn from its scabbard with the right hand.
  - **CARRY SWORD**: Back of sword blade rests against the shoulder. Blade is held nearly perpendicular, with the right hand at waist height. Blade should point forward.
  - **PRESENT ARMS**: From the 'Carry', the sword hilt is raised to be even with the face; right elbow tucked into the side; the flat of the blade facing forward, and the blade tilted forward about six inches off the perpendicular. The next movement immediately follows, with the right hand dropping to the right leg; the blade remains facing out, and the finger guard of the sword hilt should rest against the leg. The sword should be pointed slightly to the right, but not extremely so. The sword tip should be about six inches off the ground.
  - **ORDER ARMS**: At ORDER, the sword hilt is rotated down so the blade faces the ground. At ARMS, the sword is brought smoothly to the "Carry" position – being careful to avoid hitting the tricorne.
  - **RETURN SWORD**: Guardsman looks down at the sword sheath and in one movement inserts sword and pushes it home. This is a little different from modern sword drill and is intentionally simplified here. The effect remains the same.
- *Bayonets*: Bayonets will not be fixed for indoor events.
- *'Advance Arms' and 'Support Arms'*: In parades 'Advance Arms' and 'Support Arms' may be ordered for ease in carrying a musket.
- *Special needs accommodation*: The CG commander will make all possible necessary accommodations to enable CG members with special concerns to participate. These may include marching, standing, and other concerns.
- *Acknowledgement of Society Presidents*: When the SAR State President or NSSAR President-General are present at an event with a SAR CG participation, the CG shall form line at a position of 'Attention'. The CG commander will then present himself to the respective President; render a hand or sword salute and request the honor of presenting the CG to the President. The President walks down the line escorted on the unengaged side by the CG commander. The President may either: (1) return to his seat or, (2) take a place of honor at the head of the CG. Note: Orders to the CG will be given by the CG commander throughout the event. Commands given by the President will be addressed to the CG commander, not to the CG. Note: The CG inspection described above may be foregone with the mutual agreement of the President and CG commander.

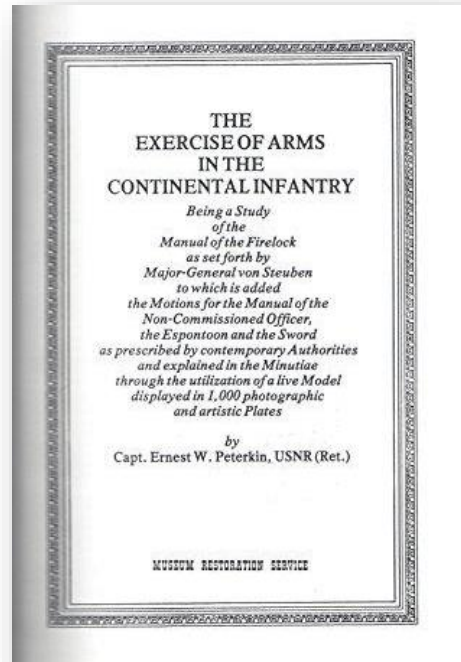
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<sup>14</sup> US Army TC 3-21.5 section F-3

## Period Drill Commands

The following select period drill commands are offered for consideration and are extracted from Peterkin's, *The Exercise of Arms in the Continental Infantry*.

- REST
- ATTENTION
- ORDER – FIRELOCK
- SHOULDER – FIRELOCK
- ADVANCE – ARMS
- TO THE FRONT – MARCH
- OBLIQUELY – TO THE RIGHT/LEFT
- HALT
- PRESENT – ARMS
- TO THE RIGHT/LEFT – FACE
- TO THE RIGHT – ABOUT FACE
- FIX – BAYONET
- UNFIX – BAYONET
- SUPPORT – ARMS
- EASE – ARMS
- SLOPE – ARMS
- TRAIL – ARMS



## Uniforms and Accoutrements

*Color Guard Uniforms:* Period regimental uniform or militia attire, or Native Indian American dress must be worn to obtain CG participation credit towards CG medals. Where circumstances dictate, Compatriots may wear appropriate modern civilian attire (i.e., coat and tie) in a color guard, as the Society is a civilian, not military organization. However, compatriots in modern civilian attire will not accrue credit towards a CG medal. Note: If weapons are to be fired, firing party participants must wear natural fiber, long-sleeved outer garments, or full uniforms, as appropriate to avoid flash burns and melted fabric.



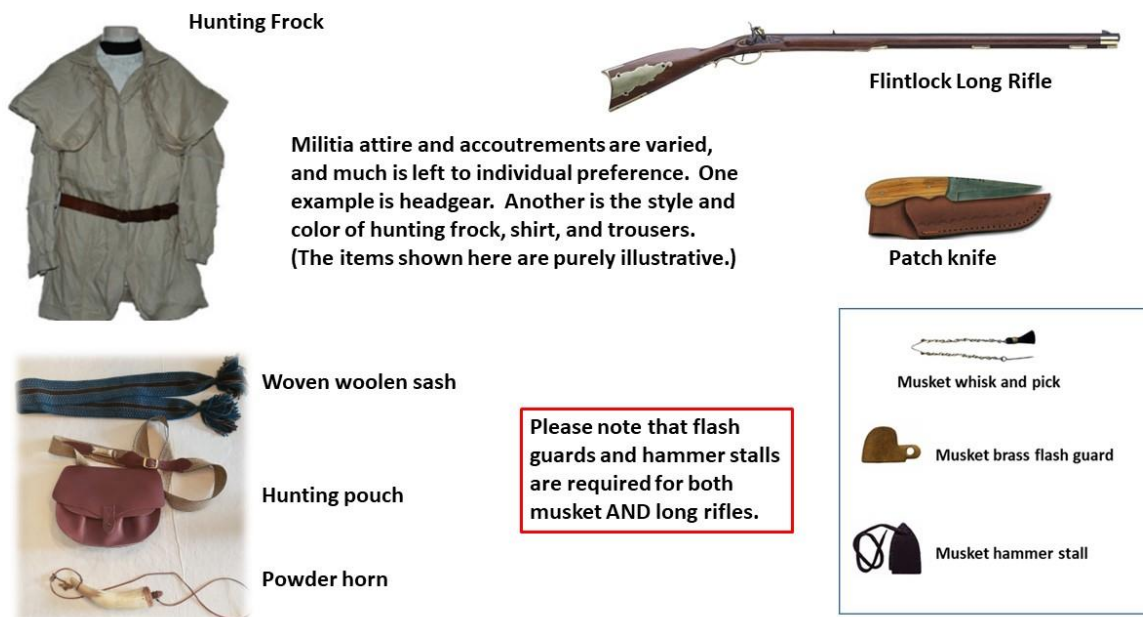


**Figure 3: VASSAR Regimental Uniform**

- *Gloves:* The CG commander will give instructions for the use of gloves. Standardization is important. Usually, it should be all white gloves or none. Militia may wear period gloves or none. Militia should not wear white gloves.
- *Sunglasses:* Sunglasses should not be worn indoors. If needed for medical reasons, they may be worn outdoors.
- *Footwear:* Period footwear is recommended. However, in lieu of period footwear, black slip-on (non-laced) shoes may be used.
- *CG Equipment:* When VASSAR CG equipment is needed, such as flags, stakes, harnesses, etc., the VASSAR CG commander has limited funds available to purchase some equipment. In general, VASSAR Chapters should make every effort to fund their Chapter CG gear.



**Figure 4: VASSAR regimental accoutrements**



**Figure 5: Variation of VASSAR Militia attire and accoutrements**

The selection of militia attire and accoutrements shown in Figure 5 above is purely representational of a wide range of militia attire and accoutrements. Given the range of

acceptable militia headgear, none are displayed here in the interest of brevity. For VASSAR color guard purposes, the same white trimmed black tricorn shown in Figure 3 may be worn, as desired.

A point of clarification: flintlock long rifles **MUST** be equipped with flash guards and hammerstalls. It is appreciated that the installation of a flash guard on some long rifles may be difficult due to the lock mechanism, but still must be accomplished to meet VASSAR firelock safety standards.

## Color Guard Equipment

*U.S. Flag (50-star) Flagpole topping ornament shall be the Eagle.*

- Preferred U.S. flag dimensions: 4' 4" hoist (height) x 5' 6" fly length
- Fringe and cord/tassel are viewed as decorations to the U.S. flag and are therefore optional for civilian CGs like the SAR.<sup>15</sup>

*Historical U.S. Flag(s):* Hopkinson: 15-star, Betsy Ross etc.

- No flag will be larger/taller than the 50-star U.S. flag.
- No cord/tassel or fringe will normally be displayed on U.S. historical flags.<sup>16</sup>

*VA State and Organizational Flags:*

- The flagpole topping ornament for the Virginia SAR is the flat spear point.
- The cord/tassel for the VA State flag is not prescribed. An optional white fringe is available with the matching cord.
- Flag dimensions should not be larger than the U.S. flag.
- Flag should not be carried higher than the U.S. flag.

*Casing Flags:*

- CG flags should be properly stowed in flag cases.

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<sup>15</sup> **"The placing of a fringe on the [U.S.] flag is optional with the person or organization, and no Act of Congress or Executive Order either requires or prohibits the practice...** The fringe on a flag is considered an "honorable enrichment only" and its official use by the Army dates from 1895."

Ref: *"The United States Flag: Federal Law Relating to Display and Associated Questions"*, CRS Report to Congress, April 14, 2008.

<sup>16</sup> The Williamsburg Quartermaster issued fringe and tassels for flags to units in the Fall of 1775.

Flagpole ornaments (Finials)



Web harnesses (various styles)



Wood or aluminum flag poles (must reach, or be extendable to 8')



**Figure 5: Additional CG equipment**

## References

- *NSSAR Color Guard Handbook*: (version dated 12 Sep 2020) provides general information about Color Guards.
- *Title 4 U. S. Code §6: Position and Manner of Display*: “The flag when carried in procession with another flag or flags should be either on the marching right; that is, the flag’s own right, or if there is a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line. When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, the flag of the United States of America should hold a position of superior prominence, in advance of the audience, and in the possession of honor at the clergyman’s or speaker’s right as he faces the audience. Any other flag so displayed should be placed on the left of the clergyman or speaker or to the right of the audience.”
- *Code of Virginia §1-506: Flag of the Commonwealth*: “The flag of the Commonwealth shall be a deep blue field, with a circular white center of the same material. Upon this circle shall be painted or embroidered, to show on both sides alike, the coat of arms of the Commonwealth, as described in §1-500 for the obverse of the great seal of the Commonwealth; and there *may* be (emphasis added) a white fringe on the outer edge,

furthest from the flagstaff. This shall be known and respected as the flag of the 'Commonwealth'."

- U.S. Army, *Drill and Ceremonies Manual*, TC 3-21.5, 2012.
- U.S. Army Color Guard Drill Instructional Videos:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8oZl8ny6r0A>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5fWy4R3W7Y>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GV8p13\\_csSA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GV8p13_csSA)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEDCYbq9qIM>
- U.S. Marine Corps, *Drill and Ceremonies Manual*, MCO P5060.20, 2003.
- Ernest W. Peterkin, *"The Exercise of Arms in the Continental Infantry"*, 1988.

"The Baron Steuben mentioned when he was here that he would settle with your Excellency some Plan as to the Colours. It was intended that every Regiment should have two Colours—one the Standard of the United States which should be the same throughout the Army & the other a Regimental Colour which should vary according to the facings of the Regiments. But it is not yet settled what the Standard of the U. States is. If your Excellency will therefore favor us with your Opinion on the Subject we will report to Congress & request them to establish a Standard & so soon as this is done we will endeavour to get Materials & order a Number made sufficient for the Army. Neither can we tell what should be the Regimental Colours as the Uniforms were by a late resolution of Congress to be settled by your Excellency."

*The Board of War to General Washington, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1779*

## ANNEX A: SAFETY POLICY

### Responsibility

The color guard commander, or a qualified designee, shall be responsible for enforcing all policies as much as practicable; however, each compatriot is ultimately responsible for his own health and safety, including, but not limited to, obtaining personal medical insurance.

It is the compatriot's personal responsibility to be aware of his physical limitations and to excuse himself from events that will exceed his capabilities.

The color guard commander, or his designee, shall be responsible for confirming proper permits for an event have been obtained.

### Policy

#### A. Insurance:

1. VASSAR has General Liability Insurance that covers all its members in good standing, and the VASSAR Color Guard, to include the firing of black powder from muskets and long rifles (but not cannons).

#### B. Training:

1. All compatriots assigned to fire a firelock shall be certified as to their competency by the State Society color guard commander, or his designees, based upon the following criteria:
  - a. Demonstrated knowledge of, and compliance with, the above-stated standards.
  - b. Demonstrated efficiency in safely loading and firing the firelock.

#### C. Firearm(s):

1. As the historical period being portrayed is the American Revolutionary War, only muskets and rifles of that period, including but not limited to the British Brown Bess musket, the French Charleville musket, the Spanish M1752 musket and the American long rifle, are allowed.
2. Only reproductions that are manufactured for black powder shall be fired. Firing original (antique) firelocks is expressly prohibited.
  - a. Firelocks shall have a flash protector and frizzen/hammer cover (i.e., hammerstall).
  - b. Firelocks shall always be pointed in a safe direction. At no time shall a firelock be pointed at another person.
  - c. Firelocks shall remain unloaded until guardsmen are instructed to load.
  - d. A finger shall never be on the trigger unless directed to fire.
  - e. In the case where the firelock has a set trigger installed, this will not be set. This may involve a heavier pull on the trigger, but this is safer than using a set trigger.
  - f. Charged firelocks shall be carried at half-cock.

- g. A safety inspection must be performed prior to and immediately after the event.
- h. The minimum age to fire a firelock is eighteen (18) years.
- i. Members of the public may handle a firelock that has not been fired or has been cleared after a firing, provided the guardsman maintains positive control of the firelock by retaining contact with the firelock or its sling, and the firelock has been inspected to ensure that it is unloaded.

*D. Powder:*

- 1. Powder load shall not exceed 125 grains FFG for muskets, and 90 grains FFG for rifles.
- 2. Powder shall only be kept in paper cartridges, which should be discarded after use. Cartridge paper will not be used as wadding.
- 3. The use of powder horns and/or plastic cartridges shall not be allowed due to the danger of potential static electrical charges that can build on plastic.
- 4. **A ball or other projectile shall never be loaded.**
  - a. Only blank cartridges are used.
  - b. Wadding/patches are never used for color guard purposes.
  - c. Ramrods and/or other objects shall **not be inserted into charged barrels.**
  - d. Loose ball shall not be carried in cartridge boxes or shot pouches. Riflemen shall not be permitted to carry a “speed loader” or bullet board.
- 5. Compatriots participating in a gun salute shall keep the powder cartridges in a leather covered pouch or box with a flap that completely covers the opening. The pouch or box shall be worn externally to the compatriot’s clothing (cartridges shall not be kept in pockets or under coats).

*E. Edged Weapons:*

- 1. All edged weapons, including but not limited to swords, bayonets, and tomahawks/hatchets, shall be kept sheathed until the appropriate time for display.
- 2. At no time will an edged weapon be pointed at an individual.
- 3. Bayonets will only be fixed on muskets during outdoor ceremonies and parades.
- 4. Spontoons, halberds and pikes must be carried in the upright position and only pointed at the ground during a salute.

*F. Personal Safety*

1. Only natural fiber fabrics or leather will be worn if a color guard member is firing, or is next to, a firing member. No gabardine, polyester, or polyester-like material is permitted.
2. Firing participants are recommended to have eye and hearing protection.

*G. Record Retention*

1. Lists of trainers and those trained shall be updated annually.

*H. Accident-Incident Procedures*

1. VASSAR's Accident-Incident procedures should be followed in the event of an incident that warrants reporting. The Accident-Incident Report is located in Annex D of this Handbook.



## ANNEX B: SAFETY CHECKLIST

### **A. Site Safety:**

- Check weather forecasts.
- Ensure a safety observer is appointed.
- Check the event site for hazards and potential obstructions (e.g., low hanging branches, exposed roots, depressions in the ground, etc.).
- If conducting a live fire (i.e., firelock salute) event, ensure:
  - Firing detail line of fire is clear of all personnel for at least 150 feet for 30 degrees on either side of the firing line.
  - That no personnel are closer than 15 feet for the other 300 degrees around the firing line.
  - That an aiming point for the firing detail is designated.
  - Area is free of combustibles (e.g., dried leaves, dried bushes, pine needles, etc.).  
Ensure a portable fire extinguisher is on hand.
  - Local law enforcement notified prior to the event.
  - Local EMT notified prior to the event.

### **B. Firearm Inspection:**

#### *1. Pre-Event:*

The color guard commander, or his designee, shall inspect every firearm brought to the event. **Any firelock failing safety check will be immediately removed from the site and secured.** A firelock failing the safety check shall not be used or carried during the event unless the discrepancy is corrected, and the firelock passes the safety check.

- *Do not allow late arrivals to bypass any of these safety checks.*
- Ensure only blank cartridges are carried by the firing detail.
- Order guardsmen to fall into a single line; firelocks at the 'Order Arms' position.
- Order SHOULDER FIRELOCKS, then OPEN PANS, and SECURE FIRELOCKS. Check that barrels are free of loose material. Then SHOULDER FIRELOCKS.
- Order SEARCH FIRELOCKS (aka "**ping check**") to verify barrels are empty using ramrods. After the barrel is verified by the color guard commander or the safety observer, the commander orders RETURN RAMRODS.
- Order SHOULDER ARMS; then POISE FIRELOCK and place firelocks at half-cock.
- Inspect firelocks to ensure each meet the following:
  - **Flash guard and hammerstall are fitted.**
  - **Half-cock position works properly.**
  - **Flint is firmly secured by leather or lead.**

- Firelock is visually in good material condition (e.g., no missing pins or screws, barrel not cracked, parts fit properly fit together, etc.).
- The use of a visual mark affixed to the firelock's butt (e.g., colored sticker) to mark firelocks passing the safety check is encouraged.

## *2. Post-Event*

- Form guardsmen back in a single line.
- Ensure all muskets are at half-cock and hammerstalls fitted over the hammer.
- Conduct 'Secure Firelocks' followed by 'Search Firelocks' as during pre-event inspection.

## ANNEX C: FIRING PARTY COMMANDS

### Guidance

To minimize confusion between those compatriots who are regular Revolutionary War re-enactors intimately familiar with period musket drill, and compatriots who are not, the safest policy to adopt is one of clarity and standardization. Loading and firing period firelocks is different from contemporary US military rifle volleys at, for example, military funerals. For clarity, when firelocks are to be fired at SAR events every effort will be made employ period (vice contemporary US military) drill commands.

The following commands are derived from Peterkin's *"The Exercise of Arms in the Continental Infantry"*.

**HAVE A CARE:** This informs the detail that the call to 'Attention' is imminent.

**ATTENTION:** Firing party detail comes to 'Attention', stands with heels about two inches apart. Guardsmen will have the butt of their firelocks resting on the ground next to the right foot. All firelocks must be unloaded. Guardsmen will generally be one arm's length apart, and not at close interval. ***The commander and safety observer shall ensure that all firelocks are the half-cock position at this point.*** Guardsmen will be told what their aiming point will be (for example, a distant tree-top) to ensure uniformity of barrel elevation when firing.

**SHOULDER FIRELOCKS:** Guardsmen go to 'Shoulder Firelock'. Hammerstalls should remain on.

**PRIME AND LOAD:** Firelocks are brought to the 'Recover', and with a brief motion, to the 'Prime' position. A blank cartridge is removed from the cartridge box. Guardsmen bite off the top of the paper cartridge and pour a measure of powder into the pan. The hammer is then closed over the pan. Firelocks are then cast about (rotated) so that they are held by the left hand, and barrel pointed up. With the right hand, the remaining powder in the cartridge is poured down the muzzle. The empty paper cartridge is then discarded. Ramrods shall not be drawn and used. The musket then is placed in the 'Shoulder Firelock' position without further command. [This is a visual signal that the firelock is loaded.]

**MAKE READY:** The firelock is brought to the 'Recover'. Hammerstalls are removed. With his right thumb, the guardsman goes to full cock and the index finger stays clear of the trigger.

**TAKE AIM:** The firelock is brought to the firing position and the right foot moved back. The commander will have established a common point of aim so that all the firelocks are at a consistent angle.

**FIRE:** Firelock is fired. The shooter will hold his firelock in the aim position and await the next command.

**PRIME AND LOAD:** The firelock is immediately brought to the 'Prime' position. The firelock is then half-cocked and the sequence above is repeated until all volleys are complete.

On completion of the volley fire the commander orders 'Shoulder Firelock'.

On completion of all firing, the following two safety checks will be performed for all firelocks in the squad. [Note: it is important that the commander and event coordinator discuss before the

event starts the need for a pause in the program to permit the post-firing safety checks to be complete.]

**SECURE FIRELOCK:** From the position of 'Shoulder Firelock', the firelock will be rotated so the barrel points to the ground, and the lock is upside down (facing the ground). This will check to ensure any residual powder will pour out.

**OPEN PAN:** The hammer will be moved fully forward (open) to ensure any powder is cleared from the pan when the firelock is moved to the 'Search Firelock' position.

**SHOULDER FIRELOCK:** Guardsmen go to 'Shoulder Firelock'.

**SEARCH FIRELOCK:** From the position of 'Shoulder Firelock', firelocks will be cast about (rotated) so that they are held by the left hand, , and barrel pointed up. With the right hand, the ramrod is withdrawn, rotated, and inserted into the barrel, but not fully – the tip remains several inches above the base of the barrel. When the inspecting officer passes, the ramrod is released with the right hand and allowed to fall fully. An empty barrel should result in a distinct "ping" being heard. (Note: a distinct "ping" may not be heard if a wooden ramrod is used.) When the inspecting officer is satisfied, the command will be given to RETURN RAMRODS, ensuring that the palm of the hand is not placed over the barrel, and got to 'Shoulder Firelock'.

*Note: If at any time an unsafe situation is identified by ANY member of the firing party detail, the command **CEASE FIRE** will be given in a clear voice – at which point all guardsmen will immediately go to the 'Poise', and will hold this position until the commander issues the next order, for example, SHOULDER FIRELOCK.*

### Misfire Procedures – Flintlocks

#### **FAILURE TO SPARK**

Failure to spark is where the prime fails to ignite – mostly as a result of the flint failing to generate a spark, or the powder fails to ignite even if the flint sparks. A note of caution: very occasionally, the prime flashes and the main charge ignites after a delay. This is called a "hangfire."

If one or more of the firing detail experiences a misfire after the order to fire has been given:

- The firer(s) and/or the safety observer call out "**MISFIRE!**"
- Since the commander will ensure that firelocks are held in the firing position for at least ten seconds, this will address a potential hangfire (delayed firing).
- When directed by the firing detail commander, all firers will return to the 'Prime' position.
- All firers half-cock their firelocks and reattach hammerstalls.
- Individuals who experienced a misfire will quickly check the priming and flint.

- Re-prime, as necessary. The safety observer will ensure that no further black powder is poured down the muzzle of the affected (misfire) firelock.
- All return to the 'Shoulder Firelock' position and await the next order from the firing detail commander.
- The safety observer will monitor the affected firelock to see if it fires on the next order to do so.

## **FLASH IN THE PAN**

Flash in the pan is where the prime flashes but fails to ignite the main charge in the barrel.

If one or more of the firing detail experiences a misfire after the order to fire has been given:

- The firer(s) and/or the safety observer call out **"FLASH IN THE PAN!"**
- Since the commander will ensure that firelocks are held in the firing position for at least ten seconds, this will address a potential hangfire.
- When directed by the firing detail commander, all firers will return to the 'Prime' position.
- All firers half-cock firelocks and attach hammerstalls.
- Individuals who experienced a flash in the pan whisk the pan clear and pick out the touch hole.
- Re-prime. The affected firelock will not have black powder poured down the muzzle (it already has an unfired charge). The safety observer will pay particular attention to this detail.
- All return to the 'Shoulder Firelock' position and await orders from the firing detail commander.
- The safety observer will monitor the affected firelock to see if it fires on the next order to do so.

On completion, the entire firing detail will then proceed with the 'Secure' and 'Search Firelock' post-firing safety checks, with the safety observer paying particular attention to the affected firelock(s) that failed to fire. Each firer will state how many rounds were successfully fired.

The color guard commander shall ensure the firing site is properly policed and used cartridge paper picked up and properly disposed.

## ANNEX D: ACCIDENT-INCIDENT PROCEDURES

### Guidance

In the unlikely event of a serious accident or incident involving the Virginia SAR, the state society has developed an action plan and procedures to deal with the situation. The plan is reviewed annually for accuracy and completeness.

### Objectives

- Provide situational awareness and guidance to key VASSAR leadership about potential or actual incidents involving the Virginia Society in a timely fashion.
- Support VASSAR members directly involved in accidents and/or incidents.
- Manage the crisis.
- Provide timely and comprehensive reports to VASSAR's Insurance Company

### Accident-Incident Reporting

Use the form found on the following page. A digital copy can also be found on the "Resources" tab of the Color Guard pull-down menu in the *Virginia Dispatch*.

This is for a serious accident-incident (e.g., fractured/broken bones, laceration, falls resulting from losing consciousness, dislocations, resuscitation, hospitalization, use of ambulance, musket/edged weapon safety incident, provocative actions, violent protests, etc.).

Accident-Incident forms are not required for minor injuries such as scrapes, bruises, sprains, etc.

The person filling out the form should make a digital copy with a smart phone and email/text the digital copy to the point(s) of contact listed on the VASSAR wallet card issued to guardsmen.

The original completed (signed) form should be mailed as directed by the VASSAR POC.

**PLEASE ENSURE THAT SEVERAL DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEO OF THE INCIDENT ARE TAKEN, IF SAFE AND ABLE TO DO SO.**



# Accident-Incident Report Form

Virginia Society, Sons of the American Revolution

Version: February 2023

1. Date of **Report** (MM/DD/YYYY): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Type:  Accident  Incident  Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. Location: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Date (MM/DD/YYYY): \_\_\_\_\_

5. Time: \_\_\_\_\_ (am or pm)

6. Responsible VASSAR Chapter/Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

POC name : \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Injured or Involved Person(s):

a. \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Name/Addresses of Witnesses (each witness should attach a signed statement of what happened):

a. \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Describe the Incident in Detail: (Note the type of activity taking place at the time of the Incident. Describe any property and/or equipment involved.)

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(Use additional pages as necessary)

**10. Diagram of the Incident:**



**11. Describe emergency medical procedures followed (if applicable):**

Treatment given  First aid  First responders (EMT)  Hospitalization

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**12. Were the Next of Kin Notified?**  Yes  No  Not applicable

How? \_\_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_

By whom? \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**13. Were digital photographs of the incident & site taken? If so, who took them?**

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**14. Was a Police report filed?**  Yes  No **Where can a copy be obtained?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**15. Name of person completing report (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position/Role:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_



## ANNEX E: COLOR GUARD MEDALS

### Background

The *NSSAR Color Guard Handbook*<sup>17</sup> has detailed information about Medals pertaining to Color Guard activities. For VASSAR, these are revised and summarized as follows:

| <b>Award</b>                             | <b>Eligibility Criteria</b>  | <b>Notes</b>  |
|--|--|---|
| <b><i>Bronze CG Medal</i></b>            | <p>Event-based system:<br/>                     In 2023, the VASSAR Color Guard Committee amended the Color Guard Bronze Medal requirements from participating in at least 50% State/Chapter level events to a fixed annual minimum number (six events) per year over three (3) years. The years do not need to be consecutive. A year is any period of twelve (12) consecutive months.</p> <p>Three (3) years of service.</p> | <p>May receive this medal only once. (Oak leaf clusters and ribbons not authorized.)<br/>                     Must participate in uniform.<br/>                     Approved by VASSAR CG Commander.<br/>                     The medal is approved by Virginia State and presented by the Chapter or Virginia State.</p> <p>Therefore, qualifying events must be from the compatriot's primary Chapter and State.</p> <p>The policy is effective 1 January 2024.</p> |
| <b><i>Silver CG Medal</i></b>            | <p>Event-based system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participate in at least three (3) district or national events in each of three years. The years do not need to be consecutive. A year is any period of twelve (12) consecutive months.</li> </ul> <p>Service at District or National levels</p> <p>Three (3) years of service</p>  | <p>Must have earned the Bronze Medal first.<br/>                     May receive this medal only once. (Oak leaf clusters and ribbons not authorized.)</p> <p>Must participate in uniform.</p> <p>Approved by both VSSAR <u>and</u> NSSAR CG Commanders.</p> <p>Presented by District VP General, State President, or by District or State Color Guard Commander.</p>   |
| <b><i>National Von Steuben Medal</i></b> | <p>Event-based system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participate in at least twenty-five (25) District or National events over a five (5) year period. The years do not need to be consecutive. The five years cannot begin any earlier than the approval date of the Silver Color Guard Medal.</li> </ul> <p>Service at District or National levels</p>  | <p>Application form available on SAR website.</p> <p>Must have earned the Silver Color Guard Medal.</p> <p>Approved by both VSSAR <u>and</u> NSSAR CG Commanders.</p>   |

<sup>17</sup> Pages 13-19.

|                            |   |  |
|----------------------------|---|--|
|                            | Five (5) years of service   | Presented by District VP General, State President, or District or State Color Guard Commander  |
| <b>Gold CG Medal</b>       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Color Guardsman of the Year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Three (3) years of service at the National level</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. National CG leadership service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ At least one year as Vice Commander and two years as Commander of the NSSAR CG (or three years as Commander)</li> </ul> </li> </ol> | <p>Must have earned Bronze and Silver Medals first.</p> <p>Awarded to the SAR Color Guardsman of the Year by the President General.</p> <p>Or awarded for National CG leadership service.</p>                                  |
| <b>Molly Pitcher Medal</b> | <p>Event-based system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participate in at least three (3) State, District, or National events in each of three years.</li> <li>○ Participate in qualifying State, District, and National CG events for at least three years. The years do not need to be consecutive. A year is any period of twelve (12) consecutive months.</li> </ul>                | <p>Approved both VASSAR and NSSAR CG Commanders. The husband/male companion must have been awarded the SAR Silver CG medal.</p> <p>Awarded to women who have supported SAR CG at the State, District, and National levels.</p> |

The following Medal, approved by the Virginia SAR Awards Committee in 2021, is added herein and summarized as follows:

| <b>Award</b>             | <b>Eligibility Criteria</b>  | <b>Notes</b>   |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Billy Flora Medal</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Require participation in no less than <u>six (6) events</u>, with at least <u>one from each of the three categories</u> listed below. The criteria shall be met between 1 January and 31 December of any given year. This number of events could increase if the number of State Events from Presidential Initiatives or National events that the Virginia State Society sponsors is increased.</li> <li>2. Categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Meetings</u>: Annual, Semi-Annual, or any special meeting called for Virginia Society SAR membership.</li> <li>○ <u>National</u>: Crossing the Dan, Raid at Martin's Station, Yorktown Days, Great Bridge.</li> <li>○ <u>State</u>: Peter Muhlenberg's Last Sermon, Daniel Morgan's Beeline March, Wayne's Crossing, Fairfax Resolves Commemoration, Culpeper</li> </ul> </li> </ol> | <p>The Virginia SAR Color Guard Medal (Billy Flora Medal) may be awarded to a member of the Virginia SAR or Virginia C.A.R. who participated as a Color Guard Member in at least six (6) of the qualifying events defined in eligibility criteria during a calendar year. The policy is effective January 1, 2024.</p> <p>Approved by the Virginia SAR Color Guard Commander or the Virginia SAR President.</p> <p>Presented by Virginia SAR Color Guard Commander, Virginia SAR President, or his representative.</p> <p>Awarded to individuals demonstrating exceptional service to the Virginia SAR Color</p> |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <p>Minuteman Muster, Abingdon Muster, Battle of Spencer's Ordinary. Events declared State Events by Presidential Initiative or ExCom direction.</p> <p>Awarded to Virginia State Color Guardsman of the Year.</p> | <p>Guard. May be awarded posthumously.</p> <p>Oak Leaf Clusters shall be awarded in lieu of an additional medal.</p> |
|--|---|--|

## ANNEX F: VASSAR COLOR GUARD ORGANIZATION

### The VASSAR Color Guard Committee

The following is extracted from the VASSAR Official Handbook, Volume III, *Procedures and Committees* (update FEB 2020). [*Emphasis added.*]

(1) *The Color Guard Committee is responsible for organizing the Virginia Society Color Guard, encouraging the creation of chapter color guards, scheduling the Virginia Society Color Guard and chapter color guards for appearance and/or participation in ceremonies at the Virginia Society annual and semi-annual meetings and at historical or special commemorative events.*

(2) The Virginia Society Color Guard has been formed as a service to the State Society and to its Chapters. All color guardsmen in the Virginia Society are considered to be members of the Virginia Society Color Guard, Mid-Atlantic District Color Guard, and National Color Guard and may serve at Chapter, State, District and National events. A man can participate in the State Color Guard without participating in a chapter color guard and vice versa. It is essential that for recognition and awards purposes, participating at events at different levels not be co-mingled.

(3) *Color Guard Committee Policies are set by the Virginia Society Color Guard Commander.*

(a) The Color Guard is organized into three regions [Editor comment: the 2022 decision to organize into four regions will be updated in subsequent revision to the Handbook]: Northern Virginia, Tidewater Virginia, and Western Virginia. The goal is to develop each regional unit with 12-15 members to provide services to Chapters in its respective area.

(b) Each Virginia Society Chapter is encouraged to form its own Color Guard to serve the needs of the Chapter and participate at Special, State, District or National events.

*The committee will provide guidance and assistance as needed and requested.* However, each chapter is responsible for appointing its own commander, schedule its own events, keep its own record of participation, and recognizing its own members.

(c) The Virginia Society Color Guard usually will not participate in the same event with a unit of the U.S. Armed Services.”

[Ref: Vol. III, Paragraph III, 2.D.(e)]

### Committee Member Responsibilities

**The Virginia SAR Color Guard Commander** is the head of the Virginia SAR Color Guard and serves as the Chairman of the Virginia SAR Color Guard Committee.

The standard term of service as the Virginia SAR Color Guard Commander is two years, however the option of a shorter term is acceptable. The President of the Virginia SAR will formally appoint the State Color Guard Commander. By tradition, this is performed at the Annual Virginia SAR Conference unless the previous commander’s tenure is cut short.

The Commander shall be assisted by a State Vice Commander, who also performs duties as Adjutant and four Regional Color Guard Vice Commanders.

Specific duties of the VASSAR Color Guard Commander include:

- Chairs the State Color Guard Committee.
- Controls and reviews the *VASSAR CG Handbook*.
- Conducts periodic CG Committee meetings (virtual or in-person).
  - Frequency to be agreed by the committee members.
- Submits the semi-annual and annual Color Guard Committee report.
- Coordinates periodic Color Guard Workshops, as required.
- Coordinates VASSAR CG support, specifically:
  - Publicizes known CG events in the VASSAR website.
  - Liaises with the appropriate Regional CG Vice Commander and Chapter President as required.
    - Safety issues addressed IAW the *VASSAR CG Handbook*.
    - Ensures CG Commander designated for the event.
    - Ensures the person in charge of firing detail is designated.
    - Ensures flags, stands, and stakes are available/provided.
- State CG assets:
  - Ensures annual inventory of CG gear is performed by the Quartermaster.

**The State Vice Commander/Adjutant** shall serve as Vice Chairmen of the Virginia SAR Color Guard Committee. He will also command the Virginia SAR Color Guard in the absence of the Commander. His duties include tracking attendance, taking committee meeting minutes, monitoring the State Color Guard Awards, and performing other such administrative tasks as assigned by the Commander. In the absence of the Commander and Vice Commander, one of the Regional Vice Commanders will command the Color Guard by mutual agreement among the other Regional Vice Commanders.

**VASSAR Color Guard (North/East/Central/Frontier) Region Commander.** Serve as Regional Color Guard Commander for events located within his region. Assist and advise chapter presidents and commanders with training, safety procedures and administration as needed. Serve as event commander as required/requested. Responsible for regional VASSAR issued color guard equipment.

**The Color Guard Safety Officer.** Responsible for ensuring the proper safety protocols are followed at events where Virginia SAR Color Guardsmen participate in the Commonwealth of Virginia. He shall review Annex A (Safety Policy) and Annex B (Safety Checklist) of the VASSAR Color Guard Handbook. Duties include, but are not limited to, the inspection of firelocks for proper physical safety items (e.g., flash guards, hammerstalls, and functioning half-cock setting), and the proper check of all firelocks (e.g., “Secure”, “Search” and “Poise” steps) prior to and on completion of Guardsmen participation in the event. Responsible for a review of the event area to ensure no safety issues are present. If present at the event, the Color Guard Safety Officer shall be responsible for weapon safety checks as well as the event layout (e.g., potential trip hazards, overhead obstructions, and other issues that could impact on participating Guardsmen).

**The Color Guard Training Officer.** Responsible for developing and maintaining formal qualification standards related to (1) the safe handling and firing of blank charges from firelocks, (2) the role of a Color Guard Safety Observer, and (3) the responsibility and proficiency of a Firelock Squad Commander. He will work and coordinate with the Color Guard Safety officer on safety training issues. Other training lines of effort include drill and ceremony; flag etiquette; conduct of Sentinels; proper wearing of Regimental uniform/Militia attire and accoutrements.

**The Color Guard Quartermaster.** Responsible for keeping inventory on all equipment assigned to the Virginia SAR Color Guard. He will maintain a list of recommended sources that Compatriots can access. Be responsible for ensuring replacement equipment has been procured. Proper disposal of worn flags belonging to the Virginia SAR.

**The Immediate Past VASSAR Color Guard Commander.** Will act in an advisory capacity only to the Color Guard Committee. He provides continuity of experience and insight for the Commander. He is a non-voting member of the Color Guard Committee.

**The Color Guard Handbook Editor.** Responsible for keeping the VASSAR Color Guard Handbook up to date and posted to the VASSAR website. He will ensure that periodic reviews and updates to the Handbook are conducted. He will be a non-voting member of the Color Guard Committee.

**The Color Guard Insurance Advisor.** Responsible for reviewing the current General Liability Insurance coverage for VASSAR, with a special focus on the VASSAR Color Guard and its activities. He will provide advice to the Color Guard Committee and will be included in the VASSAR Insurance Committee. He will keep track of all VASSAR sponsored CG activities and keep track of all scheduling Color Guard Firelock firing events (for auditing purposes).



**Figure 6: VASSAR Color Guard Organization**

### **Color Guard Regionalization**

At the 2022 Annual VASSAR Conference, Chapters were organized into four regions as noted below. New in 2022 is the establishment of Regional Color Guard Vice-Commanders.

#### **Northern Region – 8 Chapters**

- Colonel Fielding Lewis
- Colonel James Woods II
- Colonel William Grayson
- Culpeper Minute Men
- Fairfax Resolves
- George Mason
- George Washington
- Sergeant Major John Champe

**Central Region – 7 Chapters**

- Dan River
- Fort Harrison
- General Daniel Morgan
- Patrick Henry
- Richmond
- Rockbridge Volunteers
- Thomas Jefferson

**Eastern Region – 8 Chapters**

- James Monroe
- Nansemond Indian Patriots
- Norfolk
- Rappahannock
- Richard Henry Lee
- Thomas Nelson Jr.
- Williamsburg
- Great Bridge

**Frontier Region – 7 Chapters**

- Clinch Mountain Militia
- Colonel George Waller
- Fincastle Resolutions
- General William Campbell
- Lieutenant David Cox
- Martin's Station
- New River Valley



## ANNEX G: VASSAR CHAPTER FLAG ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

### Order of precedence for VASSAR Chapter Flags:

- Richmond
- Norfolk
- Thomas Nelson, Jr
- Thomas Jefferson
- Lieutenant David Cox
- George Mason
- George Washington
- Patrick Henry
- Colonel George Waller
- Williamsburg
- Fincastle Resolutions
- Culpeper Minutemen
- Richard Henry Lee
- Rockbridge Volunteers
- Fairfax Resolves
- James Monroe
- Fort Harrison
- General William Campbell
- Dan River
- New River Valley
- Colonel Fielding Lewis
- Clinch Mountain Militia
- Martin's Station
- General Daniel Morgan
- Colonel William Grayson
- Colonel James Wood II
- Rappahannock
- Nansemond Indian Patriots
- Sergeant Major John Champe
- Jamestown Headquarters
- Great Bridge