American Legion Department of Florida  
Color Guard Competition Rules  
Advancing/Retiring Colors Class

**Purpose**  
To present the Color Guard, composed of members of The American Legion Family, in a military manner with dignity, style and bearing associated with a military ceremonial Color Guard Unit that advances the colors to open a meeting and retires the colors to close a meeting.

**Time and Place**  
The Advancing/Retiring Colors Color Guard Contest will be held June 16, 2016 from 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM at the Annual Department of Florida Convention.

**Supervision**  
All interpretations and rulings are made within the framework of the National Color Guard rules.

**Entry**  
May 27, 2016, is the deadline for a Color Guard unit to enter the competition. To enter a Color Guard unit in the competition, the sponsoring post will submit a written request to enter the competition on official post letter head addressed to the Department Sgt-at-Arms. The correspondence should contain the names of Color Guard unit members, and verify that they are members in good standing of the sponsoring post, and be signed by the post commander and adjutant. The entry request should be mailed to the Department of Florida, ATTENTION TO JENNIFER SCHNEIDAU, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR. The post will be notified that the competition entry request has been received.

**Eligibility**  
All competitors must be members in good standing of the American Legion Family (American Legion, Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary) of the sponsoring post. Mixed membership Color Guard units representing the sponsoring post may participate in the contest.

**Color Guard**  
This contest will be open to all units composed of not less than four (4) members. If the Color Guard consists of only four (4) members, the American Flag bearer will give all Color Guard commands.

**Inspection**  
Inspection will consist of a certification that the required number of personnel are available for competition, that the Color Guard sponsoring post has a delegation.
registered for the Department Annual Convention (Color Guard members themselves are not required to be registered as convention delegates), that required equipment is being carried onto the field of competition, and to insure that basic personal appearances and condition of uniforms and equipment is in accordance with a precise military inspection. At the request of the inspection judge, unit members will be required to show their current American Legion Family membership cards.

**Judges**

There will be an Inspection Judge, an Execution Judge, and a Timing and Penalty Judge provided by the Department. The judges are to rank and rate the unit participants.

**Points**

Awards will be made on the following points:

Execution:
- Dignity and Military Bearing: 
  - Commanding Officer: 20
  - Unit Members: 20
  - Marching and Maneuvering: 20

  **Subtotal**: 60

General Effect:
- Dignity and Military Bearing: 20
- Showmanship: 20

  **Subtotal**: 40

**TOTAL**: 100

**Uniform and Equipment**

The style and color of uniform will be optional with each unit provided they are within the dignity and propriety required when carrying the National Colors. Headgear is required to be worn by all members of the unit.

Required authorized equipment will consist of National Colors*, American Legion Post Banner, and at least two weapons.

Additional authorized equipment, such as flags, sidearm, sabers and swords may be carried and can be simulated. “Replica rifles” may be used, as long as they have the same weight as the real rifle, plus the bolt mechanism. “Simulated rifles” (rifles of lesser weight with or without simulated bolt mechanism) cannot be used in this class.
*DEFINITION – The Institute of Heraldry, Washington, D.C., has specified in Title 4 of the U.S. Flag Code, the 50-Star American Flag is the Flag of our Country (U.S. Colors); therefore, all others shall be treated as banners. All banners and flags shall be dipped at a reviewing stand except the 50-Star Flag of our Country.

Use of National Color staff head finial piece, as defined by flag code, is mandatory. If a directional piece is used, care should be taken to make sure the directional piece is facing the assemblage. This is how flags with directional pieces will be judged.

Minimum size of U.S. Colors is 3 feet by 5 feet. No flag shall be larger in size than the U.S. Colors.

Rifles are defined as weapons that are hand operated and designed to be fired primarily from the shoulder. The surface of the rifle must have bore lands and grooves to impart rotary motion to the projectile, which conform to the original design of military rifles, past or present. Sights, slings, barrels, trigger and trigger housing are optional. Bolts or simulated bolts are required.

Side arms are defined as weapons, which are hand held and fired by means of a primer, percussion cap, or cartridge enclosed igniter.

Sabers (swords) are defined as weapons which are designed to be hand held for cutting, thrusting or slashing an enemy, with either a curved (saber) blade or straight (sword) blade which may be constructed of any material and must have hand guard.

**Conduct of Color Guard/Penalties**

(a). The contest will be held on a floor approximately 40 feet wide and 60 feet long with the outside lines marked. A Commander’s Station will be placed at some point on the floor that best suits the Color Guards advancing/retiring of colors.

(b). Each Color Guard will have a maximum of four (4) minutes for their advancing/retiring of colors performance. Timing and judging will start for a unit with the first step across the starting line by any member of the unit. A signal will be given at the expiration of four (4) minutes, however timing and all judging will continue until the last member of the unit proper crosses the finish line, including the Commanding Officer.

Any violation of the maximum time shall result in a one tenth (0.1) point penalty for each three- (3) seconds, or fraction thereof.
(c). Each Color Guard will have a designated competition time. Following inspection, the unit will remain available to proceed to the starting line for competition.

| The failure of any unit to report at the designated competition time will result in a one-half (0.5) point penalty. For each 15 minutes or part thereof and up to the conclusion of the contest, another one-half (0.5) point will be assessed. |

(d). Once a unit reports to the starting official that the unit is ready, the unit must start within sixty (60) seconds or less.

| Failure to start within 60 seconds or less will result in a one-point (1) penalty. |

(e). Each Color Guard shall only enter and exit the floor over the designated “starting point”. After timing has commenced, there will be no penalty for marking time at the starting line. The use of colors must be with dignity and propriety. All boundary lines are inviolate at all times except for unit entrance, exit, or for members involved in set up prior to the start of the performance or tear down at the end of the performance.

| A one-tenth— (0.1) point penalty will be assessed for each starting point, exit point, or other boundary line violation. |

**Advancing Colors**
The following is an example of an advancing of colors routine:

(a). Color Guard consisting of minimum number of four (4) is formed at the rear of the contest area in a rank or file, whichever may suit the situation best, formation facing the Commander’s station.

In forming a rank, the National Color is to the right of the Post Color and the two Guards are on the respective flanks. In forming a file, the National Color is second in file, preceded by a Rifle Guard and followed respectively by the Post Color and a Rifle Guard.

To properly form the Guard, the following sequence of Commands may be used: “Fall In”—“Dress Right Dress”—“Ready Front”—“Right or Left Shoulder Arms”—(Color bearers should assume the position of carry or any other suitable position at this command) “Forward March.” The above-mentioned commands put the Guard in a forward motion.

Upon arriving at a position in front of the Commander’s station, the following commands may be used: “Guard Halt-Post Colors” (The National Color bearer steps off in the direction of the Flag receptacle to the right of the Commander’s station, halting and facing front upon arriving in front of same). The Post Color bearer follows the same
procedure to the Flag receptacle to the left of the Commander’s station. During this procedure the Rifle Guards will assume the position of Port Arms. The next command may be “Place Colors.” Colors may be placed by stepping forward with one foot and placing Colors into the receptacles, making sure any top ornament on each respective color is facing the assemblage. It must be remembered that the Colors may be posted simultaneously, or the Post Color is posted first followed by the National Color. The Color Bearers then return to the position of attention. The next command may be “Present Arms.” The Rifle Guards should render the prescribed salute with their pieces and the Color Bearers should render a right hand salute. (Post Color Bearer should either face the National Color or turn toward the American Flag while executing the salute).

The next command sequence may be “Right Shoulder Arms” (Color Bearers recovering from hand salute on same), “Assemble March” (Color Bearers may face the center and step off respectively in the direction from which they came and assume their positions in the formation facing the rear of the competition area. The Rifle Guards may execute an about-face on command and be prepared to move out on the next command with Guard intact).

The next command may be “Forward March” and upon arriving at the starting point, the Guard should be halted with the command of “Guard Halt” and then the Guard may be given “Fall Out.”

**Retiring Colors**
The following is an example of a retiring of colors routine:

(a). Retrieving the Colors may be executed in nearly the same manner except substituting the command of “Retrieve Colors” for “Post Colors,” and giving the command “Present Arms” upon the Color Bearers arrival in front of their respective colors (Color Bearers will salute at this time).

The next sequence of commands may be “Right Shoulder Arms” (Color bearers will assume position of attention) “Take Colors” (Color Bearers putting one foot forward to take Colors and assuming position of attention, after securing same). It must be remembered that the Colors may be retrieved simultaneously, or the National Color is retrieved first followed by the Post Color. The next commands may be “Assemble, March” (Color Bearers executing same marching as in returning from Posting). The Rifle Guards will execute about-face after Colors have arrived in respective positions. The Guard may be retired in the same manner as it was in Posting, with the exception of the last command, which should be “Dismissed.”

**Other Penalties**
(a). A unit violating any requirement of the Eligibility Clause of this contest will be disqualified and its position and standing in the contest will be forfeited.
(b). Any infraction of flag etiquette. The authority adopted for flag etiquette is the “American Legion Competitive Flag Code,” adopted by the American Legion.

**One point (1.0) for each offense**

(c). Each piece of dropped equipment or uniform.

**Assessment will be a one tenth (0.1) penalty for each infraction**

(d). Retrieval by any member of each piece of dropped equipment or uniform.

**Assessment is one point (1.0) for each retrieval of dropped equipment or uniform.**

Only judges may retrieve dropped equipment or uniform items.

**Tie Breaker**

In the case of a tie for first place in this Color Guard Class, the Color Guard with the highest general effect score will be declared the winner.

**Awards**

A trophy will be presented to the runner-up and winner of the contest.