



**THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA
COLOR GUARD UNIT CONTEST RULES
FOR DEPARTMENT CONVENTION**

MILITARY CLASS

1. PURPOSE

The intent of this Class is to present the Color Guard, composed of bonafide members of The American Legion, in a military manner with dignity, style and bearing associated with a military ceremonial Color Guard Unit.

2. TIME AND PLACE

The Military Class Color Guard Contest will be held at the Department Convention starting at a time to be designated by the Ritual Commission (RC) and organized by the Department Sgt-at-Arms. The contest site will be in an appropriate location designated by an Area Commissioner of the RC.

3. SUPERVISION

The competition will be under the rules of the RC and supervised by the Department Sgt-at-Arms. All interpretations and rulings made by the RC are made within the framework of the National Color Guard competition rules. These rules, properly mandated by the Department Ritual Commission, are not subject to review, correction or waiver, unless this Commission, properly constituted, in proper session, makes such review, correction or waiver.

4. ENTRY FORMS

The American Legion sponsored COLOR GUARD Units, AMERICAN LEGION MILITARY CLASS, who is qualified for participation may receive the forms by requesting them from the Department Sgt-at-Arms or as posted on the Ritual Commission web-page. The entry form must be certified by the Adjutant of the unit's sponsoring Post / Unit or District and the original sent to the Department Sgt-at-Arms and a copy to the Chairman of the Ritual Commission.

5. ENTRY DEADLINE

All competing units shall, not later than 45 days prior to the date of competition, forward their contest entry form via the Department Sgt-at-Arms and Ritual Chairman. No award will be made to any unit until the Department Sgt-at-Arms has approved its eligibility.

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6. ELIGIBILITY

Only units consisting of bonafide members of The American Legion over 18 years of age will be permitted to compete. Each competing unit must have participated and / or be sponsored in its Post or District within the current year. No member shall compete with more than one unit or in more than one class.

All contest participants 19 years of age or older are **REQUIRED** to register for the Department Convention as GUESTS of their respective District, unless their registered as a Department Convention Delegate. This registering may be accomplished by registering on-site with the District at the Department Convention. All competing members will be expected to have their registration credentials during the inspection portion of the contest.

Participating units with members not registered with the District for the Department Convention will not be eligible for any contest awards.

COLOR GUARD: This contest will be open to all units composed of not less than four (4) or more than five (5) members including the Commanding Officer.

INSPECTION: Will consist of a certification that the required number of personnel are available for competition, that each has registered for the Department Convention (**the registration credentials must be shown during the inspection portion of the contest**), 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. Also, at the request of the inspection judge, unit members will be required to show their current American Legion Family membership cards.

7. FLAG REGISTRATION

All competing personnel of each unit entering the contest must register their flags at the flag registration room with the Department Sgt-at-Arms at the Department Convention.

8. MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES

One representative of each competing unit will meet with the Department Sgt-at-Arms (Chief Judge) prior to the contest at a time and place to be designated by the Chief Judge, to receive instructions and transact any business, which may properly come before such meeting. Order of appearance in the contest will be in reverse order of receipt of entry form with earliest postmark.

9. JUDGES

Five judges will be provided: One Chief Judge (Sgt-at-Arms), one General Effect Judge, one Marching and Maneuvering Judge, one Timing and Penalty Judge and one Inspection Judge that shall be selected by the Department Sgt-at-Arms a minimum of forty-five days prior to the Convention. Each Judge will have a scoring sheet as per Article 10. The Judges are selected each year based upon their experience, caring and nurturing attitude, consistency,

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professionalism and communication skills and the understanding and ability to uphold the rules and regulations as outlined in the manual. The judges are to rank and rate the unit participants. They must never exhibit rude, sarcastic or hurtful dialogue or to convey boredom or indifference. A judge relates to all participants at three levels, that of teacher, counselor, and critic. They must judge with their “head, conscience and heart.”

10. POINTS

Awards will be made on the following points:

General Effect:

Performance Effectiveness.....	15
Repertoire.....	15
Requirements Effectiveness.....	10
Effective Use of American Flag Section.....	10
Marching & Maneuvering	
Execution	
Performance.....	15
Exposure/Technique.....	10
Equipment	
Performance.....	15
Exposure/Technique.....	10
TOTAL.....	100

This system has been devised to reward and encourage the continuing development and quality achievement of excellence, taste, style projection, variety and unit uniqueness, as well as innovation, and acknowledges the joint efforts of the performers, designers, and instructors in maintaining the traditional American Flag etiquette and requirements.

11. UNIFORM & 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 on the National Color bearer.

Required authorized equipment will consist of National Colors* and at least one weapon and one American Legion Organizational Banner. Additional authorized equipment, such as flags, sidearm, sabers and swords may be carried and can be simulated. “Simulated rifles” 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, that 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, it will be judged on the directions of the bearer, and not the direction of the staff head. All other staff heads on other banners when used are optional. 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.

12. CONDUCT OF COLOR GUARD / PENALTIES

(a). The contest will be held on a field or floor 40 feet wide and 60 feet long with the outside lines and center line marked. A 90-inch (7ft. 6in.) line will be marked on each side of the centerline for the Pass-in-Review area.

(b). Performance time shall be not less than four (4) or more than six (6) minutes. Timing and judging will start for a unit with the first step across the starting line by a member of the unit proper, excluding the Commanding Officer. A warning single 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 minimum or maximum times 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 Department Sgt-at-Arms (Chief Judge) 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.

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d of the field, to
the right of the Saluting Point. After timing has commenced, there will be no penalty for marking time at the starting line. The saluting point shall be the center of that sideline of the floor that is to the right of the traditional 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 line, exit line, or other boundary line violation.

12.1 REQUIRED MANEUVERS: Each unit must execute, in any order, at the Saluting Point, the following maneuvers: Pass-In-Review, Presentation of Colors, Post and Retrieve done in accordance with FM-22-5. In addition, a unit may execute any other “appropriate” maneuvers during their performance.

(a) PASS-IN-REVIEW

The area of Pass-In-Review shall be ninety (90) inches before and ninety (90) inches after the Saluting Point. This area will be clearly marked. The unit shall be in a company front with the placement of the Commanding Officer at the discretion of the unit. All members, including the commanding Officer may start the Pass-In-Review with the salute or first step over the line of the Pass-In-Review area. All members of the unit must render the proper salute by displaying “Eyes Right” except: The U.S. Flag bearer shall not dip, but may at the discretion of the unit, render “Eyes Right”. The extreme right element of the unit renders no eyes right, but does render the proper salute unless it is the Commander, in which case an “Eyes Right” is required.

Any violation of Pass-In-Review shall result in a one point (1.0) penalty.

(b) PRESENTATION OF COLORS

This maneuver shall be done at a halt, at attention, facing the Saluting Point. The American Legion organization banner shall dip at least momentarily to the Saluting Point. All weapons must render the proper “present arms” at least momentarily. All salutes shall be rendered simultaneously at some point in the presentation.

Any violation of Presentation of Colors shall result in a one point (1.0) penalty.

(c) POST AND RETRIEVE

This maneuver includes the U.S. Flag and American Legion organizational banner. The U.S. Flag is to be posted to the right of the Saluting Point with its front facing the field. Colors must be properly guarded at all times; for guarding purposes, weapons shall at all times be in the possession of the guarding member. During the ceremony of Posting and Retrieving, two (2) salutes are required, to be executed simultaneously by all members; one directly following posting and one salute directly prior to retrieving colors.

Colors must not be posted for more than sixty (60) seconds. Time shall commence upon the release of the first pike and shall terminate upon the grasp of the last pike. A color is deemed posted immediately upon the release of the pike. A color is deemed retrieved upon the intentional grasp of the pike. The U.S. Flag and Banner may be posted simultaneously, if not so posted; the U.S. Flag must be posted last. The U.S. Flag and Banner may be retrieved simultaneously. However, if not so retrieved, the U.S. Flag must be retrieved first.

The U.S. Flag must be guarded at all times. The U.S. Flag is considered as being properly guarded during maneuvers if the guard is within three (3) paces of the U.S. Flag.

Any violation of Presentation of Colors shall result in a one point (1.0) penalty.

- (d) The Commanding Officer and any guard members playing musical instruments shall be judged as a part of the unit proper. All musical instruments must be played within the boundaries of competition floor.
- (e) Each Color Guard shall be subject to the rulings of the Chief Judge of Contests with respect to entry on, exit from, conduct on the field, and in the immediate area.
- (f) The Banner of The American Legion sponsor shall be accorded proper respect at all times.
- (g) General Effect judges will use cassettes while judging.
- (h) The current competitive flag code, as adopted by the National American Legion, will be the rules for proper use in all matters not covered herein. A Bugler and/or Drummer will be judged on the proficiency of the playing or drumming under the General Effect caption. Bugling shall be limited to standard bugle calls.
- (i) No pyrotechnic, discharged of arms, pressurized canisters, dangerous materials, inflammable liquids, powders and live animals will not be permitted.

13. OTHER PENALTIES

- (a) A unit violating any requirement of Rule 6 will be disqualified and its position and standing in the contest will be forfeited.
- (b). A unit violating any rule, or part of a rule for which no specific penalty is provided.

Each violation not less than one-tenth (0.1) point nor more than disqualification, at the discretion of the Chief Judge of Contests

- (c) 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

- (d) Any unit violating Rule 8.

Assessment is a two point (2.0) penalty

- (e) Any unit violating Rule 12, Section (i).

Assessment is a one point (1.0) penalty for each infraction

(f) Each piece of dropped equipment or uniform.

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

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

***Only judges may retrieve dropped equipment or uniform items only.**

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

(h) Deliberate grounding of equipment is not permitted in this class.

Assessment is a one point (1.0) penalty for each infraction

14. PROTESTS

Any protest regarding these contests will in all respects conform to and will be disposed of according to these rules. Protest must be filed with the Chief Judge of Contests, not later than thirty (30) minutes following the conclusion of the contest. Copies of the protest must have been given to any other units involved or affected by the protesting group. The protesting unit must be represented by a proper officer at a meeting on said date, time and place announced by the Chief Judge of Contests. Copies of protests, review of decision and rulings may be obtained from the Ritual Commission Chairman.

Audio-visual recording equipment may be allowed in the area of competition at the discretion of the Chief Judge of Contests; however, no such evidence will be admissible at a protest meeting.

15. AWARDS and RECOGNITION

The official Department Championship Color Guard of The American Legion and the Department Commander will be selected from either the Color Guard Military Class, or Color Guard Military Open Class. The Color Guard composed of bonafide members of the American Legion; with the highest total number of points will be the Official American Legion Department Color Guard.

The awards will be from the Department Sgt-at-Arms as befitting the Color Guard unit ranking in the contest.

16. TIE BREAKER

In the case of a tie for first place, the color guard with the highest general effect score will be declared the winner.