

North Carolina SAR Handbook, Vol 4  
Color Guard Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)  
20 June 2016

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Standing Operating Procedure (SOP)  
for  
Color Guard

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**Foreword**

All Chapters within the NCSSAR are encouraged to form color guards, within their means, and to participate in color guard ceremonies at the chapter level, which include posting the colors at meetings, grave markings, patriotic parades, as well as wreath laying ceremonies as part of a combined State Color Guard. To accomplish this, the recommended basic color guard element at the chapter level would be two color bearers and two riflemen. The chapter color guard commander may fill any of these positions.

1. Getting started: Step one is to acquire a color guard uniform portraying either Continental or Militia. Militia is perhaps less costly and more versatile as it may be worn in both warm and cold weather by simply adding layers of clothing, long underwear, thick socks and gloves in the winter time. It will normally consist of a Tri-Corn or other brimmed hat, Revolutionary War period shirt and pants, thick belt, moccasins or plain black shoes with buckles, and other simple items of equipment, i.e. a Knapp sack, canteen, hunting knife, powder horn, tomahawk, bayonet and other items as desired. Ideas may be gleaned from the selection of items offered by Jas. Townsend & Son, a recommended full range shopping site on line. Some items may already be found within the personal clothing of the individual member or may be easily manufactured by those with an available sewing machine and the skill to use it.
  
2. Suitable museum-quality non-firing weapons of the Revolutionary War Period may also be found on-line, in addition to period reproduction black powder weapons, slings and equipment - bear in mind that only one or two riflemen or none are needed to perform a basic color detail i.e. post the colors at a

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chapter meeting or event in which case only the National Colors (50-Star American flag or Betsy Ross), the State of North Carolina flag, and the Chapter S.A.R. flag need to be used.

3. Chapters should be aware that there is no standing NCSSAR Color Guard. For most events, including grave markings, the color detail will consist of members of the chapter in period dress with invited members of other chapter color guards to make up a combined Color Guard detail, in order to post the Colors and provide rifle escorts to participants who wish to present wreaths as part of the ceremony. A protocol has been established within the NCSSAR in which notice of the event is posted by the hosting chapter with details on the date, time, and location of the event, with a request for invited chapters to notify the hosting chapter of intent to participate, the number of participants, and intent to present a wreath. Such invitations should be answered by the date indicated by the hosting chapter. For planning an event, the host should check the SAR Calendar to assure that the planned event does not conflict with a key event that appears on the NSSAR web site. Chapters should utilize their own assets first and then coordinate with the State Color Guard Commander for support from the State Color Guard Inventory of Flags, as detailed in paragraph 4 below:

4. State Color Guard Inventory of Flags under charge of the State Color Guard Commander, all sleeved and on 8 foot oak poles. Also in inventory are four indoor flag stands and four spiked outdoor flag supports. See below:

- a. U.S. 50 Star flag, fringed, topped by an Eagle.
- b. Betsy Ross 13 Star flag, topped with wooden period knob.
- c. State of North Carolina flag, fringed, topped w/spike.
- d. State S.A.R. flag, fringed, topped w/ spike.
- e. Grand Union (a.k.a. Continental Colors or Cambridge) flag, topped w/spike.
- f. Guilford Courthouse flag, topped w/spike.
- g. Gadsden (Don't Tread On Me) flag, topped w/spike.
- h. New England (Red Pine Tree) flag, topped w/spike
- i. Beehive Flag (Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence), topped w/spike
- j. Bladen and Brunswick Militia Rattlesnake Flag, topped w/spike

5. The wearing of medals on uniforms is not in keeping with the tradition of the Revolutionary War era and as a matter of policy should not be worn. The time and place for the wearing of such awards include on a blue blazer, tuxedo, dinner jacket or formal military uniform, dress mess, service whites, dress blues, but not when dressing out as an S.A.R. Color Guardsmen. The official policy is not to wear them, including the S.A.R. neck ribbon. No insignia should be worn on any uniform that is not of the era being depicted. This includes name tags, S.A.R. Blazer Insignia, and similar badges.

#### Reference:

A. The NSSAR Handbook covers Insignia, Medals and Awards of the NSSAR. This is a must read for members. Main headings for this volume include: NSSAR INSIGNIA, MEDALS AWARDED FOR SERVICE TO THE SAR, MEDALS AWARDED FOR SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY, CODE FOR WEARING MEDALS, DECORATIONS, BADGES AND INSIGNIA, CARE OF INSIGNIA AND MEDALS.

B. The Illustrated Drill Manual and Regulation for the American Soldier of the Revolutionary War, First Edition ISBN: 0.913150.47.9 Edited by A.N. Schultz - Illustrated by R. T. Coleman. Available for \$6.00, plus postage, from:

Jas. Townsend and Son, Inc.  
133 North First Street  
P.O. Box 415  
Pierceton, IN 46562  
Telephone: (574) 594-5852 Fax: (574) 594-5580

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- C. BRITISH ARMY MANUAL OF ARMS 1764 (may be viewed on YOU TUBE on-line)
- D. The NSSAR Color Guard Handbook publication by the NSSAR Color Guard Committee.

#### 1. SITUATION

- a. Enemy forces: Omission of color guard presence at events.
- b. Friendly forces: All Chapters and Combined Elements of the NCSSAR

**2. MISSION** “The Sons of the American Revolution is the leading male lineage society that perpetuates the ideals of the War for Independence. As a historical, educational, and patriotic, non-profit corporation, we seek to maintain and expand the meaning of patriotism, respect for our national symbols, the value of American citizenship, and the unifying force of “e pluribus unum” that was created from the people of many nations -- one nation and one people.” To that end, the color guard’s aim is to demonstrate our heritage and willingness to honor our ancestors by public demonstration as participants in Wreath Layings, Grave Markings, Parades, and other patriotic gatherings in Revolutionary War period dress as either Continental Soldiers or Militia by posting the colors and performing other actions as may be required.”

#### 3. EXECUTION

- a. Forming a chapter color guard.

(1) Size and composure: Ideal minimum: Two Color Bearers to carry National Colors and Chapter S.A.R. flag, with two riflemen as escorts, although individual chapter color guardsmen may participate in combined color guard activities as riflemen or individual color bearers. (If only one man is available for an event, he should carry the Chapter S.A.R. flag)

(2) If three flags are used, the State of NC flag may be pre-posted, the “Betsy Ross” flag may be used as the National Colors at Chapter meetings, in lieu of the U.S. 50-Star flag, and the Chapter S.A.R. flag should be carried.

(3) Uniform: Period Dress of the American Revolution (Militia) or Continental Uniforms are required for all combined National, District or State Color Guard events. Color guard uniforms may be obtained through Jas. Townsend & Sons or other vendors on-line, as referenced in Paragraph B.

(4) Equipment: Flags, poles, indoor flag stands, and related items, are available through varied sources. Period Weapons, both firing (Black Powder) and non-firing Museum Quality Reproductions are available through various on-line sources. Tomahawks, Long Hunters Knives, Canteens, Tri-corn Hats, Hunting Shirts and related items are available as referenced in Paragraph B. Outdoor Flag ground spike-type stands may be fabricated from local sources using Rebar and pipe lengths of a diameter to allow insertion of the flag staff. All chapters participating in combined events, where the colors are to be posted as part of the ceremony, should bring outdoor flag supports for each flag they will carry, i.e. Chapter Colors, Hornet’s Nest, Guilford, Betsy Ross, State of NC flag, etc. If only four flags are to be posted, i.e. the National Colors, the State Colors, the Host Chapter S.A.R. Colors, and the State S.A.R. Colors, then other participating Color Guard members may retain their colors in formation as directed by the Color Guard Commander.

(5) The hosting chapter is responsible for posting the National Colors (U.S. 50-Star flag) the State of NC flag and their own Chapter flag with earned streamers. The hosting chapter may request the State of NC flag and the U.S. 50-Star flag from the State Color Guard Commander if they are unable to provide these

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from their own resources. All chapters should bring an outdoor flag support for each flag they plan to carry, as an event may require all flags to be posted in place. Alamance Battleground's Patriots Day and SCSSAR's Buford's Massacre are such events. Chapter planners should coordinate logistics in advance.

(6) All chapters who plan color guard activity should monitor the official web site and complete the RSVP notice in advance of all planned activities to assure that they will be listed in the program produced by the hosting chapter and plan their arrival at the event location in time to park, suit up and coordinate with the Color Guard Commander on site for the event.

#### 4. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

##### a. Administration

(1) The Chapter commits to an event and plans to use its own assets to complement a combined color guard or hosts a event and invites other chapters to participate by posting the date, time, and location of the event in coordination with the NCSSAR Web Master using the standard Calendar of Events Format that may be seen in the NCSSAR section of the National SAR Web Site.

(2) If the host plans to give streamers to participating chapters, these items must be ordered well in advance.

(3) The Chapter President or his designated officer should maintain a basic after action report format for the event, using the key word S-A-L-U-T-E, and post

- a. Size of the element.
- b. Activity (i.e. grave marking, wreath presentation, flag retirement, etc.)
- c. Location by address or map reference,
- d. Uniform worn by chapter participants (i.e. continental uniform or militia period attire)
- e. Time of the event (reported with the date of the event), and
- f. Equipment carried or used, to include flags, flag holders, uniforms and related weapons.

(4) The State Color Guard Commander, with the assistance of the adjutant(s), will record participation at the National, District and State Color Guard events. This data will be presented semi-annually to the Board of Managers. Recommendations for award of the State Bronze Color Guard Medal, the Silver Color Guard Medal or the Von Steuben Color Guard medal will be coordinated with the State Color Guard Commander. Recommendations for the award of medals will be forwarded to the NCSSAR Senior Vice President for presentation at a state, district or national meeting, as appropriate.

(5) The chapter color guard commander or the chapter president should maintain a log of chapter member participation in color guard activity for presentation of the Chapter Bronze Color Guard medal and as a back up to the Chapter Americanism Report submitted annually. The report of color guard activity should be sent via e-mail or USPS mail to the state Color Guard Commander and the designated District Vice President. Award of the Chapter Bronze Color Guard medal should be coordinated with the NCSSAR Color Guard commander and the NCSSAR Color Guard commander or Adjutant should be invited to present the medal at an appropriate chapter venue.

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(6) Individual color guardsmen should also keep a log or journal of all qualifying color guard events in which they participate as a guide for the time they plan to submit their request for the Bronze or Silver Color Guard, or the National von Steuben Medals as defined in the NSSAR Handbook: <http://www.sar.org/node/2068>

(7) The NCSSAR uses the event system for determination of eligibility for securing the medals.

- a. To earn an SAR Bronze Color Guard Medal, a Color Guardsman must participate in at least 50% of the scheduled Color Guard activities for his State and/or Chapter in each of three years, which do not need to be continuous. A year shall be any period of twelve consecutive months. A North Carolina color guardsman will be eligible for the Bronze Medal on/after the anniversary date of the first Color Guard event in which he participates.
- b. The Silver Color Guard Medal is for service at the District and National levels. An SAR Color Guardsman must have the Bronze Color Guard Medal before he can be awarded the Silver Color Guard Medal. To earn an SAR Silver Color Guard Medal, a Color Guardsman must participate in at least three District and/or National events in each of three years, which do not need to be continuous. A year shall be any period of twelve consecutive months.
- c. To earn the National Von Steuben Medal for Sustained Achievement in the NSSAR Color Guard, a Color Guardsman must serve at least five years after he has received the SAR Silver Color Guard Medal, and he must participate in at least twenty-five (25) National and/or District Color Guard events. The five years' service does not have to be continuous. Color Guardsmen may take longer than five years to participate in twenty-five qualifying events, but may not be awarded the National Von Steuben Medal earlier than five years after he has received the Silver Color Guard Medal.

(8) Firing of muskets - On certain occasions a musket/rifle salute is deemed appropriate and shall be conducted according to the following guidelines. **No compatriot may fire a musket while wearing Polyester clothing.**

- a. An NCSSAR Safety Officer, Adjutant or State Commander will perform a safety inspection of firearms prior to the beginning of the ceremony. It should be conducted as follows; the rammer should be pinged to show that the weapon is clear, and it should be hung by the trigger at half cock to make sure that it will not go off accidentally.
- b. As determined by the event commander, musket firings shall be aimed in a direction which protects against all possible injury to persons and property.
- c. All guardsmen who are assigned to fire muskets shall be certified as to their competency by the NCSSAR Color Guard Commander, Adjutant or designated safety officer, based upon the following criteria:
  - i. Demonstrated knowledge of and compliance with the above stated standards.
  - ii. Demonstrated efficiency in breaking down, cleaning and assembling musket.
  - iii. Demonstrated efficiency in safely loading and firing a musket. No one joined a firing line unless they had been taken to the range for live fire and volley practice.

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- 1) They would fire their firelock 5 to 10 times at a target with the ball and powder load that would have been used in 1780
- 2) They would be taught the manual of arms with a firelock following the Steuben drill manual of 1780
- 3) They would be given a copy of the manual of arms and a video so they can practice at home
- 4) Then they would be taught to fire a volley with others inline and by command
- 5) They must be able to maintain discipline and stay in line during the ceremony.
- 6) After the training, the Color Guard Commander must certify the shooter as safe. There is no room for show-offs or egos during live fire activities. The Color Guard commander is responsible for all live fire activities and will ensure discipline and safety of all concerned. Other considerations include:

- The rifle or musket must have a hammer stall and a flash guard
- There shall be no powder in the horn or elsewhere about the shooter
- Only blank cartridges issued by the Color Guard commander can be used
- The rifle or musket must be inspected before the event
- No firelocks or other 'toys' made in India will be allowed.
- In order to participate in a volley the participant must be at the venue early and rehearse; If they are even one minute late, they do not participate
- The squad must have a clear field of fire of 40 yards in front of the muskets
- There must be at least two firelocks minimum for a volley.
- The local law enforcement agency must be informed of the volley by the event coordinator
- The CG Commander must be able to call off the volley any time he is uncomfortable with any part of the event

#### b. LOGISTICS

(1) Chapters should plan transportation to and from the site, transport of flags, banners, stands and other equipment, as well as any wreaths and wreath stands or other items required. Carpooling is desirable. Maps to the location, including narrative directions, and if possible, an advance recon of the route, are desirable.

(2) Some events are overnight, i.e. for Kings Mountain and Cowpens, as SAR Headquarters on the night before those events, which include a social hour, key meetings and other briefings concerning each site. The Cowpens agenda also includes travel to downtown Spartanburg, .C. in the morning to participate in a Massing of the Colors and presentations at the General Daniel Morgan statue. Participants should plan to pay for meals during events.

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(3) A canteen with drinking water should be planned for and carried to events with personal items, medicines, etc., along with planned arrival time to allow for parking, donning equipment and the weather. (Cowpens is nearly always a “Cold Weather” event)

**5. COMMAND AND SIGNAL**

a. **COMMAND.** The Hosting Chapter is usually the command authority with National SAR Officers recognized by protocol order. In North Carolina, the NCSAR Color Guard Commander is the usual commander of marching assets, i.e. the assembled combined color guard.

b. **SIGNAL.** Electronic coordination by e-mail, using the planning criteria presented in this SOP, and by telephone. Chapters use their own established means of coordination in planning and reporting. The method of contact for the NCSAR Color Guard Commander is: .com or (910) 864-1279.

**ACKNOWLEDGE:**

RICHARD D. BISHOP

Major, U.S. Army (Retired)

NCSAR Color Guard Commander

Annex: National, District and NCSAR Area Color Guard Events

Prepared By RICHARD D. BISHOP, Major, U.S. Army (Retired) (2010)

NCSAR Color Guard Commander (2010-2014)

Revised by GARY O. GREEN, Lt Col, USAF (Retired) (2014)

for the betterment of the North Carolina Society, Sons of the American Revolution



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Annex 1

National, District and NCSSAR Area Color Guard Events

**National Events set by NSSAR.**

**State/Chapter events become National Events when the NSSAR President General attends and takes an active part in the program.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
January	Battle of Cowpens (Chesnee, SC)
January	Battle of Cowan's Ford (Huntersville, NC)
February	Battle of Kettle Creek (Washington, GA)
February	Crossing of the Dan (South Boston, VA)
February	Battle of Moore's Creek
February	Spring Leadership Meeting
March	Battle of Guilford Courthouse
April	Adoption of Halifax Resolves
May	Battle of the Waxhaws (Buford's Massacre) (Lancaster, SC)
May	Memorial Day
June	Battle of Ramsour's Mill
June/July	National Congress
July 4	Independence Day Parade
September	Gathering at Sycamore Shoals (Elizabethton, TN)
September	Fall Leadership Meeting
September	Vigil at George Washington's Tomb (Mt Vernon, VA)
October	Battle of King's Mountain (NC/SC co-sponsors)
October	Yorktown Days (Yorktown, VA)
November	Battle of Great Bridge (Norfolk, VA)
November	Veterans Day in Charlotte, Fayetteville, Raleigh or Roanoke Rapids
December	Wreaths Across America

Other national events which are identified by the National Color Guard Commander at the beginning of each year, for example:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event &amp; Location</b>
February	California Massing of Colors Burbank, CA
February	Washington Birthday Parade Laredo, TX
March	Last Naval Battle of the Revolution Cape Canaveral, FL
April	Patriot's Day Concord, MA
May	Kentucky Derby Pegasus Parade Louisville, KY
May	Battle of Pensacola (Pensacola, FL )
May	Fields of Honor / Healing Field Various
May	Spirit of Vincennes Rendezvous Vincennes, IN
May	National Memorial Day Parade Washington DC
June	Battle of Bunker Hill Bunker Hill, MA
July	Battle of Fort Laurens Bolivar, OH
October	Point Pleasant Battle Days Point Pleasant, WV

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**District Events:**

State/Chapter events become District Events when the NSSAR District Vice President General attends and conducts a meeting of district members.

**State Events:** (To be awarded the Bronze Color Guard Medal by the state, a compatriot must attend 50% of the following events for three years.)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
February	Winter Board of Managers Meeting
April	Annual Convention
May	Patriot's Day at Alamance Battleground, Alamance, NC
May	Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence (Meck Dec) Day, Charlotte, NC
August	House in the Horseshoe, Sanford, NC
August	Remembrance of Tryon Resolves, Bessemer City, NC
August	Summer Board of Managers Meeting

**Chapter Events:** (Chapter Color Guard Commanders are responsible for maintaining records of individual Color Guard Member's participation.) Chapter Events become State Events if attended by State President, who takes an active part in the program and so states at time of event. The following are examples of chapter events:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
February	President's Day Community Dinner, Mecklenburg chapter
July	Battle of Colson's Mill, Norwood, NC
September	Battle of Elizabethtown, Elizabethtown, NC
December	Christmas Parades in Fayetteville, Raleigh or Roanoke Rapids Grave Markings Chapter Meetings

There will be other Chapter Events that occur, so designated by the individual Chapter Officers.

Participation in events outside the state of North Carolina may be included in the determination of the Bronze Color Guard medal at the chapter level. The Chapter Color Guard Commander will determine the veracity of the participation. For example:

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**SCSSAR State Events**

The following are considered state events by the SC Society:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
January	Daniel Morgan Statue Ceremony
June	Carolina Day
July	Thomas Heyward Pilgrimage
July	Battle of Huck's Defeat
August	Battle of Musgrove's Mill
September	Battle of Eutaw Springs
December	Battle of Great Cane Brake

Changes:

2015	Added national events Cowan's Ford, Memorial Day, 4 <sup>th</sup> of July, Veterans Day; changed House in the Horseshoe from a chapter to a State Event
2016	Added national event - Battle of Waxhaws (Buford's Massacre); added a table of contents