



Oak Creek Police Department

Ceremonial Honor Guard

S.O.P. 3

PRESENTING THE COLORS

The following S.O.P. (Standard Operating Procedure) will be referenced when "Presenting the Colors" is being training or is requested of the Honor Guard Unit.

Proper FLAG etiquette dictates that the flag of the "United States of America" is always the first flag in movement and SHALL ALWAYS be to the left of a formation as the formation is viewed, and always preceded by a rifle bearer (weapon). There are no exceptions to this. Any other positioning will have the Colors inverted and is against U.S. Code, Title 4, Chapter 1 (c). There can be a multiple number of additional flags, however always preceded by the "United States of America" flag. The following S.O.P. will provide specific directions for Presenting the Colors.

The Color Team shall have to orient themselves so when marching in, the U.S. Colors are proceeded only by the Front or Right Rifle, then orient themselves to the audience so that the U.S. Colors are on the left of the formation as viewed. (This can not be accomplished with commands of: "To the Rear March" or "About Face" movements.)

Also there is a hierarchy of flags and the order in which they appear, and coinciding with that is how Color Teams are arranged in a parade or in a procession. (For clarification, U S Flag code should be consulted)

** A minimum of three (3) people are required to form a Color Team.*

- 1. Rifleman*
- 2. U.S. Flag*
- 3. Rifleman*

A. This detail will be referred to as, "Color Team" The Color Team order will be:

- Front or right Rifle
- U.S. Flag (Team Commander)
- State Flag
- Optional Flags (if applicable)
- Rear or Left Rifle

1. From the standing position, at the proper spacing, preparing for the detail, the sequence of Commands will be:

- “STAND BY” (Preparatory command that action is imminent)
- **“DETAIL”**
 - Rifles have the butt stock aside the right foot at the proper position
 - The barrel is extended out with the right arm
 - Right hand cupped forward the tip of the M-14 Rifle at the bayonet lug
 - Left hand moves to the small of the back
- **“ATTEN-TION”**
 - “ATTEN” is preparatory, movement on the **“TION”** of the word
- **“PORT-ARMS”**
 - Rifles are brought to “Port-Arms” (Described in detail later in this S.O.P.)
 - Flags are brought to “Port-Arms”.
- **“FORWARD-MARCH”**

Upon arriving at the proper position in the room, each Color Team member will continue stepping in Mark-time. After the Front Rifle feels that the remainder of the Color Team is in place (4 to 5 Steps) the Front Rifle will initiate a left face movement, slowly, with each Color Team member turning as well, still in “MARK-TIME”. The following commands will be given by the Color Team Commander:

- “DETAIL” (Given on the left foot)
- **“HALT”** (Given on the next left step after “DETAIL”) After “DETAIL”, there will be a step with the right foot, then the left foot will be brought to the right foot, “clicking-in”

From this position, still in the “Port-Arms” position, the command sequence is:

- **“ORDER-ARMS”**
 - The right hand is removed and the rifle is “slapped” the end of the forestock at the barrel and gas tube location, (M-14 Rifle)
 - Rifle is guided down, left hand is placed under bayonet lug to assist
 - Rifles are grounded and placed aside the right foot, magazine well out
 - Rifle is straight along the right leg
 - Right hand is cupped just over the forestock at the start of the barrel and gas tube,
(M-14 Rifle)
 - Left hand index finger 1st knuckle from the tip is lodged under the bayonet lug
 - Palm is facing down , hand is parallel to the ground
- **“READY”**
 - On “Ready”, the Rifles will bring the left hand from the above described position to the belt buckle.
 - Flag bearers from the flag to the flag harness cup
- **“CUT”**

- Upon **“CUT”**, open left hand coming up to the left shoulder, closed as in the position of attention upon reaching straight up- elbow down position
- Then dropped straight down to position of attention, done at a “One-two” silent count
- **“RIGHT SHOULDER-ARMS”**
 - Flags are hoisted into the harness cups
 - Right hand holding the pole right at nose level, back of hand outward, arm as parallel to the flag pole as possible.
 - Left hand on the cup
 - Rifles
 - Right hand/arm brings the rifle to the “Port-Arms position
 - Right arm should be as parallel to the rifle as possible
 - Left hand then is placed on the forestock
 - Right hand slaps the bottom of the butt stock
 - Left hand guides the rifle around the head onto the right shoulder, simultaneously the Left hand, open flat, palm downward, is hooked to the rear of the rifle receiver where it meets the stock awaiting the “Cut”. (M-14 Rifles)
- **“READY”**
 - Flags
 - No cut, left hand remains in control of the flag on the cup
 - Rifles
 - Left hand is already in place as described earlier
- **“CUT”**
 - Rifles are then “Cut” in the previously described manner

NOTE: THE U.S. FLAG SHOULD BE HOISTED BRISKLY, AND LOWERED CAUTIOUSLY AS IT MUST ALWAYS REMAIN HIGHER AND MORE PROMINENT THAN OTHER FLAGS.

- **“PRESENT-ARMS”**
 - Flags
 - “PRESENT” is dragged out, flags other than the U.S Flag are slowly dipped, about 3 seconds given to about a 45 degree angle
 - Rifles
 - On “ARMS”, Rifles are presented in the Rifle salute position
 - Slight un-noticeable kick with the right shoulder to assist the rifle movement
 - Rifle is out in right hand straight up and down
 - Rifle is turned with the right hand
 - Rifle is in a controlled drop to the left hand in the “Port-Arms” position
 - Right hand then slides up to the grip area (where held for firing)
 - Rifle is given a twist, positioned straight up and down, magazine well straight out

- Left hand grasping the Rifle (Should be cupped, but grasping with wrapping fingers around heat shield holds the weapon more securely)
- Right hand is cupped forward, holding the rifle at the grip area, thumb and fingers extended out

NOTE: THIS POSITION WILL BE MAINTAINED FOR THE NATIONAL ANTHEM and/or PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND TAPS.

- **“SHOULDER”**
 - Flags
 - Flags previously dipped (lowered) are slowly raised up-right at the same speed as they were lowered, about three seconds given prior to “Arms”
 - Rifles
 - Remain, no movement
- **“ARMS”**
 - Flags
 - Right hand up in front of the face holding flag pole
 - Left hand on the cup of the harness
 - Rifles
 - Twisted to “Port-Arms” position
 - Right hand is removed, then slaps the bottom of the butt stock
 - Left hand guides the rifle around the head then slides automatically to the “cut” position and then an automatic “cut” is done, (No “cut” command at “Shoulder-Arms”)
- **“ORDER-ARMS”**
 - Flags and Rifles are returned to the right side

NOTE: THE U.S. FLAG SHOULD BE LOWERED CAUTIOUSLY

- **“READY”**
 - Left hand of Flag bearers and Rifles is placed in the above described position
- **“CUT”**
 - Left hand is moved or, “cut” in unison
- **“PORT-ARMS”**
 - Flags
 - Flag poles are raised slightly off the ground
 - Are held with the right hand low, like in the position of “Attention”
 - Left hand is parallel to the deck
 - Rifles

- With the right hand cupped at the area where the barrel and gas tube come out of the stock, with the right hand only, the rifle is brought to the Port-arms angle meeting the left hand
 - Right forearm remains as parallel to the rifle as possible
 - Left hand slaps (For affect) then simultaneously grasps the forestock
 - Right hand slides to the grip area
 - Rifle is approximately 4 inches from the chest
- **“MARCH IN FILE, READY-STEP”**
 - The front rifle steps out & left simultaneously (angle) with the left foot, moving out and left, passing the U.S. Flag. as the front rifle bearer takes his 5th step, (the Team Commander (U.S. Flag bearer) simultaneously steps out in stride with his/her first step (left foot). The remainder of the Color Team Follows in suit.

Note: The steps taken are small normal 30” marching steps. Practice needs to assure that proper spacing is maintained and the Color Team isn’t too spread out, but at the same intervals as when marching in.

The Colors should ALWAYS be “Presented” prior to posting. After Presenting the Colors, and stepping off in the above stated paragraph, the Color Team would then march and orient themselves behind the stanchions where the Colors are to be placed.

The situation may arise where you Present the colors and then when stepping off, you just march in a horseshoe maneuver to orient the Color Team behind the stanchions as you have just presented in front of. Once the Color Team has orientated to the correct position, which would place the stanchions to the left of the Color Team. The Color Team will remain in MARK-TIME, awaiting the Command sequence:

- **“COLORS”**
 - Rifles
 - The command, “Colors” is given on the left foot, you would then go into Mark-Time, right step (immediately after command of Colors), left step, right step and then Click-in with the Left foot to position of ATTENTION. RIFLES REMAIN FACING IN THE SAME DIRECTION AS THE APPROACH.
 - Flags
 - When the Color Team Commander gives the command of, **“COLORS”**, Flag Bearers will initiate a automatic turn to their left to the stanchions. The sequence of steps is: Command given on the left step, right step, left step, right step then click in with the left foot to the position of Attention.

This turn should be gradual and smooth using all the steps to complete the rotation / turn.

- Flags, still at the PORT-ARMS position for the sequence of commands specific to only the Flags:

- **“READY-TWO”**
 - Flags are placed over the stanchions but not in
- **“READY –TWO”**
 - Flags are put in the stanchion, *NOTE: Flag Bearers should be looking down on the same side, then slowly raise their head looking forward, not up*
- **“READY-TWO”**
 - Look-up and assure the eagle on the top the flag pole is forward or that the flag pole hem is facing you, slowly lower your head to face directly ahead
- **“READY-TWO”**
 - Un-furl the flag

At this point there are different versions on the hand movement once the Flag is un-furled. A slight head- nod by the Honcho and you leave your arms outstretched on either side of the flag, or at the head-nod you return your arms to your sides at the position of Attention.

- **“COLORS”**
 - Flags
 - On the Command of “Colors”, the flag bearers do an auto turn to their right, using the step sequence of, left step, right step, left step, right step, (turn should be complete) and the next left step is stepping off or marching forward.
 - Rifles
 - Rifles complete the same sequence of steps, still facing forward marching in MARK-TIME, and step off or march forward at the same time.

The Color Team will then march ceremoniously out of the room / area where the Flags where posted.

Retrieval, the Color Team would march up to the stanchions, once at the proper spot and spacing, the Color Team in MARK-TIME; the Honcho would begin the sequence of commands:

- **“COLORS”**
 - Flags
 - Would then initiate the automatic turn or left facing movement, same step sequence as described above.
 - Rifles
 - Face forward, same step sequence all stopping together.
- **“READY-TWO”**
 - Flags
 - Reach out and down to grasp the Flags

- **“READY-TWO”**
 - Pull the flags out of the stanchions
- **“READY-TWO”**
 - Pull the flags to the PORT-ARMS position
- **“COLORS”**
 - Flags
 - Step sequence with turning movement to right, left step, right step, left step, right step and left step, stepping off and moving forward.
 - Rifles
 - Same step sequence, Mark-Time, stepping off simultaneously with the Flag Bearers.

The Color Team will then leave ceremoniously.