

82nd Airborne Division Association

How to Start a Chapter Color Guard

One of the most effective means of establishing visibility of your Chapter and the Association is through Color Guard activities. There are many opportunities for participation in the community, in parades and other events. The Color Guard is a means of recruiting new members when troopers see the team and become aware of a chapter's existence in the community. The Color Guard develops an esprit de corps among its members and the rest of the Chapter. It gives members of the team a sense of involvement and a reason to attend meetings and remain active. It gives other members of the Chapter pride in membership when they see the Color Guard perform. Holding competitions with other chapter Color Guards is another great way to interest members in attending chapter events.

1. A Chapter Chairman who wishes to start a Chapter Color Guard must first find out if there is interest by the members to do so. This can be done first through informal talks with members to determine how they feel about starting a Color Guard, as well as asking how many would realistically participate once a ceremonial team was formed.
2. When there is sufficient support, voiced informally, bring the matter of forming a Color Guard to the general membership. Discuss the following:
 - a. Need for approval and support from chapter for the team.
 - b. Benefits of pride and visibility to the Chapter in having a team.
 - c. Demanding discipline and training necessary for the team.
 - d. Types of activities for team participation.
3. Once authorized, the Chapter Chairman should assign a QUALIFIED volunteer as Drill Leader of the team.
4. Select, after try-outs, a minimum of 4-6 members to participate.
5. Plan an Organizational Meeting for the Team. Set time and place of meeting and obtain phone numbers for reminder calls as the date approaches.
6. The Team Leader will be responsible for calling, conducting meetings, and drill training of the team.

Note: Usually, members of a Color Guard buy their own uniforms. In some cases, chapters subsidize some of their expenses. There is no need to buy expensive dress uniforms. As long as each member is wearing the same outfit, they will look good. To begin with, a sport jacket, shirt and tie, and cap or beret will make an attractive appearance.

7. Team Leader should make recommendations to Chapter Chairman on decisions regarding:
 - a. Recruitment of new Team members.
 - b. Eligibility of Team members.
 - c. Equipment to be ordered (rifles, flags, taped music, etc.). For flag folding, Drill and Ceremony manual, Army Field Manual 22-5, and the American Legion US Flag Code of Etiquette will be needed.

- d. Uniforms (including headgear, footwear, patches, ribbons, badges, pistol belts, etc.)
 - e. Funding of fund-raising activities for the above
 - f. Performance commitments.
8. The Team Leader must have accurate records kept on all Team meetings and activities of the Team in community. Report at general membership and/or Chapter Newsletter.

The Color Guard of a chapter helps mold the perception of the Chapter and the Association to the public. Be it a Holiday Parade, Patriotic Programs, or giving a final tribute to a veteran at a funeral service, the Color Guard provides a much needed service while also strengthening Chapter camaraderie.