

# Instructions to the Colour Guard

Von Steuben describes this important task to Ensigns thusly:

*“When on that duty, they should consider the importance of the trust reposed in them; and when in action, resolve not to part with colours but with their lives. As it is by them the battalion dresses when marching in line, they should be very careful to keep a regular step, and by frequent practice accustom themselves to march straight forward to any given objective.” – von Steuben*

1. The Colour Guard shall consist of 1 Ensign, 11 Privates, and 1 NCO.
2. The Colour Guard shall be formed thusly at the center of the Battalion line.

PPPEPPP  
PPPSPPP

3. Those soldiers assigned to the Colour Guard shall be chosen from those veteran soldiers who display the honour of the Battalion as this duty is of the utmost importance to the security and safety of the Battalion.
4. Those soldiers assigned to the colour guard shall hold their fire in battle, waiting until such time as the colours might be in danger from the enemy. At this point, the colour guard must expend every effort to insure the safety of the Battalion colours.
5. When the Battalion is encamped and not in use with the Battalion on the Parade, the Battalion Colours shall be posted to the front of the Adjutant’s tent at the center of the Battalion front.

## Of Marching with Colours

The following are instructions to the Ensign when the Battalion is Marching in Line.

*Battalion! Forward !*

At this caution the ensign with the colours advances six paces; the serjeant who covered him, taking his place. The whole are to dress by the colours (*Note: this does not mean the whole is standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the colour guard*). The commandant of the battalion will be posted two paces in front of the colours, and will give the ensign an object to serve as a direction for him to march straight forward. Note that the Ensign will also serve to set the pace of the Battalion (along with the drums). It is therefore critical that the Ensign maintain an even, steady pace.

*March!*

The Ensign who carries the colours will be careful to march straight to the object given him by the colonel; to do which, he must fix on some intermediate object (*e.g. The Commandant instructs the Ensign to march toward a tree at the far end of the field. The Ensign should try to find some other object in direct line to the tree such as a fencepost, tree, hillock, etc. In this way the Ensign can line up on both objects and insure that he is marching in a straight line*).

If many Battalions are in the line, the Ensigns must dress by the Ensign in the center of the line. If there are only two, they will dress by each other. They must be very careful not to advance beyond the battalion they are to dress by, it being much easier to advance than to fall back.

Should a Battalion by any cause be hindered from advancing in line with the rest, the Ensign of that Battalion must drop his colours, as a signal to the other Battalions (who might otherwise stop to dress by them) not to conform to their movements; the colours to be raised again when the Battalion has advanced to its post in the line.

The officers commanding platoons will continually have an eye over them (the colours), immediately remedying any defect, carefully dressing with the center, and keeping step with the colours.

*Battalion! Halt!*

The whole stop short on the feet then advanced.

*Dress to the Right!*

The men dress to the right, and the colours fall back into the ranks.

As in the instructions for all of the above movements, the entire Battalion will take their direction and dress in all Battalion formations. This includes the passage of defiles, displaying from column into line, retiring, and etc...