

Duties of the 2nd Wisconsin Color Guard

1. Your first job is to protect the flag from damage or unauthorized capture. Be especially careful of firing weapons, trees and other tearing threats. Do not be afraid to move or lower the flag to protect it!
2. When possible, the color guard should be made up of a Sergeant in charge as flag bearer and corporals acting as the guard. However, since small units typically do not have enough Sergeants and Corporals to spare, any experienced veteran can be appointed or volunteer.
3. The US flag should be on the left (looking out from the line) and the subordinate colors on the right.
4. At Shoulder Arms the flag should be vertical, holding the flag firmly with the left hand near the base, which is on the hip, and the right hand at shoulder height. At "Present-Arms" lift the right hand to eye-height and extend it straight out creating a 45° angle.
5. Typically, the 2nd Wisconsin will have the following color guard: US Flag, Color Sgt., Wisconsin Flag and two ranks of men directly behind them. These Rear Guards are responsible for keeping the open space in the line for the flag bearers to return to. They must also keep the company aligned on the Flag Bearers as they advance; The Color Guard will not mount bayonets (flags tend to catch)
6. At the command "Battalion, forward . . .," both ranks of the Color Guard take one step forward. The Bearer(s) and the two Guards next to them (the Color Rank) take an additional five steps forward without breaking stride. The rear rank has now just filled the gap in the battalion ranks as shown in Diagram [1]. The rear ranks should not "dress to the middle" as we must maintain their spot open so the Rear Guard can step back for the return of the Color Guard to the front rank.
7. At the command "March!," the Color Rank and battalion step off smartly. The Bearer keeps his position in front of the rest of the Color Guard by choosing a point somewhere ahead and marching toward it. The members of the Color Guard remaining in the battalion line should NOT attempt to regulate the six-pace gap, except on instruction from the Battalion Commander. However, they MUST maintain alignment on the Colors and never push the unit into a drift. Do not be afraid to push back. It is up to you to maintain unit alignment on the Colors!
8. The Color Guard should start slowly (half steps) until the entire unit is moving. Once everyone is moving step out in your normal pace. Coordinate your speed and movement with the left and right forward guides, but only take commands from the commander. Do not let yells from the ranks direct your movements.
9. At the command "Battalion, Halt!," everyone halts. At the command "Guides and Colors . . . Post!," the Color Rank should face about, march smartly back to its position, and face about again, the rear rank Guards having stepped back one pace to receive them.
10. At the command "Fire by . . .," the whole Color Guard takes one step backwards, bringing the Color Rank into the rear rank of the battalion. [2] The Bearer should probably order this when he hears the preparatory command with the local command "Color Guard, one step backward, March!" The Bearer(s) should furl the flag(s) against the pole and keep them from damage.
11. If the unit is to make a final advance on a position, "Charge Bayonet" for example, the Color Guard moves to the front rank, but does not advance the usual 6 paces. They must keep the flag protected from any fire while advancing [3].
12. The Color Guard typically should not fire their weapons during general engagements to avoid damaging the flag (and in theory that they should have a round ready in an emergency).
13. In the event of a retreat, the Guard should skedaddle faster than the others. When going to the rear, the Bearer(s) should change positions with the rear rank guards [4].
14. Members of the Color Guard should prepare in advance what to do when they die in battle (and most of them will die!). Discuss among the Guard who will take up the Colors when they fall. Also discuss among the men around you what to do if the whole Color Guard goes down. PLAN. You can improvise when and how you go down, but do not improvise who will take-up the flag and where you will meet later. When a Flag Bearer goes down, he should take and protect the rear end of the Color Guard. He should be the last to go.
15. Only allow your flag to be captured if it has been pre-scripted or agreed to by your commander and the commanders of the opponents. In the event that your flag is captured, it is the responsibility of the Bearer to go with the flag (go ahead and act "captured") and see that it is returned safely.

Positions of the Color Guard

(O= Officer, 1s= 1st Sergeant, 2s= Left Guide, P= Private, C= Corporal, FC= File Closers, 1-8= Guards, B= Bearer, | \ = Front)

Color Company with Color Guard in Line of Battle

| \ (Color Company)

2SCPPCO | 2s B^{US} 1 B^{wis} C P P P C C P P P P C O
P P P P P 1 S | 4 5 6 P P P P P P P P P P 1 s
7 8 9 FC FC

Diagram 1

Battalion in position of Forward March

	\							
Left Guide		B ^{US} 1 B ^{wis}					Right Guide	
_____		4 5 6					_____	
_____		7 8 9					_____	

Diagram 2

Battalion at Halt, firing

	\						
_____		B ^{US} 1 B ^{wis}				_____	
LG		3 4 5				RG	
		6 7 8					

Diagram 3

Battalion at Charge Bayonet, Forward March

	\						
LG						RG	
_____		B ^{US} 1 B ^{wis}				_____	
_____		4 5 6				_____	
		7 8 9					

Diagram 4

Battalion retreating

	\						
_____		4 5 6				_____	
_____		7 8 9				_____	
LG		B ^{wis} 1 B ^{US}				RG	