OUTDOOR FLAG CEREMONY  
  
Colors and Retreat: When the flag is raised in the morning, it is spoken of as "Colors." When the flag is lowered at the end of the day it is called "Retreat."  
  
Color Bearer: The red sash, if worn, goes over the right shoulder and is tied with a square knot over the left hip.  
  
Color Guard: Red sashes, if worn, are tied around the waist on the left side. There are generally four guards, but there may be two, six or eight.  
  
Formation: The group proceeds in single file and forms a horseshoe around the flagpole and stands at attention. Color Guard (bearer and guards) then advance with the Color Bearer preceding the guards, who follow immediately behind in twos. They take position in front of the flagpole and stand at attention facing the pole during the entire ceremony.  
  
Silence: There is absolute silence from the time the group moves forward until it returns to the starting point. The Color Guard is the "Official Guardian" of the flag and does not sing or speak.  
  
Ceremony: The ceremony takes place after the flag has been raised or before it is lowered. The ceremony itself varies but often consists of the Pledge of Allegiance, the Promise and Law, patriotic or nature poetry, and songs.  
  
Salute: The salute for Girl Scouts is the hand over heart, civilian salute. The group gives full salute at Colors from the moment the flag starts upward holding salute until it reaches the top. At retreat, the full salute begins the moment the flag starts down. The flag is lowered slowly, and the salute is held until it arrives at the bottom and is in the hands of the Color Bearer.  
  
Raising / Lowering: The clasps on the rope should be the same distance apart as the eyelets in the flag. All clasps should be fastened on the flag before it is started upward. At Colors, one guard may hold the flag as the Color Bearer attaches it to the rope before raising it briskly to the top. At Retreat, the first two Color Guards may step forward to catch the flag as it is lowered so that is does not touch the ground. The upper corner of the flag should be in the Color Bearer's hands before she unfastens the clasps.  
  
Folding: The flag is held by the Color Guard with the blue field nearest the flagpole. It is folded lengthwise in half, then again lengthwise in half, folding the blue field underneath toward the outside. The last couple (farthest away from the pole) begin folding the flag in a triangle. They fold until they can pass it on to other members of the Color Guard. This continues until the flag is in a triangle.  
  
Placing Folded Flag: The Color Guard resumes its original position. One member of the first couple steps up in front of the Color Bearer with the folded flag. She places it in the bearer's outstretched hands, so that it can be carried point forward, then returns to position.  
  
Return: After the ceremony one of the ways the Color Guard may retire is as follows:  
  
The Color Bearer does a right-about face. At the same time two of the guards turn left and face in, the other two turn right and face in. The bearer walks forward between the lines; the first two guards follow. The color Bearer leaves the field ahead of the others in formation, and the campers fall in behind.  
  
Commands:   
  
POSTING COLORS -  
  
Company, attention.  
  
Color Guard, attention.  
  
Color Guard, advance.  
  
Color Guard, present the Colors.  
  
Girl Scouts, the flag of your country. Pledge Allegiance.  
  
(Poem or song)  
  
Color Guard, dismissed.  
  
(Color Guard steps back one step and salutes the flag with their hands over her hearts before retreating.)  
  
Company, dismissed.  
  
RETREAT COLORS -  
  
Company, attention.  
  
Color Guard, advance.  
  
(Poem may be read here followed by "Taps") or  
Color Guard, retire the colors.  
  
(Color guards salute the flag and step forward  
(Flag is lowered and folded)  
  
Color Guard, dismissed.  
  
Company, dismissed.

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