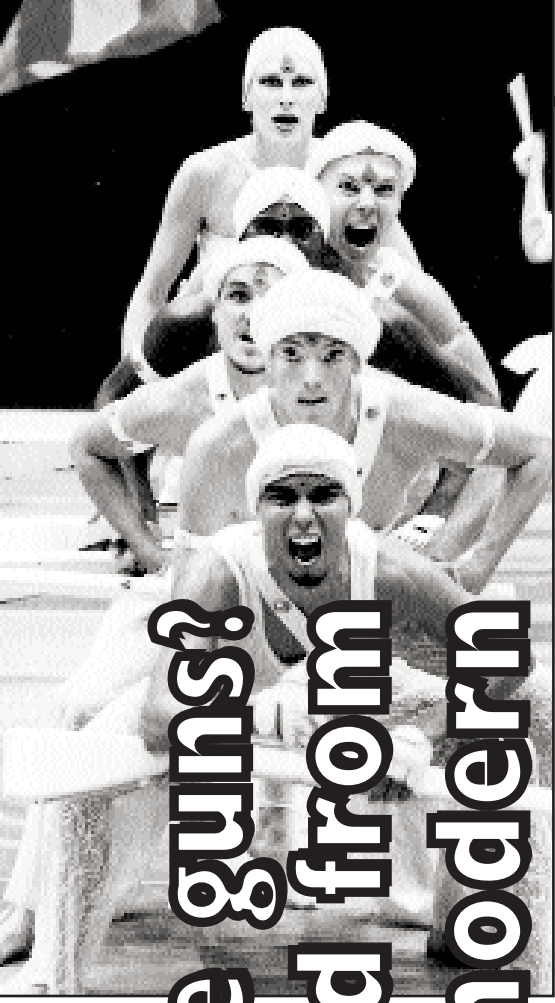


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# Why the guns? Color guard from military to modern



## Chapter 8 by Shirley Stratton Dorritie

*Dateline: Saturday, April 13, 2002:* It is the Winter Guard International Independent World Championships at the University of Dayton Arena, Dayton, OH.

Pride of Cincinnati floats above the floor exploring the vantage point of clouds. Fantasia depicts the Kama Sutra, taking the audience on a spine-tingling roller coaster of primitive desire.

Feats of physical strength and dramatic mastery abound. Viewers from any background would be entertained and enthralled -- the quality of the performance and intricacy of choreography stands up against professional dance companies.

While many traditional color guard viewers may wonder how the activity got from where it started to where it is today, those unfamiliar with the military basis of "color guard" could very well ask, "Why the guns?"

The short answer is that in U. S. tradition, the color guard was the group of weapons that guarded the national and regimental "colors." Founded upon this military tradition and sparked by both imagination and competitive desire, modern color guard has added multi-ethnic pageantry, theater, dance, performance art and stagecraft to the basic structure of flags and the weapons by which they are guarded.

A shorter answer is, "because it's fun."

Interested in a longer answer? Well, it all started in 1777, when Benjamin Franklin (in Paris as an agent for the embattled British Colonies) composed a letter to Gen. George Washington. In this letter, Franklin introduced an ex-Prussian army captain with an impressive visage, formerly attached to the general staff of Frederick the Great.

The letter earned Frederick William Baron von Steuben an invitation to join Washington at Valley Forge, PA. Upon his arrival, von Steuben was appointed as inspector general of the downhearted, disorganized Continental Army and ordered to turn it into an impressive and efficient fighting machine.

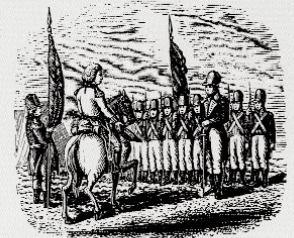
To do so, von Steuben personally undertook the training of 100 specially selected men who then became his instructional staff. In the process, he wrote the first U.S. manual of drill, ceremony and service regulations. His "Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States" was adopted by Congress in

1779 and remained the official U.S. military guide until 1812.

In this manual, von Steuben laid the foundation for ceremonial and competitive color guard in the United States. His "Manual Exercise" of weapons and "Honors Due From Guards to General Officers and Others" are clearly recognizable as early forms of what would become the "requirements" of competitive color guard --

### Baron von Steuben's Revolutionary War Drill Manual

A Facsimile Reprint of the 1794 Edition

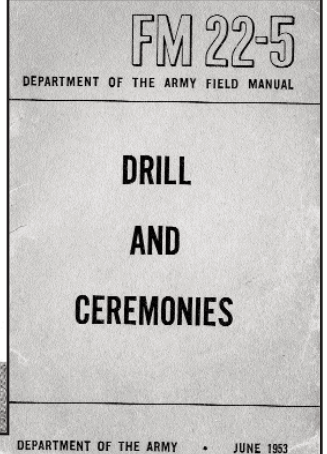
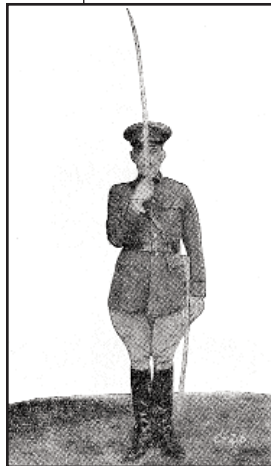


Frederick William Baron von Steuben

(Above and left) Cover and text from "Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States," by Frederick William Baron von Steuben, Dover Publications, New York, copyright 1985; (below left) illustration from "Manual of Basic Training and Standards of Proficiency for the National Guard, Volume 1," published by the United States Government Printing Office, copyright 1927; (below) FM22-5 (from the collection of Frank and Shirley Dorritie).

#### THE MANUAL EXERCISE.

- I.  
*Posture—Firelock!* Two motions.
- 1st. With your left hand turn the firelock briskly, bringing the lock to the front, at the same instant seize it with the right hand just below the lock, keeping the piece perpendicular.
  - 2d. With a quick motion bring up the firelock from the shoulder directly before the face, and seize it with the left hand just above the lock, so that the little finger may rest upon the feather spring, and the thumb lie on the stock; the left hand must be of an equal height with the eyes.
- II.  
*Cock—Firelock!* Two motions.
- 1st. Turn the barrel opposite to your face, and place your thumb upon the cock, raising the elbow square at this motion.
  - 2d. Cock the firelock by drawing down your elbow, immediately placing your thumb upon the breech-pin, and the fingers under the guard.
- III



the Presentation of the Colors, Posting of the Colors, Manual of Arms, Retrieval of Colors and Pass in Review.

In the 20th century, the Department of the Army "Field Manual, FM 22-5 Drill and Ceremonies" (pictured above) continued the traditions set forth by von Steuben. It presented guidelines for all ceremonies, defined basic marching maneuvers, manual of arms and position of the National Colors.

Most of these ceremonies involved the National Colors in some way and the majority required presenting the National Colors to a reviewing officer or official, passing in review of the official, posting the Colors to begin the event and retrieving the Colors at its conclusion.

The meetings and ceremonies of veteran's

(Top) Fantasia winter guard, 2002; (below) Pride of Cincinnati winter guard, 2002 (photos from the collection of Winter Guard International).

and fraternal organizations included many of these same features, as did many civic ceremonies. Each VFW and American Legion post normally had a ceremonial color guard, filled by its most respected members.

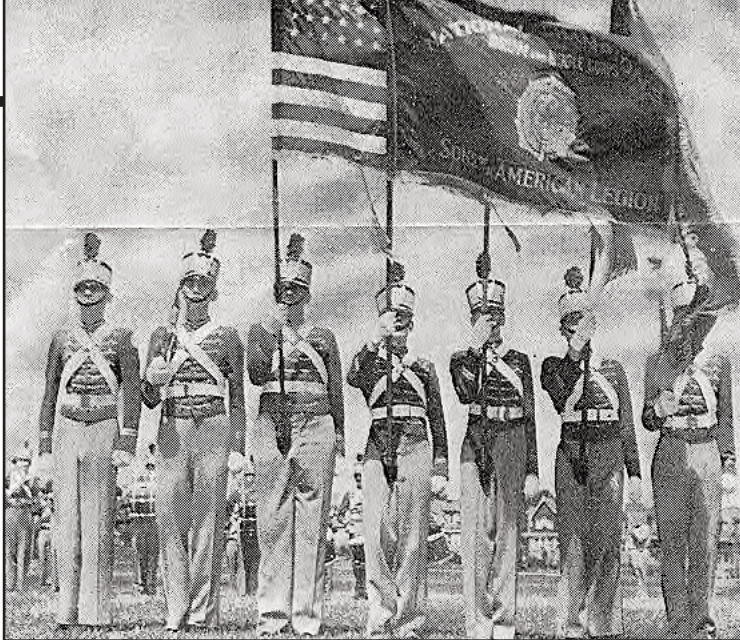
In addition, the VFW, American Legion, fraternal organizations, Boy Scouts, Police Athletic Leagues, Catholic Youth Organization and various other civic and social groups began to sponsor color guards for their ceremonies and events, and to use them to lead their groups in processions, reviews and parades.

In conjunction with the development of competitive drum and bugle corps, these organizations began to sponsor competitions between color guards representing each post, parish, etc. Rifle drill teams were also organized and showcased in competition.

Competitive circuits sprang up around the country to bring guards, drill teams and drum corps in the local area into regular competition with one another. Drum and bugle corps incorporated the National Colors and color guards into their presentations and the two activities grew up side-by-side.

Many drum and bugle corps color guards also competed on their own in the "comp" guard circuits. The VFW, American Legion and CYO sponsored national championships, and other high-prestige title competitions abounded.

Embedded in military and civilian use of the color guard was the intention that the presentation of the National Colors be an emotionally stirring event, one that stayed in the memory and attached a feeling of pride and excitement to the sight of the Colors.



The Skokie, IL, Sons of the American Legion color guard, 1949 (photo from the collection of corpsreps.com).

This required the imaginative use of all available components, including the assignment of the most respected persons in the group to the color guard or "honor guard." Beyond that, it required the refinement of their bearing into an impressive stature, the exact detailing of every aspect of uniform and equipment, and the ability of the group to move with absolute unity and precision.

Additional flashes of excitement created by movement of the weapons beyond the prescribed manual of arms and/or stylized approaches to the presentation increased intensity of the experience for the viewers.

Although specific rules varied between sponsoring organizations, the basic competitive color guard program took place in a rectangular area (either indoors or out), with a starting line at one end and a finish line at the other. The presentation and saluting point was at the center of the sideline to the right of the starting line.

Rules required each unit to enter the competitive area over the starting line and exit over the finish line and execute in front of the saluting officer the following requirements (in any order) that included the following:

*Pass in Review:* units marched past saluting point and saluted while marching.

*Present the Colors:* the colors advanced and halted; the guard saluted and the flag bearers dipped their flags.

*Post and Retrieve the Colors:* the colors were placed in a receptacle. Weapons presented their arms and flag bearers rendered a hand salute. Typically, a routine was then performed. Flag bearers resumed positions at the receptacles. Weapons presented their arms and flag bearers rendered a hand

salute. Colors were retrieved.

Competitive drum and bugle corps programs included similar requirements -- entry over the starting line ("off the line"), presentation of the National Colors ("color presentation"), a production in "concert" and "exit" over the finish line.

In addition to the National Colors and guarding weapons, pennants or flags were gradually included to serve as "guide-ons" for squads of musicians.

The means of presenting the entry, requirements and exit was left to the creativity

of the designer. With the advent of competition, the impetus to be memorable to the judges and the audience was even stronger. Color guards and drum corps strove to bring a unique quality to their presentations, both through *what* they did and *how* they did it.

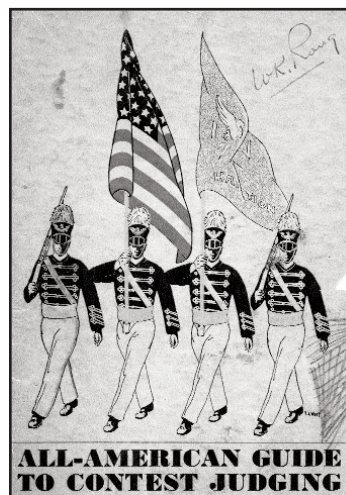
Although uniformity and precision were the basis for the judging system, imagination began to play a bigger role with each passing competitive season. In most cases, this translated into the creative use of the obstacles presented by the competitive rules. Ironically, the largest obstacle of all was the American flag itself.

The 1954 "All-American Guide to Contest Judging" states that the "Flag Code" must be adhered to when using any form of the American flag and assessed a 10-point penalty for any and all flag code violations. This applied to both competitive color guards and drum and bugle corps.

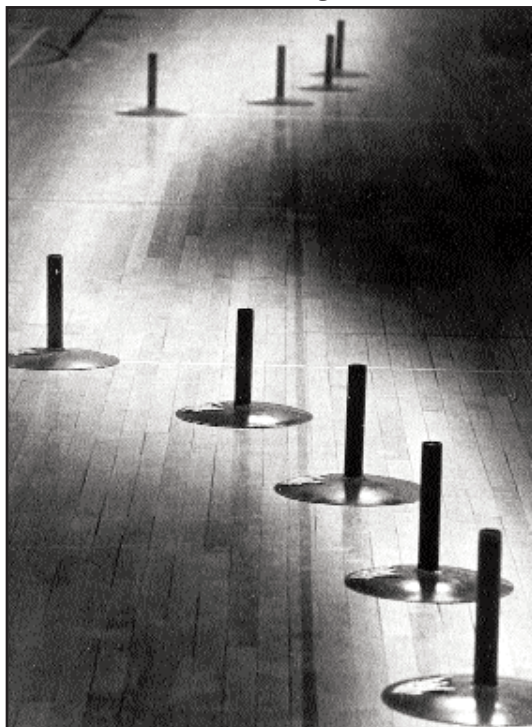
Penalties within other organizations ranged from one to two points per infraction. Unfortunately, there was considerable variance in the interpretation and definition of the "Flag Code," as opposed to FM 22-5, as opposed to "Flag Etiquette," as opposed to judging convenience and/or the personal opinions of contest sponsors throughout the country.

The United States Flag Code (Public Law 829, 77th Congress, Chapter 806, 2nd Session, H. J. Res. 359 as amended by Public Law 107, 83rd Congress) put only minimal restrictions on the ceremonial use of the National Colors:

Sec. 3, "That the flag, when carried in a procession with another flag or flags, should be either on the marching right -- that is, the flag's own right -- or, if there is a line of other flags, in



Cover of the All-American manual, published by the All-American Association of Contest Judges, copyright 1954 (from the collection of Frank and Shirley Dorritie).



"Buckets" used to post flags at an indoor color guard show (photo from the collection of Drum Corps World).

front of the center of that line.”

c. “No other flag or pennant should be placed above or, if on the same level, to the right of the flag of the United States of America. . .”

Sec. 4, “That no disrespect should be shown to the flag of the United States of America and the flag should not be dipped to any person or thing. Regimental colors, state flags and organization or institutional flags are to be dipped as a mark of honor.”

c. “The flag should never be carried flat or horizontally, but always aloft and free.”

From this foundation and the traditions of military ceremony, many rules of “Flag Etiquette” emerged which varied from contest to contest and, in many cases, the penalties assessed for violations determined the outcome of major contests. Among these rules:

**The National Color bearer may not execute a back step, side step, “to the rear,” “about face” or any other “theatrical” step.** This rule was intended to

simply the reading of the position and direction of motion of the National Colors relative to all other flags.

**The National Colors must be “guarded” by an “authorized” weapon at all times and no piece of equipment can pass between the National Colors and its guard unless that equipment also qualifies as a guard.** The distance the weapon could be from the National Colors without incurring a penalty varied a great deal -- the American Legion allowed a three-pace distance, VFW rules allowed only one pace. This rule emerged out of the traditional purpose of the color “guard.” The U.S. Flag Code did not require that the National Colors be guarded.

**Authorized weapons were:** a) rifles or simulated rifles conforming to the original design of military rifles past or present (simulated rifles were initially required to have a sling, a trigger and housing, an ammunition chamber and moveable bolt action to open the chamber); b) side arms or simulated side arms; c) sabres or swords designed for cutting, thrusting or slashing, with one or both edges sharpened and a minimum of 24 inches in blade length.

**No flag may pass through the immediate front (the infinite path through which the Colors can pass safely without contact) of the National Colors without dipping in salute** (termed a “sweeping” violation).

**No flag may be in front of the National Colors facing the same direction** (termed a “trailing” violation). In many areas of the country, the 180-degree circle to infinity in front of the Colors was included in this interpretation. In other areas, it was the 90-degree quarter circle to the right and front of the Colors.

**The palm of the hand may not touch the National Colors** (termed “grasping”).

**No flag may be higher than the National Colors.** The logical extension of this rule was that the National Colors be posted



The Casper, WY, Troopers, 1970 (photo from the collection of the Troopers).

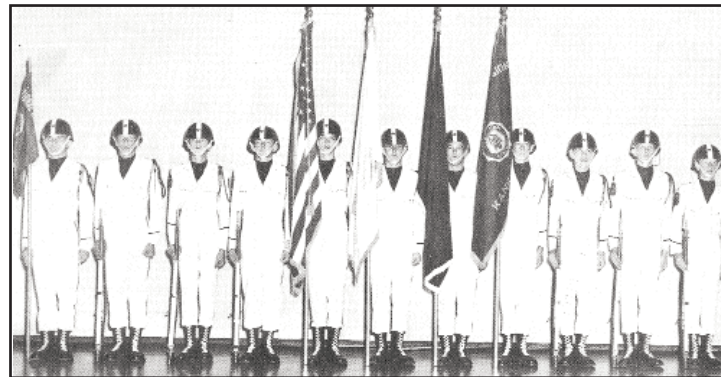
simultaneously, or after all other flags, and retrieved simultaneously, or before all other flags. However, many areas of the country required the reverse.

The end result was that incorporating the National Colors into a competitive program was a challenging and risky prospect, particularly if one planned to compete in more than one circuit or region of the country. Many designers opted to send the “A squad” (American flag squad) to the corner of the floor or field after the requirements. This meant that the other members of the color guard became increasingly more important in the overall program.

Additional contest rules had a great impact on the look and vocabulary of the color guards. Headgear was required as part of the uniform for all members. Uniforms reflected the look of the sponsoring organization and almost always included white or black boots. Competitive color guard allowed for a limited number of drummers to provide a cadence, but required all guards to sustain a tempo between 128 and 132 beats per minute.

Equipment could not be grounded other than the posting of the flags.

Flag poles were seven to eight feet tall and the flags -- in the colors of the representing



The Kankakee Shadows color guard, 1961 (iphoto from the December 1961 issue of Drum Corps World magazine, Chicago IL, page 3).

organization -- were constructed of sturdy fabric intended to survive many seasons of use. Many rifles weighed 9.5 pounds and even simulated rifles weighed more than five pounds. The required sling, trigger guard and moveable chamber bolt made spinning and other manipulation of rifles extremely difficult.

Dropped equipment incurred a one-tenth penalty. All dropped equipment was returned to the bearer by a judge. Retrieval of a drop by the bearer was considered a breach of dignity and military bearing worthy of a further penalty of one full point. In many areas, a two-tenth “unit penalty” was also assessed as an assumption of potential errors that could have taken place while the equipment was out of the bearer’s hands.

All of this dramatically limited the equipment vocabulary. A judging system based on uniformity and precision meant that more difficult equipment maneuvers frequently brought more risk than reward.

The underlying rhythm of every group was provided by the high mark-time and the primary tools of expression were height of leg-lift, marching style, uniformity, dignity and military bearing, snap and the absence of error.

Famed visual adjudicator George Oliviero remembers the competitive color guard scene in Boston during these early years: “In 1958, I went to the local gymnasium with a friend to see my first color guard contest . . . Ike Ianessa was president. There were three to six drummers standing on the back sideline of the gym. They provided a steady beat and that, my friends, was the music.

“That year, I saw St. Rose of Chelsea and they were graceful and stunned me with their precision. I was hooked. . . Dini Melaragni taught St. Rose. He worked at the Naval Shipyard and was a dominant presence in competition color guard. He was also about six foot five inches and about 400 pounds and nice as can be.

“There was Jack Whelan who was teaching St. Anthony’s of Alston, a perennial champion both locally and where ever Jack took them nationally. Then in the late 1960s, there was Bruce Leo who had the audacity to *spin* flags!

Mary Berkeley brought something other than the equipment manual when she put her girls from Holy Family in Rockland on the floor without shoes, dressed as barnyard workers and danced a bit!”

Visual legend Bobby Hoffman described his late 1950s introduction to color guard during a 1977 *Drum Corps World* interview: “. . . these three or four young ladies came down to (Hawthorne Caballeros) rehearsal and they were looking for a color

guard instructor . . . I figured, what the hell, I can use the money. I'll do it. It turned out it was a comp guard and I had never seen a comp guard.

"Well," they told me, "You put it on a basketball court and you move around like this and you do this and that's it."

"Now picture this. We arrived at the contest. I had never seen one and the Mello-Dears come on. They just laid me out. Then the Colleens came out, same thing. By then I knew what I was in for. This guy, Bud Johnson, was teaching a guard (Bracken, I think). He asks, 'This the first time you've ever been to a guard show?'"

"I said, 'Yeah.' Fifteen minutes later he sees me bringing my guard onto the floor and he said, 'I gotta get a seat to watch this.' So, needless to say, we really got our legs cracked, bad! But the next year we were competitive and came in second at the end of the year." (*McGee, F. and Boyle, M., DCW Vol. 6, No. 1, April 1977, p. 28.*)

Among the powerhouse color guards in the New York/New Jersey area were the MelloDears and Meadowlarks, Colleens, Bonnie Scots, New York Wildcats, Skylarks, Hawthorne Muchachos, Memorial Cadets, Los Santos, Valley Grenadiers and the Bon Bons.

In Western Pennsylvania, Norwin Knights High School, Catholic Daughters of America Drum & Bugle Corps, Cranberry Passajeros Fife and Drum Corps, Meridian Woodpeckers Fife and Drum Corps and the General Butler Vagabonds set standards.

In the Midwest, the Mariners, Mutineers, Phantomettes, Kanakee Shadows, Corsairs, Buccaneers, McHenry Viscounts, Racine Kilties and the Casper Troopers became legendary.

In the Midwest, Gary Czapinski was performing in the Mutineers and teaching several other color guards. At the age of 21, he became director of the Midwest Color Guard Circuit. He describes the conflicts that arose between the contest rules and the wishes of the participating groups in the 1960s and early 1970s.

"Contests were won or lost on finger positions on the sabres during the Pass in Review. In the Midwest, we started to think that this isn't something that really, really, advances the art form. It got to the point where you could just do those requirements only so perfectly and then what? We didn't want the contests determined by these issues."

"I was judging at the time and the units all looked the same and had the same requirements, so how we separated them was by style. We started to try new things. I remember that C.H. Beebe ran a Boy Scout color guard, called the Madison Scouts, and he wouldn't carry rifles because they were a Boy Scout troop and carrying weapons was against their code."

"Doc Patton, then the director of the Midwest Color Guard Circuit, said they shouldn't be able to compete without rifles."

This was a big issue at the time, with much debate and reference to the FM 22-5. Eventually the units overrode Doc Patton's decision and told the Scouts they didn't have to carry rifles if they didn't want to."

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, comp guards began to push the boundaries more and more, and every innovation found its way to the drum corps field. Indoors, "organizational" flags became more proficient as an ensemble. On the field, guide-ons became full-sized flags staged in groups rather than as individuals at the end of bugle squads.

Techniques for spinning flags were developed. Simulated rifles became somewhat lighter and easier to manipulate. As spinning and tossing weapons emerged, rifle and sabre lines appeared both indoors and out.

A cycle of growth began -- a new



The Spectacle City Mariners color guard, Greendale, WI, late 1960s (photo from the collection of Gary Czapinski).

vocabulary required modifications in the equipment, which allowed for new vocabulary, which required modifications in the equipment -- and on it went.

The contribution of the color guard to the overall drum corps program began to shift

from strict military maneuvers to signature effects created by featured elements. Among the most memorable was the Casper Troopers' breathtaking "suicide toss" involving the rifle line and a trusting drum major.

While VFW rules included senior men, women and all-boy, all-girl or mixed juniors divisions, most color guards were single gender.

Guards in senior corps were male until 1969, when Gene Bennett added a female guard to the Long Island Sunrisers. This opened the door for Eastern senior corps to draw on the considerable talent of female guards competing in Eastern color

guard circuits.

In 1970, Hugh Mahon and Pete Emmons created a female color guard for a previously all-male Garfield Cadets, also facilitating the influx of female comp guard talent.

Comp guards in the East began to use recorded music rather than drummers to accompany their shows. This created an immediate shift from military cadence to all realms of musical possibilities -- including ballet, opera, Broadway and jazz, and the shows naturally reflected this new spectrum.

The use of recorded music spread to other areas of the country at varying rates. Cavalier's color guard instructor Bruno Zuccala recalls, "In 1969, I marched in the Vagabond winter guard (Western Pennsylvania) and we used music for the first time for the first three minutes of the show. It was unheard of in this area."

However, in New Jersey, the use of music was so common that Emmons created controversy by choosing *not* to use it with the 1970 Garfield Cadets. In northern California, recorded music wasn't allowed until 1974.

Drum corps also began to explore thematic and theatrical approaches to their presentations, but this did not come without resistance and challenge. In 1971, the competitive shows of Madison Scouts, Chicago Cavaliers and Blessed Sacramento Golden Knights ventured out of the military and into the theatrical.

The venture caused an uproar, but it also created a wave of change that was unstoppable despite the best efforts of the rulemakers of the activity.

Under the visual design of Gary Czapinski, the 1971 Madison Scouts presented "Scouts in Fantasyland," a theme-based show involving a little *girl* dressed as Alice (director Bill Howard's daughter), a costumed white rabbit, Pinocchio and seven dancing dwarves. Flag bearers portrayed woodcutters sawing logs.

The Cavaliers presented a three-ring circus, complete with clowns, jugglers and a magician. (*See two Madison Scouts photos*



Troopers Drum Major Pete Emmons during a precision rifle toss, 1966 (photo from the collection of the Troopers).



The Santa Clara Vanguard perform their famous "bottle dance" at DCI Midwest Prelims, 1978, in Whitewater, WI (photo by Dave Page from the collection of Drum Corps World).

on page 47 of the "Scouts in Fantasyland" show and one Cavaliers "circus show" photo on page 306 in "A History of Drum & Bugle Corps, Volume 1").

The response to both programs included T-shirts reading "1971: The Year Drum Corps Died" and "Drum Corps RIP 1971." It also included a definitive statement from the "powers that be" in the VFW.

In the February 1972 issue of *Drum Corps World*, A.J. "Tony" Schlecta, chairman of the National Band and Drum Corps Committee of the VFW, announced the rules governing the 1972 national championships to be held in Minneapolis, MN.

To the previous year's rules for drum and bugle corps was added: "To preserve the prestige of this contest being of a semi-military nature in the tradition of drum and bugle corps, there will be No Clowning, Dancing, Prancing or Skipping permitted, nor use of any costumes that are not in conformity with the uniforms of the unit."

Regarding the color guard rules, the following statement was made: "While our

attention has never been called to any dance steps being attempted by color guards, the No Clowning, No Dancing, No Prancing, No Skipping, while not stated in the rules, will apply." (*Drum Corps World*, February 8, 1972, p. 6)

Clearly the traditional policymakers in the drum corps activity wanted to put a stop to any dance or theatricality at their events. However, a new generation of managers, designers and performers was already embarking on a course to determine the corps' own destinies.

With the formation of Drum Corps Associates (1965) and Drum Corps International (1971), rule-making was placed in the hands of the corps themselves and designers in all captions now had input into the system by which they would be judged.

While most corps steered clear of costume changes for many years to come, the influence of theater and dance on the color guards became more and more common.

The 1972 Santa Clara Vanguard's "bottle dance" during their "Fiddler on the Roof" show proved that not only could this influence contain the dignity and integrity of the past, it could elevate the drama of the

musical program to new heights.

In 1973, the Drum Corps Rules Congress adopted the "Competitive Flag Code," which clarified and consolidated other flag codes used around the country. DCI also embraced the comp guard activity and included a national championship for comp guards in its August championship format.

The new rules retained

a one-point penalty for infractions of the flag code, as well as the one-tenth penalty for dropped equipment and one-point penalty for retrieval by the bearer.

By 1974, the DCI contest rules for both drum corps and comp guard no longer included the "requirements," stating that "Each unit may execute any appropriate maneuvers which are intended to generate effect." Guards were allowed a designated equipment person who retrieved and returned dropped equipment, then reported the number of drops to the penalty judge after the performance.

In addition, the rifle hardware that made complicated spin sequences so difficult became optional. Intentional grounding of the equipment was allowed, making dance and theatrical features more feasible and the transitions into them much more expedient. The possibility of each performer using more than one piece of equipment during the performance began to take root.

Because controlling "exposure to error" was still a prominent factor in competitive success, equipment usually supported only the major musical impacts and then stayed still in order to avoid an unnecessary "tic."

Flag vocabulary now included slams, angles and single spins. Rifles accomplished low tosses (doubles and triples). Fan spins and double-fast predominated rifle phrasing. By the mid-1970s, trademark gestures emerged for many guards.

These included Madison Scouts rifle line's "hat bow," the highland steps of the Racine



The Madison Scouts' "hat bow," performed on the track at a show in the late 1970s (photo from the collection of Drum Corps World).

Kilties and the 27th Lancers and the Anaheim Kingsmen's use of the rifle as a mace to depict the mood of *March to the Scaffold*.

The late 1970s were an exciting time. More and more guards explored new territory

### A memory from Gary "Chops" Czapinski

In 1970 and 1971, I was doing several corps with Larry McCormick and we were going in a theatrical direction. We decided to push the issue and went to the (American) Legion (Uniformed Groups) Congress, requesting that the obligatory format of "off the line," "color presentation" and "exit" be dropped. We wanted an open format without a required color presentation. Clarke Williams and Bobby Hoffman joined us on that. We were booted out of the session and were called un-American.

In 1971, we decided to keep pushing. Madison did the "Scouts in Fantasyland" and Cavaliers did the circus. Members of the Madison color guard changed into dwarves from costumes in packs on their backs. Tony Schlecta would not allow us to use this in the show at the VFW Nationals (Dallas, TX). We took it all out just for that show and placed 10th in the finals, much lower than expected based on the corps' quality.

The following year, I was teaching the Santa Clara Vanguard with Pete Emmons. They were playing "Fiddler on the Roof" and Pete and I did a lot of research. We understood that the "bottle dance" was a men's dance and originally intended to do it with the horn line. Gail Royer absolutely refused to consider it, but we kept pushing.

During one rehearsal, when Pete and I weren't there, Scott Pierson and his girlfriend (who was a dancer) took the rifle line away and taught them the "bottle dance." Scott had already blocked it out on the field when Pete and I came back. They showed it to us and then we showed Gail.

It wasn't as bad as Gail thought it would be, so he said "OK, we'll try it." He didn't foresee that it would be any big deal and kept talking about taking it out. But the response was *big* and later in the year I remember Don Angelica saying, "Hey you're getting applause for this -- don't take it out, put more in!"

### **A memory from Sal Salas**

When I first came to the Midwest in 1975 and went to a Midwest Color Guard Circuit show, the number of great guards that competed during that time was incredible. A few come to mind -- the Troopers, what a dominating force in the 1970s! Blue Knights, Seattle Imperials . . . these color guards were truly an inspiration to all of us. The precision of the Troopers, the uniqueness of the Blue Knights in their conquistador costuming and the dance of Seattle -- who could not be inspired by them?

Key figures in my development were Shirlee Whitcomb, a person who would foster growth and challenge and encouraged the "new" and accepted the future; and Mickey Kelly, who was honest and straight-forward. I remember in 1989, at the Boston WGI regional with State Street Review, thinking that we had created a great product and Mickey being honest enough to say things that maybe weren't what I wanted to hear, but to challenge me and make me look at things differently and take the program to the next level.

George Zingali and I both had a way of competing with each other that made us go the next step, to try to outdo each other in the spirit of color guard, to go toward the future and not just the familiar; Stanley Knaub and I competed against each other in the 1970s in individual rifle competitions. I was inspired by the talent he brought to the activity. He was the first person I saw do double-time. Talk about going into my backyard the next day and learning how to do that so the next time I saw him in competition I could do it also! He was a great person and definitely not your "tell you what you want to hear" kind of person. I really got to re-establish our friendship in the summer of 2001 with the Glassmen. He was a talented, knowledgeable man.

Other guards that were inspirational include the Anaheim Kingsmen, Santa Clara Vanguard, Lynwood Diplomats, Blue Devils, 27th Lancers, Quasar, St. Anthony's Imperiales, Phantom Regiment and Cavaliers. Inspirational instructors include Scott Chandler, Jay Murphy, Jeff Namian, John Brazale, Steve Brubaker, Tam Easterwood, Tim Glenn, Carol Abohatab, Denise Bonfigilio and list goes on and on.

### **A memory from Mike Turner**

There is a time within all of us, if we are lucky, to have an experience that makes a profound difference for a moment and then continues to live within our hearts to become a passion. For me, it was the "Bluegrass Nationals" in Lexington, KY, 1974, my first drum and bugle corps show. I saw the Santa Clara Vanguard, Anaheim Kingsmen, Phantom Regiment and the Troopers.

I also saw a corps that I would eventually spend 18 years of my life committed to, the Madison Scouts. They played *Brian's Song* and there were boys in the color guard. That was what I wanted to do. I could not believe what was happening to my body when the Scouts re-entered the field playing with such a force and sound the likes of which I had never heard before. *And there were boys in the color guard.*

I became a member of the Madison Scouts in 1976. Now just imagine, a little kid from Kentucky experiencing the entrance of Sal Salas, my first instructor. He entered the gym wearing brown corduroy overalls trimmed in sequins and three-inch shoes. God, could he spin a rifle! We were innovators that year in more ways than one. We cut the poles from eight feet to seven and a half feet and got rid of the sling. We also learned two completely different shows that year.

Performing with the Madison Scouts throughout my college years made a tremendous difference in the way I looked at the world. I graduated with a degree in business, but began studying modern dance. Spending one weekend a month with friends like Tam Easterwood, Scott Chandler and Jeff Namian broadened my world in a way that is hard to explain. Instructors like Sal, Jimmy Elvord, Ray Baumgardt, Frank Dorritie and Bob Michaelson certainly made Kentucky seem smaller in the world of "drum corps."

Many years later, because of my color guard performing experience, I began to dance professionally. It was so interesting to be on stage with beautifully trained bodies defying gravity, but not having the slightest idea of how to maintain spatial relationships in a circle. I knew that from guard.

I taught the Madison Scouts until 1993 and then moved to San Francisco to teach the Santa Clara Vanguard. But the thrill of "trooping the stands" as a performer is something that will be with me forever. I love teaching and have been fortunate enough to have some of the finest men in the world stand in front of me and say, "Teach me." I have lost a great many of the people in my drum corps family, but many of them are still teaching and judging today.

Great memories would be the first time 27th Lancers produced two flags on the same pole, Phantom Regiment changing to the bust of Beethoven in four counts, the Blue Devils dancing with wings. But, it was an amazing experience to simply bow at the waist with hat in hand and know you were making a whole lot of young men from all over the country say, "I want to do that."

and the performers shaped by this push toward innovation would become the next generation of instructors and designers.

By 1976 and 1977, color guards everywhere had added more detailed character and mood to their programs. Flag poles were shortened, rifles lightened and the equipment was decorated for further effect. Flag tosses appeared and rifle tosses soared.

Equipment exchanges and more complex vocabulary filled longer phrases. In comp guard, equipment and bodies both were moving into new planes.

Bruce Leo's St. Anthony's Imperiales from Everett, MA, were catching saber tosses with their legs and setting unparalleled standards in excellence.



(Right) The St. Anthony's Imperiales were a top competitor in Eastern color guard shows beginning in the early 1960s and continuing through the DCI summer guard championship era in the early 1970s. The Everett, MA, group also participated in WGI title shows into the mid-1980s (photo by Orlin Wagner from the collection of Drum Corps World); (below) the Revere, MA, 27th Lancers were innovators, including having the rifle line lie on their backs spinning rifles in the late 1970s (photo by Ed Ferguson, 1976, from the collection of Drum Corps World).



### Memory from T.J. Doucette

In the late 1970s, St. Anthony's Imperiales from Everett, MA, who represented the highest level of color guard at that time, gave a classic performance. It had long been rumored that their director, Chet Pagliuca, would shut off their music at rehearsal to prepare for any unexpected tape break during a show.

I had never heard of that happening, but at a show in Lynn, it happened shortly after St. Anthony's began their performance. Literally, without missing a beat and without being visibly rattled, their incredibly elegant captain, Terry Fitzgerald, counted them through an astounding performance of their very complex show.

Exchanges, "head choppers" and all were amazing. They handled the situation with such composure, focus and professionalism that, for me, they redefined what a color guard could be. I was as affected by their performance that night as any I have seen anywhere since.

### Memory from Sylvia Nuzzo

I was so inspired by the performers of the Bridgemen color guard. I felt they were exploring something other than drum corps, even if that wasn't their intention.

There is something in the choreography, the show concept, the unconventional staging . . . my first glimpses of the Bridgemen when I was just a kid from Edmonton, ALB, inspired me to feel anything is possible.

George Zingali's St. Anthony's Imperiales (Revere, MA) traveled to California in March 1976, introducing an entirely different show concept and equipment vocabulary to the West Coast and most definitely rocking my world.

I was color guard captain and rifle instructor for the Blue Devils and I remember seeking George out, introducing myself and telling him that I had waited all of my life to see a color guard like his.

George brought that same vocabulary to the field such as double flags, highland dance, kick steps and character work that filled the 27th Lancers' program.

Dressed in pants, sans black leather riding boots, the 27th's rifle line broke out of



The Bayonne Bridgemen, 1977, at DCI East in Allentown, PA, during their "A Chorus Line" production (photo by Art Luebke from the collection of Drum Corps World).

vertical by laying on their backs and spinning parallel with the ground.

The Blue Devils introduced lamé flags, added streamers to the rifles and filled phrases with body shaping and accenting.

The Bayonne Bridgemen braved the challenge of costume effects when the rifle line opened their jackets to spell out "1776-1976" during *Stars and Stripes* and the entire guard appeared as a fully-dressed kick-line to climax the closing production from the new Broadway hit, "A Chorus Line."

In 1977, guards began picking up additional pieces of equipment. The Santa Clara Vanguard's rifles used hoops, as did Phantom Regiment's. The Blue Devils' rifle line used flags, Madison's rifles introduced a rainbow of colored flags, the Blue Stars used red and white umbrellas, Seneca Optimists used a parachute and the entire Garfield Cadets color guard played horns and sang.

Phantom Regiment brought the house down with an instantaneous change to yellow flags during Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*.

On May 14 and 15, 1977, a meeting took place at the Sheraton Palace Hotel in San Francisco, CA.

Organized by Stanley Knaub, the group also included Donald Angelica, Shirlee Whitcomb, Linda Chambers, Marie Grana Czapinski and Brian Johnston.

The goal of the meeting was to create a

actually competed -- the winter!

In addition, the format of the WGI show required four minutes of "authorized equipment" and after that it was "anything goes, except crossing the front boundary."

WGI sponsored regional contests throughout the country in the winter of 1978 and hosted its first WGI "Olympics" in Hoffman Estates, IL, in April of that year. The first WGI champion was George Zingali's Quasar from Revere, MA. In second place was John Brazale's Phantom Regiment, from Rockford IL, and in third place was Stanley Knaub's Seattle Imperials. Each of the top three guards had a distinctive trademark style



The first WGI "Olympics" retreat, 1978 in Hoffman Estates, IL (photo from WGI).

representing the diversity of what the activity now had to offer.

While Quasar and Phantom Regiment were raising the bar for style familiar to the color guard audience, the Seattle Imperials were trying something new.

A Southern California native, Knaub came from the sharp, crisp, "hard-sell" styles of the Anaheim Kingsmen and the Lynwood Diplomats.

Several years later, he wrote of his first rehearsal with the Imperials:

(Below) Quasar from Revere, MA, 1978 at the first WGI "Olympics" (photo from WGI).



The Seattle, WA, Imperials winter guard, 1978 (photo from the collection of Drum Corps World).



"I decided to put them through a major test to determine what reference to style they had. This was a memorable moment. For approximately 45 minutes, I had them try this extremely difficult rhythmic type of hard-sell "off the line" combination.

"Finally it began to dawn on me that the girls just could not get this kind of movement down. It just seemed beyond them to get this small bit of drill. All of them sweating, trying their hardest to pound it all out, yet flinching painfully as they went through the movements. I simply stopped and asked, 'What's the problem? Is this too hard for you?'

"One young lady, Karen Mari, immediately replied with a tear in her eye and with a soft yet very powerful tone in her voice, 'We don't pound our poles here.' Aha! I then realized



The Phantom Regiment winter guard, 1979 (photo from WGI).

that this guard was into the softness, the beauty of the softness, as well as the control, the clarity and especially the spirit of the smooth, soft qualities that I'd never taken the time to explore or appreciate.

"It was then that I realized they were not only going to learn from me, but I was going to learn from them." (From *Knaub's private papers, used by permission of Mary Doolittle-Burns*.)

What Knaub developed with the Seattle Imperials was a full-fledged dance program. Red ballet slippers replaced leather riding boots. Soft costuming and sheer pink flags, bright music, soft catches and smiling faces, all were trademarks of the Seattle Imperials.

Response from audiences and judges ranged from repulsion to adoration, and the judging system had a hard time accommodating this new vocabulary. However, designers all over the country knew they were looking at the future and most still refer to their first view of the Seattle Imperials as a defining moment.

Mickey Kelly (WGI Laurel honoree, former WGI chief judge and designer for the Connecticut Skylarks) recalls: "Seeing the Imperials -- both the Everett Imperiales and Stanley's Seattle Imperials -- proved to me that horizons can be expanded and not to worry about the system . . . worry about who and what you are."

In 1978, a DCI rule change allowed posting of the National Colors rather than requiring that corps commit at least two members of their 128 to the "A-squad."

The demands of a more complex vocabulary were evident throughout the activity. As guards become an integral component of general effect, the once clearly defined sections of flag, rifle and saber begin to morph during the course of the program. Versatility was expected of all members.

As new props and equipment emerged, transitions to new equipment become a major challenge in show design. The Regiment's rifles pulled mylar streamers from their jackets; North Star's rifles used huge red lips to supply smiles in *Sir Duke*; Santa Clara Vanguard involved the entire guard in a maypole dance; 27th Lancers used white pom-poms and gave small flags to the entire horn line.

Crossmen, Madison Scouts and Blue Devils all used capes for interpretation. Schaumburg Guardsmen introduced "toy soldier" characters through "toy house" scenery and the Bridgemen used small flats on the front sideline to hide costume changes and spare equipment.

Santa Clara Vanguard's surprise addition of the entire color guard on the "bottle dance" for the DCI Finals performance in 1978 brought the house down and without a doubt contributed to their third DCI championship title.

Phantom Regiment's one-tenth penalty for a rifle drop took them out of a tie for first place and brought the spotlight on the practice of penalizing dropped equipment.

With the huge advance in vocabulary and risk, to isolate dropped equipment from any other error was

an anachronism and color guard instructors began to clamor for a rule change.

By 1979, the National Colors were rarely visible in the program. Uniforms became more versatile in line and fabric, fedoras and other hats began to replace shakos and softer shoes began to replace boots.

### **A memory from Mary Doolittle-Burns**

Back in 1977, when we (Seattle Imperials) came out onto the competition floor in our red ballet slippers, we had no idea what was to come. Stanley (Knaub) understood the impact it would have on pageantry, but I have to admit, I was just a young, eager performer and I trusted him fully, heart and soul.

It was exciting to be on the cutting edge, but also very confusing. To be loved yet loathed at the same time, to be told how special we were, like no other, and then to be booed at retreat -- was so hard.

I remember the first year we competed at WGI. We walked into the warm-up area (which everyone shared) and heads started turning. We started to warm up and soon you could hear a pin drop as all the other guards stopped and all eyes were on us. It was if they were looking at aliens.

This was unnerving at first, but it just strengthened us and made us feel even more special in the end. I learned many life lessons during that time. I learned to stand strong, believe in myself, do the right thing and, most of all, to look fear in the face and have courage.

I have very fond memories of that era and I am honored to have been a part of such a revolution.

Virtually all phrases in the program were interpreted by either form, equipment or choreography. Phrases were longer and frequently involved body shaping such as lunges, bows, head bobs, arm gestures, jumps, hops, etc.

Spirit of Atlanta traveled with jazz runs and a variety of other traveling steps appeared.

Bridgemen's *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy* was based primarily on dance interpretation and character. Flags began to include contrasting colors -- the 27th Lancers explored yellow, pink and orange; the Bridgemen changed flags to new colors

for their Civil War production; and the Madison Scouts changed to bright flag and rifle colors for *Bohemian Rhapsody*. Both Blue Devils and Madison Scouts featured their entire guard on rifle.

The 1979 WGI Olympics crowned the Phantom Regiment champion, Quasar second and Seattle again in third. As these and many other guards explored and expanded their vocabularies, the judging system underwent a long process of revision to accommodate and reward as many styles as possible.

The 1980 DCI Rules Congress made the use of the National Colors "optional" and eliminated a specific score for the color guard. While both decisions were extremely controversial, each removed many



The Anaheim Kingsmen winter guard, early 1970s (photo from the collection of Drum Corps World).

### **A memory from George Oliviero**

When St. Anthony's Imperiales of Everett caught those sabres under the leg, we were all legless! To see them do "One Singular Sensation" had to be experienced. Could anyone spin sabres to match St. Patrick's and St. Anthony's? Of course, the excellence (NO errors) of Phantom Regiment simply set a standard."

### **A memory from Jay Murphy**

I distinctly remember the DCI color guard championship in Denver in 1977. When I saw the guard captain of the Seattle Imperials, Mary Doolittle, dance onto the floor at the beginning of their show, I knew then I was seeing the future of color guard. At that point, Stanley Knaub opened the door to a world of possibilities.

Seeing St. Anthony's for the first time was another "moment." It's ironic that so many years after that I was their instructor, and, of course, seeing the Blue Devils rifle line warming up outside the Everett stadium in 1975. The perfect spins looked like so many propellers. I was so impressed. I had to meet their instructor! And the rest, as they say, is history. *(Jay moved from Boston to California in 1981 to begin a multi-decade career with the Blue Devils.)*

### **A memory from Connie Corkran Costanza**

*(Note: Having won her first DCI in 1980 at the age of 13, Connie holds the record as the youngest person to win a DCI title.)*

At my first DCI, I was too young and naive to really understand the magnitude. I remember the second run-through and people right on the edge of the field.

I remember pulling up to the stadium and seeing the mass of people and the excitement.

I feel fortunate to have marched in the military style. It allowed me to have something to compare the new style to. I remember being at a Blue Devils rehearsal and trying on the new costume.

We all felt that this was not the Blue Devils we knew --it went against everything we had been taught.

We had to add a new vocabulary, we felt self-conscious performing in front of SCV. We were in tight black costumes, very exposed. We weren't able to hide behind the shako.

As the positive acceptance grew, so did our confidence in the new style and we finally realized we were part of something special.

I remember the staff telling us "the person who designed this uniform works for Diana Ross!"

It is still with me -- working in the ICU at the hospital was nothing to performing in front of 40,000 people!

Winning (DCI) three times was just the icing; it's the friendships that will last forever.

restrictions that had been defining color guards up to that point.

The compulsory link to military tradition was broken and the expectation that guards comply to a norm, through the judging system and the connection to the American flag, began to fade.

The new decade brought many other changes as well. WGI followed suit with the National Colors and both organizations eliminated the archaic penalty for dropped equipment.

The result was an increase in velocity and challenge. Training programs throughout the country were broadened. The vocabulary and staging methods used in WGI became more evident on the field. Drum corps shows began to include color guard "features" and the use of flags began to spread to other members of the corps.

In 1981, two of the top four corps (Madison Scouts and 27th Lancers) put their entire horn lines on flag during the percussion feature.

Guard "costumes" began to replace guard "uniforms." After having destroyed their black leather boots with a jazz movement vocabulary in 1980, the Blue Devils' appeared in black spandex and blue sequins with Capezio jazz shoes in 1981.

Madison Scouts put on suspenders and magically merged Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly and Bob Fosse into the new Scout persona.

Throughout the activity, guards developed new identities based on new stylistic approaches. The high mark-time was disappearing and dance was forming the basis of the movement vocabulary.

By 1982, "traveling steps" appeared in combination with equipment phrases. Jazz runs, chasses, hops and leaps became standard tools a decade after they were forbidden by the VFW.

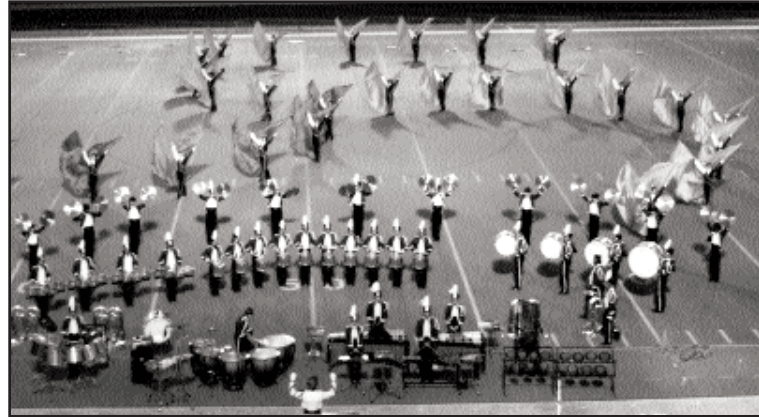
Equipment was selected for its relationship to the theme of the program. Rather than being considered "gimmicks," hoops, shields, feather fans, balls, parasols, shawls, chains, masks, canes, fans, streamers, and wings all became part of the normal color guard toolbox in the early 1980s.

WGI was such a success that two new classifications were added for 1980. That season saw the Phantom Regiment repeat their win in the Open Class. Holley Central High School was named the first Scholastic champion and the West Bridgewater Wildcats were named the first Independent A titleists.

Steve Brubaker's Cavaliers dominated the top of Open Class for the next three consecutive years. Scholastic programs spread like wildfire and the top of the WGI activity included the Skylarks, Quasar, St. Joseph's Grenadiers, State Street Review, Blessed Sacrament, Velvet Knights, as well as



(Above) The Holley Hawks from New York, 1980 (photo from WGI); (below) The 1984 Blue Devils and their "wings" (photo from the collection of Frank and Shirley Dorritie)



Marcus Whitman High School, Elizabeth High School, Canandaigua Academy, Woonsocket High School, Center Grove High School and more.

The 1984 season was a landmark year for the entire activity. It was the year the "tic" died and a new judging system began rewarding accomplishment rather than seeking out errors. A world of possibilities opened. No longer did exposure to error guide the design process.

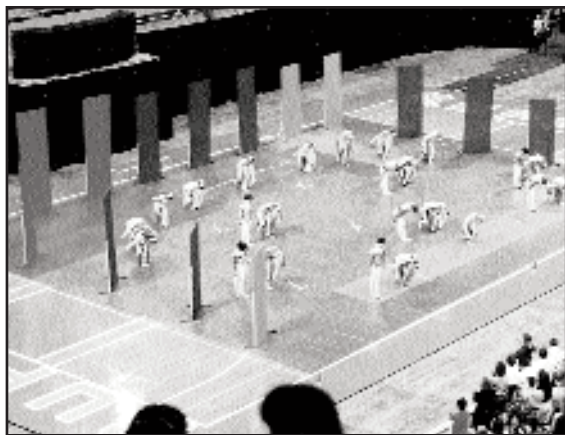
Innovation became an expectation and many mistakes were made along the way. But mistakes are an important part of any learning process and we were all "making it up" as we went along. Some ideas failed dismally, some cut a new path, set new standards, laid groundwork for the next idea.

Bobby Hoffman's famous phrase, "If you could have 10 minutes to do anything, what would you do?" seemed to be a mantra. Often during these years, color guard instructors would pass one another on the track, their arms loaded with the many pieces of equipment their groups now used, and say to one another, "What have we done? Remember the days when everyone carried their OWN equipment on to the field?"

Throughout the mid-1980s, State Street Review, Erté Productions, Center Grove High School, Miller's Blackhawks and others pioneered the use of back drops and sets to create a complete production at WGI.

In 1988, the San Jose Raiders covered the gymnasium floor with white canvas. This stroke of genius was not spontaneous. It grew out of years of dreaming, of being frustrated with the incompleteness of the look, of asking "what if?" It was a great idea -- one that evoked the response, "Of course! Why didn't I think of that?" It was adopted as standard practice almost immediately.

By the end of the 1980s, the foundation was in place for color guard to become truly modern. Set design, sound track design,



The San Jose Raiders, San Jose, CA, 1990 (photo from WGI).

### A memory from Carol Abohatab

I remember a Quasar rehearsal (1983) where Donald Angelica came and we weren't allowed to finish a run-through unless our eyes were glued to the audience. We must have done the show 20 to 25 times.

George Zingali -- the work ethic of this man was inconceivable. I remember him always saying, at a moment of inspiration, "This is the best thing I ever wrote" and, at that time, it was. The thing I remember most was his willingness to go out on a limb. Nothing was impossible, everyone had the ability to create and to be great and there was nothing that you couldn't achieve, from spinning on your back to tossing with your feet.

Later, when he was acting, we got to experience a calmer, more patient George, who was able to draw upon his guard experiences to benefit his acting career and vice versa. He also brought those experiences to us, in the form of acting exercises for his color guards and for WGI conventions. Always, the experiences with George and his staff were from the point of view of what they had seen, done and felt.

Ron Perez was part of the Zingali staff and influenced me because of his uniqueness. He was very patient -- the perfect antithesis to George! Another opposite of George was Denise Bonfiglio, who had patience and an integrity to her technique that set standards in the activity. Denise was so calm and logical. All of these people had such potent personalities and balanced each other perfectly.

Jeff Namian was an influence on me in his early years. He introduced us to dance (although it had been going on for quite some time) and challenged us to think about tradition in new ways. Although we fought it, I see now that he was giving a fresh approach to long-lasting traditions without actually changing their intent.

Sal and LuAnn Salas and State Street Review were a whole different experience for me, based on performance from a theatrical point of view. Sal, too, did his acting techniques with the guard, but these were different in that they were like games.

From day one, the approach here seemed intent on finding the best performer inside of you, with the same intensity as George, only with a different form of extraction.

The idea here was based on the entirety of the concept -- stage, props, costuming and performer. It was like being swept up in a huge cloud of entertainment energy.

Scott Chandler and Tam Easterwood were inspirations, because they would come on a weekend in a whirlwind and leave us with sore bodies and overwhelmed brains.

I loved my time there, because I learned how to take what I knew from my previous days in color guard and escalate it to heights that were foreign to me. I fought this for a long time, but I finally learned it once I started teaching.

All of my guard teachers instilled a work ethic that proved to help me in my teaching career. For this, I am forever grateful.

color effects, dramatic contour, stagecraft, costuming, character and roles all became aspects of the design process in a truly integrated way. The innovations of the last decade are worthy of their own volume in history.

The pendulum has swung wildly over the years -- from the extremes of "more" to the extremes of "less." Many times the winter guard and drum and bugle corps activities have asked themselves where weapons fit into this new art form.

WGI has consciously chosen to define itself as a unique craft based on the tools of flags and weapons. DCI guards freely draw on a broad spectrum of design choices, but more often than not they choose to spin rifles, flags and sabres.

Part of it is the tradition -- the desire to honor the past while reaching for the future. But the larger part, I think, is that for some crazy and bizarre reason, spinning a gun is just plain fun to do!

*I would like to thank the following people for their generous assistance with this chapter: Carol Abohatab, Laura Bratt, Scott Chandler, Connie Corkran Costanza, Gary Czapinski, Marie Czapinski, Mary Doolittle-Burns, Frank Dorritie, T.J. Doucette, Pete Emmons, Mickey Kelly, Jay Murphy, Ron Nankervis, Sylvia Nuzzo, George Oliviero, Sal Salas, Michael Turner and Bruno Zuccala.*

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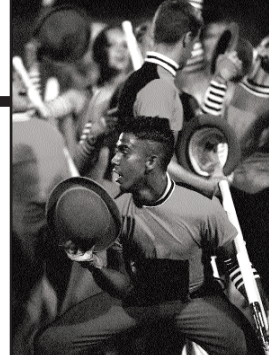
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(Above) James Logan High School, California, 2002; (right) Blue Devils, California, 2002; (below) Bishop Kearny High School, New York, 1994 (photos from WGI).



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*Shirley Stratton Dorritie was a founding member of the Blue Devils Drum & Bugle Corps rifle line in 1970. A member through 1977, she also instructed and served as color guard captain.*

*After aging out, she taught the guard until 1984 and led the program through the transition from military to modern, introducing spandex, sequins and the "wings."*

*She was on the management team from 1981 to 1984, as business manager, promotions manager and assistant director. She rejoined the administrative staff in 1997.*

*As a visual designer, choreographer and instructor, her credits include DCI's Best Color Guard award and four DCI World Championship titles.*

*She has instructed the Santa Clara Vanguard, Sacramento Freelancers, 27th Lancers and Clovis West, James Logan and Fred C. Beyer high schools.*

*She holds a BA in Interdisciplinary Studies/Theater Arts from San Francisco State University and a MA in Counseling Psychology from John F. Kennedy University. She is director of Clarion Visual Productions, a consultation service to the pageantry activity and serves as an adjudicator internationally for such organizations as Winter Guard International and Bands of America.*

*Dorritie has a psychotherapy practice in Northern California and teaches performance enhancement methods to actors, dancers and musicians throughout the United States, Europe and Japan.*