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## The American Flag: College Admission Essay Sample

“Please rise for the national anthem and the presentation of the colors.” Immediately, the thousands of people attending this Memorial Day program rise in reverent silence. It’s 9:30 in morning, the sun illuminates the Star-Spangled Banner, and the wind lifts Her gently for all to see. It’s go time.

“Guard, A-ten-HUT!” The energy that has built up in my diaphragm unleashes as my voice breaks the stillness. All eyes turn to the cadets that comprise the color guard: to the Pennsylvania flag-bearer on my left; to the two flanking riflemen; and to the American flag rippling brightly, anchored to my arm.

“Carry, COLORS!” The Pennsylvania flag-bearer and I hoist our flags up, and the riflemen lift their weapons to their shoulders, all in perfect synchronization.

“Forward, MARCH!” Together, we step off, shoulder to shoulder. We march as a team, relying on each other’s pace to stay in step as we maneuver towards the audience’s front and center.

“Guard, HALT! Present, COLORS!” We immediately stop. The Pennsylvania Flag dips to a precise 45 degree angle, the rifles move crisply to the saluting position, and the American Flag stands proudly in all Her glory. I hear the snare drums roll, and I feel a tingle down my spine, as the band begins to play.

The National Anthem concludes, and we head out. I dismiss the guard, and immediately a “SIR, YES, SIR” erupts from the other three cadets and resounds across the field. We pack our equipment, and I commend them on a job superbly done. This ceremony was the two riflemen’s first, and I think how far they have come since I taught them the basics at their first practice several months prior.

My thoughts turn to my own first year in AFJROTC when I learned that, in addition to other services, our unit provided color guards for different events around the community. I was sold--I wanted the honor of carrying the American flag during the Presentation Ceremony.

The first drill practice came around; that day, I learned how to stand at attention, how to execute different facing movements, how to salute. The next week: how to march, bear the flags, and carry a rifle. Weeks of training accumulated into months of commitment, and under the commanders’ seemingly contradictory combination of patience and strictness, my knowledge of drill flourished. At last, I could participate in color guards at various functions, award

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ceremonies, and football games; over time, I grew more and more experienced.

The next year, I joined Advanced Drill, commanded an Armed Regulation team, and voluntarily helped teach the first-years. It was at this point that I began to advance my leadership skills, as well as to develop an appreciation for helping others learn and for passing on my abilities to the following generations. When I was appointed Color Guard Commander, my roles as teacher and leader increased, and my skills continued to evolve. I have since learned how to work with others, how to give orders without sounding bossy, and most importantly, how to direct a team to accomplish a goal. My confidence, in both myself and my cadets, has strengthened. In turn, I have earned their trust and that of my superiors.

This year, my instructors appointed me Unit Commander, and they expected me to step down from Color Guard Commander. In response, I explained that I would rather forego command of the unit. (Fortunately, it did not reach that point.) To me, there is no greater honor than carrying the American flag, and I will continue to do so as long as possible.

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