A7. Lowering the Flag

1. Approach. The Flag Detail is marched and positioned at the flagpole in the same manner as when raising the flag.

2. The NCOIC commands POST. The halyard pullers march forward and 1 step past the flagpole, perform flanks towards each other and halt together when at the pole. The flag handlers will also take one-half side step away from each other, and face towards each other. The NCOIC takes one step forward, halts and faces towards the flagpole.

3. The halyard pullers carefully ensure that the halyards are free of the pole and untangled, and then temporary re-secure them to the pole.
4. If no music is to be played, the NCOIC will ensure that the halyard pullers are ready to lower the flag(s) and then command Present ARMS. If music is to be played, then at the first note the NCOIC will command Present, ARMS. On this command the U.S. Flag Handler will perform a half right face and the California Flag Handler will perform a half-left face.

5. The halyard pullers will lower the flag(s) slowly and with dignity, generally at least 30 seconds in length. The NCOIC and the flag handlers will salute and follow the flag(s), lowering their heads as the flag(s) are lowered. As the California Flag is lowered to within reach, the California Flag Handler will terminate the salute and move forward to secure the flag by cradling it in his arms, with the star side on the handler’s left.

6. The halyard puller will assist by detaching the flag from the halyard, after which the California Flag Handler will return to the original position in line formation.
7. The U.S. Flag Handler will terminate the salute and move forward to secure the U.S. Flag by cradling it in his arms, with the union on the handler’s right. The halyard puller will assist by detaching the flag from the halyard, after which the U.S. Flag Handler will return to his original position in the line formation.

8. The NCOIC will terminate the salute at the last note of the music or once the U.S. Flag Handler returns to his position, whichever is later.
9. Once the flags have been detached and safely recovered by the flag handlers, the halyard pullers will temporarily secure the halyard in the down position until the flags are folded.

10. The NCOIC commands **ONE**. The halyard pullers will face their respective flag handlers, move forward to retrieve the attachment header end of the flag and move back to their position.

11. The flags should be opened up and stretched between each halyard puller and the flag handler. The flags should be positioned so that they are facing upward, with the upper left corner of each flag in the left hand of each halyard puller.

12. The NCOIC commands **TWO**. The flags are folded lengthwise once.

13. The NCOIC commands **THREE**. The flags are folded lengthwise once more.

14. The NCOIC commands **FOUR**. The flags are folded according to standard procedures, into the triangular shape for the U.S. Flag and the appropriate form for the California Flag.

15. The halyard pullers will remain in position as the flag handlers move forward as necessary to complete the folding process. Flag handlers will take possession of their respective folded flag. The flag handlers will move to their original position.
16. The halyard pullers will then free the halyard, raise it to the “up” position, and fasten it securely.

17. Departure. Because each site is different, the direction and manner of departure should be adjusted to accommodate local needs and layouts. At this point in the ceremony, the NCOIC is still facing the flagpole.
18. It is important to note that because the detail is now in possession of flags, the appropriate honor and respect should be accorded to the U.S. Flag as the detail departs. In column formation the U.S. Flag should always be carried ahead of any other flag, while in line formation the U.S. Flag should always be carried to the right of any other flags. The following directions take this into consideration.

19. If the detail is to depart to the right, the NCOIC should resume the position on the far right of the detail. The NCOIC should command **Right, FACE**, and march the detail from the site. When appropriate, the NCOIC should then halt, face and dismiss the detail.

If the detail is to depart to the left, the NCOIC should first march to a position directly in front of the U.S. Flag Handler. The NCOIC will extend both hands forward and the U.S. Flag Handler will pass the U.S. Flag to the NCOIC
The NCOIC will command **Left, FACE**. The NCOIC should march to assume a position at the front of the column formation and march the detail from the site. When appropriate, the NCOIC should then halt, face and dismiss the detail.
20. The NCOIC will command **About, FACE**. The NCOIC should march to assume a position on the far right and march the detail from the site. When appropriate, the NCOIC should then halt, face and dismiss the detail.

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**Practical Exercise:** Break into groups of 5 cadets, each assigned to one of the positions in the flag detail. First, while the instructor or leader of the class reads the instructions, walk through the different steps in lowering the flag, simulating the pole and halyard (use flags if you have enough, or simulate that if you don’t). Next, each group should walk through the steps on their own. Finally, each group should practice with a flag at the school flagpole, actually lowering the flag. After successfully raising and lowering the flag, switch positions and do it again! If your unit doesn’t raise and lower the flag at your school every day, talk to your Principal about taking over those duties!