**4-3 COMPANY-LEVEL\* CHANGE OF RESPONSIBILITY CEREMONY**

Note: The colors are present, located so that the company is facing them or between

company and audience when the National Anthem is played.

The guidon bearer has the NCO sword on his belt.

**Note:** The Senior Platoon Sergeant (Senior Platoon Sergeant) controls the

company during the ceremony in place of the First Sergeant, similar to a

Commander of Troops (COT) in a change of command or review. Platoons,

under control of their platoon sergeants march to the final line five minutes

before the start of the ceremony. When the platoon reaches the final line

the platoon sergeant commands “Mark Time, MARCH” and “Platoon,

HALT.”

**Senior Platoon Sergeant** (Senior Platoon Sergeant): With platoons in

position, the Senior Platoon Sergeant commands “At close interval, dress

right, DRESS.”

**Platoon Sergeants**: Platoon Sergeant moves to the left or right flank of the

platoon, aligns the platoon, returns to the original position and commands

“Ready, FRONT.”

**Senior Platoon Sergeant**: When all Platoon Sergeants are in position, and

the platoons are at the position of Attention, the Senior Platoon Sergeant

commands “Parade, REST” and executes an about face.

Narrator: “Ladies and Gentlemen, the ceremony will begin in one minute,

please be seated.”

**Action:** The Outgoing and Incoming First Sergeants move to the ready line,

the Company Commander and the Senior Platoon Sergeant are standing off

to the side. When the Outgoing and Incoming First Sergeant are in

position, the Senior Platoon Sergeant starts the ceremony.

**Senior Platoon Sergeant:** Executes an about face and commands,

“Company, ATTENTION” and “Present, ARMS.” Then the Senior Platoon

Sergeant executes an about face and salutes the Outgoing First Sergeant.

Upon return of his salute, the Senior Platoon Sergeant does an about face,

commands “Order ARMS,” and “Parade, REST,” does an about face and

assumes the position of parade rest.

**Narrator**: “Good Morning and welcome to the Change of Responsibility

Ceremony for (unit name). Today, First Sergeant (Outgoing First

Sergeant’s name) will turn over the duties of First Sergeant of (unit name)

to First Sergeant (Incoming First Sergeant’s name).”

**Narrator**: “SPC (name, often an outstanding soldier such as the soldier of

the month) is presenting a bouquet of red roses to (Outgoing First

Sergeant’s spouse) for her devotion, dedication and tireless efforts to the

soldiers and families of (unit name).”

**Narrator:** “SPC (name) is presenting (Incoming First Sergeant’s spouse) a

bouquet of yellow flowers from the Officers and soldiers of (unit name) to

welcome her to the company.”

Narrator: (Reads Outgoing and Incoming First Sergeants’ biographies and

Unit History).

**Senior Platoon Sergeant:** At the completion of the unit history, executes an

about face and commands, “Company, ATTENTION” and “Present, ARMS.”

Narrator: “Ladies and gentlemen, please rise for the playing of the National

Anthem and remain standing for the invocation.”

**Senior Platoon Sergeant:** On the last note of the National Anthem the

Senior Platoon Sergeant drops his salute, executes an about face and

commands “Order, ARMS” and “Parade, REST.” The Senior Platoon

Sergeant executes an about face and assumes the position of parade rest.

**Narrator:** “Please be seated.” After the audience is seated, “The (company

name) Company Commander, CPT (name), will now oversee the transfer of

responsibility.

**Action**: The Company Commander and Senior Platoon Sergeant move to the

ready line.

**Senior Platoon Sergeant:** When the Company Commander and Senior

Platoon Sergeant are in position, the Senior Platoon Sergeant does an about

face and commands “Company, ATTENTION” and “Present, ARMS.”

**Senior Platoon Sergeant:** Does and about face and goes to the position of

present arms.

**Senior Platoon Sergeant:** After salutes are exchanged, the Senior Platoon

Sergeant does and about face and commands “Order, ARMS,” then does

another about face.

**Senior Platoon Sergeant:** In a low voice commands “Guidon… Post.”

**Guidon Bearer:** On the command of “Guidon” the unit guidon bearer

assumes the position of attention, and on the command “Post” the guidon

bearer takes two steps forward executing a right flank as in marching,

takes two steps, halts and executes a left face.

**Senior Platoon Sergeant:** In a low voice commands, “MARCH.”

**Guidon Bearer:** The guidon bearer takes three additional steps forward.

Action: When the guidon bearer has halted, the command group and Senior

Platoon Sergeant move to a designated position in front of the unit guidon.

**Narrator**: At this time CPT (name) joins First Sergeant (outgoing First

Sergeant) and First Sergeant (incoming First Sergeant) for the passing of

the noncommissioned officers sword. The War Department in 1840 adopted

the unique noncommissioned officers sword. It is a completely functional

weapon, not intended for display, but rather for hard and dedicated use.

While no longer part of the Army’s inventory, American sergeants wore it

for over seventy years, during which occurred the Mexican-American War,

the Civil War, and the Spanish-American war. The passing of the sword

signifies the relinquishing of responsibility and authority from the outgoing

to the incoming First Sergeant. First sergeants may come and go, but the

sword remains razor sharp.

**Narrator**: “SFC (name), the Senior Platoon Sergeant, retrieves the sword

from SPC (name) the guidon bearer. The guidon bearer, entrusted with the

symbol of the unit, today also holds the First Sergeant’s sword, symbol of

the authority of the NCO. SFC (name) passes the sword to First Sergeant

(Outgoing First Sergeant) in final deference to his authority and leadership.

First Sergeant (Outgoing First Sergeant) passes the sword to the Company

Commander signifying the relinquishing of his duties and gratitude for the

opportunity to care for (unit) Company’s fine soldiers. The Company

Commander passes the sword to First Sergeant (incoming First Sergeant),

delegating authority and entrusting him with the responsibility and care of

the unit. The new First Sergeant passes the sword back to SFC (name) and

the guidon bearer, symbolizing his dedication to the soldiers of (name)

Company and the continuity of the NCO support channel.”

**Action:** When the Narrator begins reading the previous paragraph, the

Outgoing First Sergeant positions himself four steps in front of his guidon;

the company commander is directly to his left. The old and new First

Sergeants then take one step forward and execute facing movements so

that they face each other. The Senior Platoon Sergeant secures the sword

with scabbard from the guidon bearer’s pistol belt (with his right hand

above his left hand), and faces about. The Senior Platoon Sergeant draws

the sword from the scabbard slightly (about 2 inches), steps forward and

presents the sword to the Outgoing First Sergeant (l), who grasps the sword

with the left hand above his right hand. The Outgoing First Sergeant passes

the sword to the Company Commander (2), who grasps the sword

with his right hand above his left hand and, in turn, passes the sword to the

new First Sergeant (3), who grasps the sword with his left hand above his

right hand. The Incoming First Sergeant replaces the sword completely in

the scabbard and passes it to the Senior Platoon Sergeant (4) who grasps it

with his right hand above his left hand, faces about and reattaches the

sword on the guidon bearer’s pistol belt. This procedure (1-4) allows the hilt

of the sword to be over the heart of the Incoming and Outgoing First

Sergeants. As the Senior Platoon Sergeant faces about, both First

Sergeants then execute facing movements back to their original direction

facing the guidon.

**Action:** The Senior Platoon Sergeant and the reviewing party face about

and return to their post. The Senior Platoon Sergeant commands “Forward,

MARCH” and the command group marches back to the ready line, the

Outgoing and Incoming First Sergeants exchange positions. (Incoming First

Sergeant crosses in front of Outgoing). The First Sergeant steps off to the

left as in marching, and marches around the platoon to a position behind

and centered on the formation. The guidon bearer executes an about face

and returns to his position.

**Senior Platoon Sergeant:** After the command group is in position the Senior

Platoon Sergeant does an about face and commands “Parade, REST” then

does and about face and assumes the position of parade rest.

Narrator: “Ladies and gentlemen, the commander of (company name), CPT

(name).”

Company Commander: Company Commander remarks.

**Narrator:** “First Sergeant (Outgoing First Sergeant).”

Outgoing First Sergeant: Outgoing First Sergeant remarks.

**Narrator:** “The First Sergeant of (company name) First Sergeant (Incoming

First Sergeant).”

**Incoming First Sergeant:** Incoming First Sergeant remarks.

Action: After remarks are complete the Incoming First Sergeant returns to

position.

**Senior Platoon Sergeant:** Executes an about face and commands “Company,

ATTENTION” and faces about.

**Narrator:** “Ladies and Gentlemen, please stand for the playing of the

(branch/unit song) and the Army Song.” \*\*

**Incoming First Sergeant:** At the completion of the Army Song, the Incoming

First Sergeant moves forward to assume command of the unit from the

Senior Platoon Sergeant. After salutes are exchanged, the Incoming First

Sergeant waits until the Senior Platoon Sergeant is in position, executes an

about face, and renders a hand salute to the Company Commander and

reports “Sir, this concludes the ceremony.”

**Company Commander:** “Take charge of the company.”

**Action:** Salutes exchanged.

**Narrator:** “This concludes the (unit name) Change of Responsibility

ceremony. Please join us for refreshments in (location), bldg xxxx.”

\* While the unit name “Company” is used, substitute as needed for Battery,

Troop or Detachment.

\*\* See inside back cover for the words to the Army Song