

Best Practices: Recorded Flag Ceremonies

The Virtual Roundtable is a fantastic opportunity to showcase the incredible youth of our Council to the entire audience. This guide is designed not as a rigid set of instructions, but as a helpful tool to share proven broadcasting tips with your unit. By keeping these simple concepts in mind, you can ensure your flag ceremony looks as sharp, professional, and polished as possible when it hits the screen.

1. Technical Standards for Recording

- **Landscape Orientation Only (16:9):** Recording horizontally allows the video to fill the entire presentation space. Vertical "phone-style" videos create large black bars on a widescreen presentation slide, which shrinks the visibility of your youth.
- **Maximum Resolution:** Setting your recording device to its highest available video resolution (such as 1080p or 4K) before filming prevents the footage from looking blurry or pixelated when compressed through the live stream.
- **Stabilize with a Tripod:** Utilizing a tripod or a stable surface keeps the camera steady. Shaky, handheld footage is difficult for viewers to follow and often degrades in quality when streamed through video platforms.
- **Audio Proximity:** Positioning the recording device close to the color guard commander helps capture commands clearly. Large spaces like church halls and gymnasiums naturally create echoes that can easily drown out voices if the microphone is too far away.

2. Visual & Uniform Discipline

- **Complete Field Uniforms:** Having all members on camera in their official Field Uniforms sets a high standard for the event. Taking a quick moment to ensure shirts are tucked in, neckerchiefs are centered, and slides are adjusted helps the unit look sharp and cohesive.
- **Flag Placement:** Double-checking that the U.S. flag is positioned on the marching right (the audience's left) ensures the ceremony aligns correctly with traditional flag etiquette.
- **Clean, Uncluttered Backgrounds:** Framing the shot against a neutral, non-distracting background—such as a solid wall, brick texture, or static flags—keeps the focus entirely on the youth. Messy backgrounds or high-traffic areas tend to draw the audience's eyes away from the ceremony.
- **Front-Facing Lighting:** Positioning main light sources (such as windows or lamps) in front of the participants illuminates their faces clearly. Placing lights behind the youth creates a backlighting effect that turns them into dark silhouettes on screen.

3. Performance & Timing

- **The "Five-Second Buffer" Rule:** Having everyone stand perfectly still and silent for 5 seconds after hitting record, and again for 5 seconds after the final word is spoken, provides vital formatting space. This gives the production team the necessary "handles" to fade the clip in and out cleanly without accidentally cutting off the audio.
- **Project with a Command Voice:** Speaking slowly, clearly, and loudly helps the audio transmit properly. Digital audio compresses easily during streams, making clear enunciation critical for the audience to understand the commands.
- **Practice "Eyes Front" and Composure:** Running through the ceremony a few times helps the youth build confidence. Reminding them to keep their expressions steady and eyes locked forward ensures they look focused; it also prevents them from looking toward a leader or the camera for guidance while recording.

4. Large-File Logistics & Submission

- **Avoid Sending Files via Text or Chat Apps:** Standard messaging apps heavily compress video files to save data, which destroys high-definition quality.
- **File Naming Convention:** Giving the file a simple name that includes your unit number and ceremony type makes it easy for the production team to track.
 - *Example:* Troop 321 Flag Ceremony.mp4
- **Use Cloud Storage:** Uploading the original, uncompressed video asset directly to your own cloud storage (such as Google Drive, OneDrive, or Dropbox) preserves the full resolution of your recording.
- **Link Permissions:** Changing the sharing permissions to "Anyone with the link can view" is an essential step that allows the production team to access and download the file without permission delays.
- **How to Submit:** Emailing the cloud storage link to qcroundtable@gmail.com delivers the full-resolution asset directly to the video editors.

5. Unit Recognition Details

To ensure your unit is recognized accurately on the master slides and credited correctly by the host during the broadcast, please include the following information in your email alongside the video link:

- **Unit Type & Number:**
- **Chartered Organization:**
- **City:**
- **Cubmaster / Scoutmaster / Advisor Name:**