

ARCH OF SABERS CEREMONY

Although the ushers usually act as saber bearers, other officers may act as saber bearers. The Arch of Sabers is customarily done with six, although four or eight sabers can be used. The ceremony takes place as follows:

FORM TWO LINES: *Exiting the church*, the person positioned as the last person in the LEFT line is generally the person who gives commands and introduces the newly married couple. The person positioned as the first person in the RIGHT line is the one who welcomes the bride to the Army.

Commands as follows:

CARRY. . . SABERS (At the shoulder)

FORWARD. . . MARCH (Position themselves on the stairs, starting at the top, every other step or every two steps, depending on the number of saber bearers.)

HALT. . . CENTER FACE (Turn and face the center)

The bridal party then walks through [SABERS STILL IN **CARRY. . . SABERS**].

When the Bride and Groom approach, they stop before reaching the first set of sabers. The person positioned on the TOP LEFT will introduce the couple, then will give the commands:

PRESENT. . . SABERS (Bring saber to the chin)

ARCH. . . SABERS (Fully extend the right arm, rotating the wrist, or by rotating the arm in a counter-clockwise direction turning the cutting edge of the saber up, away from the people, thus forming a true arch.)

THE ONLY PEOPLE TO WALK UNDER THE ARCH ARE THE BRIDE AND GROOM

When the Bride and Groom reach the two saber-bearers on the end they close sabers by bringing the sabers down to cross at waist level and request a 'kiss' for passage. When they lift the sabers, the Bride and Groom proceed. The person positioned at the bottom right (closest to the Bride) could then give the Bride a **GENTLE PAT** on her behind and say:

"WELCOME TO THE ARMY, MRS. _____." (or MA'AM if she is in the Military).

The orders are then given for:

PRESENT. . . SABERS (To the chin)

ORDER. . . SABERS (Saber the blade-down at right toe)

CARRY. . . SABERS (At the shoulder)

LEFT AND RIGHT. . . FACE (Facing command)

FORWARD. . . MARCH (Movement command)

KEEP IN MIND:

1. Usually the bride who is not a military member herself is given the pat on the bottom, however, check with the military bride for her preference if she is in a wedding gown.
2. **It is inappropriate for saber bearers not to be in uniform.**