



Taryl Manzer, 14, tosses rifles with her teammates.



Pacificaires color guard performers listen to the coaches following a rehearsal.

On guard for sport

Pacificaires color guard troupe headed to world championships in Ohio

by Boaz Joseph

Rifles. Sabres. Spandex. They're not items associated with sports, but members of the Pacificaires color guard troupe will tell you different.

Recognized as a sport in the U.S., color guard is "a combination of dance, gymnastics and cheerleading," explains club founder Alan Dyck. "It's kind of in a niche" – and with equipment.

The Surrey-based Pacificaires' "A" Guard troupe is rounding up its final rehearsals before heading to the Winter Guard International (WGI) World Championships, to be held April 2-4 in Dayton, Ohio.

Their performances involve leaps, rifle and flag tossing, and dances with sabres and an old-fashioned typewriter.

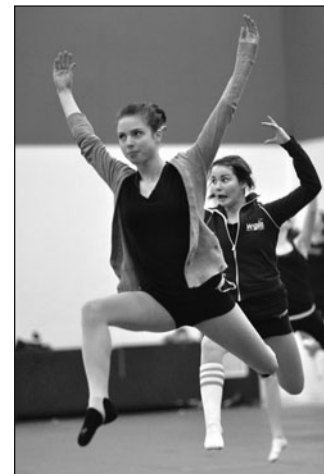
The sport evolved over the last few decades from marching bands, over time replacing their military overtone with more dance choreography.

Many schools in the U.S. have their own color guard (also called winter guard) troupes, and competing organizations have pools of athletes to choose from.

Pacificaires, on the other hand, is B.C.'s only color guard organization.

These underdogs placed 11th and 12th in the WGI World Championships in the last two years.

For more information, visit www.pacificaires.com or



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■ Photos by Boaz Joseph



Vanessa Jakubowski, 13, (left) stretches during an afternoon warmup. Above, sabres are used during a rehearsal. At right, Amy Manzer tosses a flag.

