

SCOUTS-L

FLAG ETIQUETTE

Date: Thu, 15 Jun 1995 01:53:20 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@capaccess.org>
Subject: Re: Flag Retiring Questions
To: ySCOUTS-L Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

Jon,

Your message made me wish I could have accessed Scouts-L earlier in the day. By now my comment is moot for your purposes, but may help others. The American Legion publishes a pamphlet called "Let's be Right on Flag Etiquette (American Legion, National Emblem Sales, P.O. Box 1050, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206) which is distributed by their National Americanism Commission. At page 18 the American Legion states:

"Q. How are unservicable Flags destroyed?

"A. The code suggests that, 'when a Flag has served its useful purpose, it should be destroyed, preferably by burning'. For individual citizens this should be done discretely so that the act of destruction is not perceived as a protest or desecration. Many American Legion Posts hold Flag Disposal Ceremonies on June 14 Flag Day each year. This ceremony creates a particularly dignified and solemn occasion for the retirement of unusable Flags. (Sec. 176)(k)"

Seems like the American Legion supports Flag Disposal Ceremonies similar to the one written up by F. Willard Vickery "With Honor and Dignity" Scouting Magazine, May/June 1993 at page 34.

The U.S. Code 30 USC 176 does not prohibit such ceremonies. Another statute 18 USC 700 specifically points out that any conduct consisting of the disposal of a Flag when it has become worn or soiled is not desecration of the Flag.

Sounds to me like the local American Legion Commander is having trouble distinguishing between somebody lighting an upsidedown flag as a symbol of protest from the dignified final retirement of the flag in a solemn dignified ceremony. In my opinion it shows a lot more respect than a lone person wadding up flags and chucking them in an incinerator.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman

Prof. Beaver, Nat. Capital Area Council, BSA mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG

Date: Sun, 9 Jul 1995 23:55:47 -0400
From: Merl Whitebook <MAWLAW@AOL.COM>
Subject: Re: Campfire Activities Flag Ret

Several people have asked if I had any Flag Retirement Ceremonies.

The answer is Yes so here they are.

P.S. If you have any campfire opening closing or campfire activity materials please send them to me.

Thanks
YIS
Merl Whitebook

Color Guard comes forward, Troop at attention:

Hello,
Remember me?
Some people call me "Old Glory"
Others call me the "Star Spangled Banner"
But whatever they call me, I am your Flag,
The Flag of the United States of America....
Something has been bothering me, so I thought I might talk it over with you...
because it is about you.... and me.

I remember some time ago people lined up on both sides of the street to watch a parade, and naturally I was leading every parade, proudly waiving in the breeze. When your Daddy saw me coming, he immediately removed his hat and placed it against his left shoulder, so that his hand was directly over his heart... Remember?

And you, I remember you. Standing there straight as a soldier. You didn't have a hat, but you were giving the right salute. Remember little sister? Not to be outdone, she was saluting the same as you, with her hand over her

heart.... Remember?

What happened? I'm still the same old flag. Oh, I have a few more stars now and a lot more blood has been shed since those days long ago. But now I don't feel as proud as I used to. When I come down the street you just stand there with your hands in your pockets, and I may get a small glance, but then you look away.

Then I see children running around and shouting; they don't seem to know who I am....
I saw one man take off his hat, then he looked around and saw no one else with their hat off, so he quickly put his hat back on.

Is it a sin to be patriotic now? Have you forgotten what I stand for? And where I've been? Anzio....Normandy... Guadalcanal.... Iwo Jima..... Korea..... Vietnam.... and the Persian Gulf?

Take a look at the Memorial Honor Rolls sometime. Note the names of those who never came back; they died to keep this republic free... One Nation Under God!

When you salute me... you are actually saluting them.

Well, it won't be long now until I'll be coming down your street again... So when you see me, stand straight, place you right hand over you heart, and I'll salute you by waiving back.... and I'll know....

YOU REMEMBERED.

**Troop Salute:
Color Guard, retire the flag....**

After the entire flag has burned..... At ease or "to"... Color Guard dismissed.

FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY

1 Flag - worn, tattered and soled, one medium fire. Take the flag and cut out the blue field with the stars, then cut the flag up into smaller pieces sothat each participant can have a piece to lay on the fire.

NARRATOR - Our flag is the symbol of our country. Have you ever stopped to think what the flag really means?

The Blue in our flag stands for valor which our ancestors fought and died for inthe many battles that have been fought for our country and all for which it stands.

The White stands for the purity in all of our hearts. It also represent the honor that each of us should show in all that we do in our everyday lives.

The Red stands for all of the men and women who have died in the service of our country, both as members of the armed forces and as everyday citizens.

Our flag has gone into every battle into which thre have been United States citizens, fromthe American Revolution to the Civil War, to WW I, to WW II, to the Korean Conflict the Viet Nam War to the Desert Storm.

It has flown over some battles that were never declared, such as Beruit whre the Marine Barracks was blown up by terrorists and the Alfred Murrah Building in Oklahoma City a short time ago.

In all of these, we the American peiople have stayed true to the vlaues that the Flag represents. We should always value the sacrifices that have been made for our flag and the country that it represents.

We have an old friend here who has fulfilled his duty to our country. He has

become worn and tattered and we are here tonight to retire him with honor.

We shouldn't be sad about the retirement of our friend. We are not burning him in anger, we are only releasing his spirit so that he can continue to serve us in our thoughts.

Now I would invite each of you to take a piece of cloth from the box being passed around and each of you in turn place it on the fire. You can pause for a moment to reflect upon what the flag means to each of us and remember the 167 people who lost their lives in OKC, some working in the service of our country and others as AMERICAN citizens. Thank you.
Written by Roger Newton, Indian Chiefs District, Indian Nations Council, Tulsa OK

Flag Burning Ceremony
Troop Attention

"No disrespect should be shown to the flag of the United State of America; The Flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning"

**Color Guard enters in silence, displaying unfurled flag to the troop.
(The flags colors are being separated during the reading.)**

I AM YOUR FLAG

I was born on June 14, 1777

I am more than cloth shaped into a design.

I am the refuge of the world's oppressed people.

I am the silent sentinel of Freedom.

I am the emblem of the greatest sovereign nation on earth.

I am the inspiration for which American Patriots gave their lives and fortunes.

I have led your sons in to battle from Valley Forge to the blistering desert of the Arabian Peninsula.

I walked in silence with each of your honored dead to their final resting place beneath the silent white crosses, row upon row.

I have flown through peace and war, strife and prosperity, and amidst it all

I have been respected.

"Old Glory" is my nickname; proudly I wave on high. Honor me. respect me, defend me with your lives and fortunes. Never let my enemies tear me down from my lofty position lest I never return. Keep alight the fires of patriotism, strive earnestly for the spirit of democracy. Worship Eternal God and keep his commandments, and I shall remain the bulwark of peace of freedom for all people.

FOR I AM YOUR FLAG!

(Stop here until the colors are completely separated. the continue)

My red stripes symbolize the blood spilled in defense of the glorious nation.

Let us retire the Red Stripes--Salute!

(burn the red stripes)

To.

My white stripes signify the burning tears shed by Americans who lost their sons.

Let us retire the White Stripes --Salute

To.

My blue field is indicative of God's heaven under which we fly. My stars, clustered together, unify 50 States as one for God and Country.

Let us retire the Blue Field with Stars.--Salute.

To

Color Guard files out in silence.

Flag Burning Ceremony

- 1. Display the old flag, give its history, if known,**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance Respect paid to the old flag -- read aloud "I AM OLD GLORY"**

I am old glory; for more the 9 score years I have been the banner of hope and

freedom for generation after generation of Americans. Born amid the first flames of America's fight for freedom, I am the symbol of a country that has

grown from a little group of 13 colonies to a united nation of 50 sovereign states. Planted firmly on the high pinnacle of American Faith, my gently fluttering folds have proved an inspiration to untold millions. Men have followed me into battle with unwavering courage. They have looked upon me as

a symbol of national unity. They have prayed that they and their fellow

citizens might continue to enjoy the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, which have been granted to every American as the heritage of free men.
So

long as men love liberty more than life itself, so long as they treasure the priceless privileges bought with the blood of our forefathers; so long as the principles of truth, justice and charity for all remain deeply rooted in human hearts, I shall continue to be the enduring banner of the United States of America.

3. Explain to the ensemble what will happen next, and a little word or two about it. Taps are hummed slowly while the flag is cut up. The ABSOLUTE SILENCE.

4. Color Guards cuts the field of blue stars out of the flag, with solemnity a quiet. This field of flue is put onto the fire first. The stripes are laid into the fire when the stars are almost fully consumed.

5. There is absolute silence until the entire flag is completely consumed by the flames.

6. Then the color guard, with meaning, says, 'OUR FLAG REST IN PEACE.'

Flag Burning Ceremony

Group says together: Pledge of Allegiance the sing America
(my Country Tis of Thee)

Color of the flag: Remember as you look at your Flag, which is the symbol of our nation, that it is red because of human sacrifice. It is blue because of the true blue loyalty of its defenders. It is white to symbolize liberty - our land of the free. The stars are symbols of the united efforts and hope in the hearts of many people striving for a greater nobler America.

Hold the Flag Up: Optional - at this point, each person in the audience or participating in the ceremony, may state what the Flag means to them.

Sing:

Another appropriate song may be sung (optional) Procedure for Flag Burning:

(a pair of scissors should be on hand) Take the flag and unfold. Place stars (as audience sees it) in the upper left hand corner. (One minute of silent meditation may be inserted if desired).

COMPLETE SILENCE

Then either cut or tear the position of the blue containing the stars from the flag. Have one person hold the blue in her arms until the end of the ceremony because the blue and stars is the last part of the flag to be burned. Now tear one stripe off at a time. burn it in the fire by laying it

across the flames; not in a lump. Burn each stripe thoroughly before tearing off the next stripe to be burned. After all the stripes have been burned, one at a time, then the blue and stars is ready to be burned. BEFORE the blue and stars is spread across the fire, the blue portion should be KISSED for respect by the person holding the blue throughout the ceremony. The portion is then laid, as a whole piece and not torn in any way, across the fire and all is quiet until the last speck of blue turns to ash.

Sing - Star Spangled Banner; or other appropriate song.

End of the ceremony should be followed by a silent dismissal.

Flag Burning Ceremony

Lower the colors or unfold the flag.

Tear off stripes one at a time, (we had to cut) saying one statement with each stripe. Our flag has been used so much, that it is no longer a fitting emblem to display, so we are respectfully burning it.

FIRST STRIPE: The 13 stripes stand for the original 31 colonies which are; Massachusetts, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island,

New Hampshire, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, Georgia, and New Jersey.

SECOND STRIPE: The white stands for purity

THIRD STRIPE: The red stands for courage

FOURTH STRIPE: "Give me liberty or give me death"

FIFTH STRIPE: "One if by land, two if the sea"

SIXTH STRIPE: We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of

liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America.

SEVENTH STRIPE: We hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal. They are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. Among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

EIGHTH STRIPE; Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof

NINTH STRIPE; Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or press.

TENTH STRIPE; "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth to this continent a new nation."

ELEVENTH STRIPE; The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

TWELFTH STRIPE; "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

THIRTEENTH STRIPE; "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

THE STARS: Each state is being represented by a star on a field of blue, which signifies a new constellation being formed.

As we place it in the fire, let it burn brightly and remind us how truly our flag represents our country.

Will you please join us in saying the Pledge of Allegiance and sing The Star Spangled Banner and then Taps.

BURIAL OF ASHES

If the flag to be burned is small or there is more than one flag to be burned

at a time, the flag may (but not necessarily advised unless due to lack of time) be laid as a whole unit across the fire. This can be done also if the first flag is torn and burned as describe above, and another laid across the first one at a time.

Nothing should ever be added to the ceremonial fire after the Flag has been

burned (out of respect).

The next morning the scouts that actually burned the flag and their leader will gather the ashes to be burned. This could be included as the last step in the ceremony if the wanted all of those in attendance to participate.

A hole is dug, the dirt placed carefully beside it and the ashes are placed into the hole by handfuls. Fill the hole back up with dirt, a market can be placed.

At the beginning of the ceremony the speaker should say who the flag grommets

will be given to. They are a form of good luck and can be carried or worn around the neck of the person who receives one. If the ashes are entirely out, they can be carried to the burial site in a box, if the ashes are still hot, a bucket could be used, then place by shovels-full into the hole.

From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Sun Oct 15 03:16:49 1995
Date: Sun, 15 Oct 1995 03:16:47 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
Subject: Ceremony for Proper Disposal of U.S. Flag

Alvin,

I encourage you to take Bill up on taking a look at the Flag Destruction ceremonies available at <http://www.HiWAAAY.net/hyper/Scouts>.

There continues to be a feeling by some folks that a flag destruction ceremony is somehow not in keeping with the law or otherwise proper. Let me offer up part of a previous posting on the subject, which may be helpful.

The American Legion publishes a pamphlet called "Let's be Right on Flag Etiquette (American Legion, National Emblem Sales, P.O. Box 1050, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206) which is distributed by their National Americanism Commission. At page 18 the American Legion states:

"Q. How are unservicable Flags destroyed?

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Seems like the American Legion supports Flag Disposal Ceremonies similar to the one written up by F. Willard Vickery "With Honor and Dignity" Scouting Magazine, May/June 1993 at page 34.

The U.S. Code 30 USC 176 does not prohibit such ceremonies. Nothing in the statute requires that the destruction of the flag be in private. Another statute 18 USC 700 specifically points out that any conduct consisting of the disposal of a Flag when it has become worn or soiled is not a desecration of the Flag. Merl Whitebook had some good ideas on flag destruction ceremonies in a previous posting, which follows:

Color Guard comes forward, Troop at attention:

Hello,

Remember me?

Some people call me "Old Glory"

Others call me the "Star Spangled Banner"

But whatever they call me, I am your Flag,

The Flag of the United States of America....

Something has been bothering me, so I thought I might talk it over with you... because it is about you.... and me.

I remember some time ago people lined up on both sides of the street to watch

a parade, and naturally I was leading every parade, proudly waiving in the breeze. When your Daddy saw me coming, he immediately removed his hat and

placed it against his left shoulder, so that his hand was directly over his heart... Remember?

And you, I remember you. Standing there straight as a soldier. You didn't have a hat, but you were giving the right salute. Remember little sister?

Not to be outdone, she was saluting the same as you, with her hand over her

heart.... Remember?

What happened? I'm still the same old flag. Oh, I have a few more stars now

and a lot more blood has been shed since those days long ago. But now I don't feel as proud as I used to. When I come down the street you just stand

there with your hands in your pockets, and I may get a small glance, but then

you look away.

Then I see children running around and shouting; they don't seem to know who

I am.... I saw one man take off his hat, then he looked around and saw no one else with their hat off, so he quickly put his hat back on.

Is it a sin to be patriotic now? Have you forgotten what I stand for?

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Korea..... Vietnam.... and the Persian Gulf?

Take a look at the Memorial Honor Rolls sometime. Note the names of those

**who never came back; they died to keep this republic free... One Nation
Under
God!**

When you salute me... you are actually saluting them.

**Well, it won't be long now until I'll be coming down your street again....
So when you see me, stand straight, place you right hand over you heart,
and
I'll salute you by waiving back.... and I'll know....**

YOU REMEMBERED.

Troop Salute:

Color Guard, retire the flag....

After the entire flag has burned... At ease or "to"... Color Guard dismissed.

FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY

**1 Flag - worn, tattered and soled, one medium fire. Take the flag and cut
out
the blue field with the stars, then cut the flag up into smaller pieces
sothat each participant can have a piece to lay on the fire.**

**NARRATOR - Our flag is the symbol of our country. Have you ever stopped
to
think what the flag really means?**

**The Blue in our flag stands for valor which our ancestors fought and died
for
inthe many battles that have been fought for our country and all for
which it stands.**

**The White stands for the purity in all of our hearts. It also represent the
honor that each of us should show in all that we do in our everyday lives.**

**The Red stands for all of the men and women who have died in the service
of
our country, both as members of the armed forces and as everyday
citizens.**

**Our flag has gone into every battle into which thre have been United States
citizens, fromthe American Revolution to the Civil War, to WW I, to WW**

II, to the Korean Conflict the Viet Nam War to the Desert Storm.

It has flown over some battles that were never declared, such as Beirut where the Marine Barracks was blown up by terrorists and the Alfred Murrah Building in Oklahoma City a short time ago.

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I was born on June 14, 1777

I am more than cloth shaped into a design.

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I am the silent sentinel of Freedom.

I am the emblem of the greatest sovereign nation on earth.

I am the inspiration for which American Patriots gave their lives and fortunes.

I have led your sons in to battle from Valley Forge to the blistering desert of the Arabian Peninsula.

I walked in silence with each of your honored dead to their final resting place beneath the silent white crosses, row upon row.

I have flown through peace and war, strife and prosperity, and amidst it all

I have been respected.

"Old Glory" is my nickname; proudly I wave on high. Honor me. respect me,

defend me with your lives and fortunes. Never let my enemies tear me down

from my lofty position lest I never return. Keep alight the fires of patriotism, strive earnestly for the spirit of democracy. Worship Eternal God and keep his commandments, and I shall remain the bulwark of peace of

freedom for all people.

FOR I AM YOUR FLAG!

(Stop here until the colors are completely separated. the continue)

My red stripes symbolize the blood spilled in defense of the glorious nation.

Let us retire the Red Stripes--Salute!

(burn the red stripes)

To.

My white stripes signify the burning tears shed by Americans who lost their sons.

Let us retire the White Stripes --Salute

To.

My blue field is indicative of God's heaven under which we fly. My stars, clustered together, unify 50 States as one for God and Country.

Let us retire the Blue Field with Stars.--Salute.

To

Color Guard files out in silence.

Flag Burning Ceremony

- 1. Display the old flag, give its history, if known,**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance Respect paid to the old flag -- read aloud
"I AM OLD GLORY"**

I am old glory; for more the 9 score years I have been the banner of hope and

freedom for generation after generation of Americans. Born amid the first flames of America's fight for freedom, I am the symbol of a country that has

grown from a little group of 13 colonies to a united nation of 50 sovereign states. Planted firmly on the high pinnacle of American Faith, my gently fluttering folds have proved an inspiration to untold millions. Men have followed me into battle with unwavering courage. They have looked upon me as a symbol of national unity. They have prayed that they and their fellow citizens might continue to enjoy the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, which have been granted to every American as the heritage of free men. So long as men love liberty more than life itself, so long as they treasure the priceless privileges bought with the blood of our forefathers; so long as the principles of truth, justice and charity for all remain deeply rooted in human hearts, I shall continue to be the enduring banner of the United States of America.

- 3. Explain to the ensemble what will happen next, and a little word or two about it. Taps are hummed slowly while the flag is cut up. The ABSOLUTE SILENCE.**

4. Color Guards cuts the field of blue stars out of the flag, with solemnity a quiet. This field of flue is put onto the fire first. The stripes are laid into the fire when the stars are almost fully consumed.

5. There is absolute silence until the entire flag is completely consumed by the flames.

- 6. Then the color guard, with meaning, says, 'OUR FLAG REST IN PEACE.'**

Flag Burning Ceremony

**Group says together: Pledge of Allegiance the sing America
(my Country Tis of Thee)**

Color of the flag: Remember as you look at your Flag, which is the symbol of

our nation, that it is red because of human sacrifice. It is blue because of the true blue loyalty of its defenders. It is white to symbolize liberty - our land of the free. The stars are symbols of the united efforts and hope in the hearts of many people striving for a greater nobler America.

**Hold the Flag Up: Optional - at this point, each person in the audience or participating in the ceremony, may state what the Flag means to them.
Sing:**

Another appropriate song may be sung (optional) Procedure for Flag Burning:

(a pair of scissors should be on hand) Take the flag and unfold. Place stars (as audience sees it) in the upper left hand corner. (One minute of silent meditation may be inserted if desired).

COMPLETE SILENCE

Then either cut or tear the position of the blue containing the stars from the flag. Have one person hold the blue in her arms until the end of the ceremony because the blue and stars is the last part of the flag to be burned. Now tear one stripe off at a time. burn it in the fire by laying it across the flames; not in a lump. Burn each stripe thoroughly before tearing off the next stripe to be burned. After all the stripes have been burned, one at a time, then the blue and stars is ready to be burned. BEFORE the blue and stars is spread across the fire, the blue portion should be KISSED for respect by the person holding the blue throughout the ceremony. The portion is then laid, as a whole piece and not torn in any way, across the fire and all is quiet until the last speck of blue turns to ash.

Sing - Star Spangled Banner; or other appropriate song.

End of the ceremony should be followed by a silent dismissal.

One ceremony snipped due to 300 line limit at listserver

BURIAL OF ASHES

If the flag to be burned is small or there is more than one flag to be burned at a time, the flag may (but not necessarily advised unless due to lack of time) be laid as a whole unit across the fire. This can be done also if the first flag is torn and burned as describe above, and another laid across the first one at a time. Nothing should ever be added to the ceremonial fire after the Flag has been burned (out of respect).

The next morning the scouts that actually burned the flag and their leader will gather the ashes to be buried. This could be included as the last step in the ceremony if the wanted all of those in attendance to participate.

A hole is dug, the dirt placed carefully beside it and the ashes are placed into the hole by handfuls. Fill the hole back up with dirt, a market can be placed. At the beginning of the ceremony the speaker should say who the flag

grommets will be given to. They are a form of good luck and can be

carried or worn around the neck of the person who receives one. If the ashes are entirely out, they can be carried to the burial site in a box, if the ashes are still hot, a bucket could be used, then place by shovels-full into the hole.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG

Date: Sat, 21 Oct 1995 20:51:42 -0700
From: BILL NELSON <nelsonb@aztec.asu.edu>
Subject: Yet another I am Your Flag

Here is another version. You can get this one
on our page: <http://www.hiwaay.net/hyper/Scouts/ceremony.html>

I AM YOUR FLAG

- * I am your flag.
- * I was born June 14, 1777.
- * I am more than just cloth shaped into a design.
- * I am the refuge of the World's oppressed people.
- * I am the silent sentinel of freedom.
- * I am the emblem of the greatest sovereign nation on earth.
- * I am the inspiration for which American Patriots gave their lives and fortunes.
- * I have led your sons into battle from Valley Forge to the dense jungles of Vietnam.
- * I walk in silence with each of your honored dead to their final resting place beneath the silent white crosses - row upon row.
- * I have flown through peace and war; strife and prosperity; and amidst it all, I have been respected.
- * I am your flag.
- * My red stripes symbolize the blood spilled in defense of this glorious nation.
- * My white stripes signify the yurning tears shed by Americans who lost their sons and daughters.
- * My blue field is indicative of God's heaven, under which I fly.
- * My stars, clustered together, unify fifty states as one, for God and Country. "Old Glory" is my nickname, and I proudly wave on high. Honor me, respect me, defend me with your lives and your fortunes.

- * Never let my enemies tear me down from my lofty position, lest I never return,
- * Keep alight the fires of patriotism; strive earnestly for the spirit of Democracy.
- * Worship Eternal God, and keep his commandments; and I shall remain the bulwark of peace and freedom for all mankind.
- * I AM YOUR FLAG!

Marine Master Sargeant Percy Webb

Hope this helps,
bill

--

Bill Nelson Webelos Den Leader, Pack 878 Assistant Scoutmaster,
Troop 14, Unit Commissioner, Tempe District, Grand Canyon Council
Phoenix, Arizona USA <mailto:nelsonb@aztec.asu.edu>
Member of U.S. Scouting Service Proj.,
<http://www.hiwaay.net/hyper/Scouts>

Date: Wed, 21 Feb 1996 23:31:55 -0400
From: Beverly Hutchings <hutchings@BLOMAND.NET>
Subject: opening ceremonies
To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

hi everyone,

i dug into my "box of tricks" & came up with this poem that i've used for an opening flag ceremony. my apologies if it's too "american" to be useful for our fellow scouters in the rest of the world. credit goes to country music singer johnny cash--he wrote this.

RAGGED OLD FLAG

I walked through a county courthouse square,
On a park bench an old man was sitting there.
I said, "Your old courthouse is kinda run down."
He said, "Naw it'll do for our little town."
I said, "Your flagpole has leaned a little bit,
And that's a Ragged Old Flag you got hanging on it.

He said, "Have a seat," and I sat down.

"Is this the first time you've been to our little town?"
I said, "I think it is." He said, "I don't like to brag,
But we're kinda proud of that Ragged Old Flag."

"You see, we got a little hole in that flag there
When Washington took it across the Delaware.
And it got powder-burned the night Francis Scott Key
Sat watching it writing Oh Say Can You See.
And it got a bad rip in New Orleans
With Packingham and Jackson tuggin' at its seams."

"And it almost fell at the Alamo
Beside the Texas flag, but she waved on through.
She got cut with a sword at Chancellorsville
And she got cut again at Shiloh Hill.
There was Robert E. Lee, Beauregard, and Bragg,
And the south wind blew hard on that Ragged Old Flag."

"On Flanders Field in World War I
She got a big hole from a Bertha gun.
She turned blood red in World War II
She hung limp and low by the time it was through.
She was in Korea and Vietnam.
She went where she was sent by her Uncle Sam."

"She waved from our ships upon the briny foam,
And now they've about quit waving her back here at home.
In her own good land she's been abused --
She's been burned, dishonored, denied and refused."

"And the government for which she stands
Is scandalized throughout the land.
And she's getting threadbare and wearing thin,
But she's in good shape for the shape she's in.
'Cause she's been through the fire before
And I believe she can take a whole lot more."

"So we raise her up every morning,
Take her down every night.
We don't let her touch the ground
And we fold her up right.
On second thought I DO like to brag,
'Cause I'm mighty proud of that Ragged Old Flag."

hope this helps someone else as much as it did me!

yis,

beverly hutchings, wdl & former(?) girl scout
pack 172
mcminnville, tn usa

Date: Thu, 11 Jul 1996 02:33:26 -0400
From: Ed Darrell <EDarr1776@AOL.COM>
Subject: Re: Flags & patriotism

Acknowledging discussion before, I address the issue of how to instill pride and reverence for the U.S. flag.

The answer is simple and difficult: Model the way. Do it yourself:

1. The flag code (available on-line and other places) lists more than two dozen dates on which your flag should fly at your home. Fly the flag those days and ask your neighbors to do the same.

2. Salute the flag properly when it is presented. Be the first to stand and salute when you see the colors moving into the room. When I used to report on conventions and other gatherings where flags were posted in front of civilians, it always amazed me that so few people stood for the presentation.

I've found that, as an audience member, I can have powerful influence if I simply stand quickly and salute. In Scout audiences, usually an old Eagle will say "Scouts, salute!" They do it unconsciously. When this happens, the entire audience rises quickly. It is impressive.

This also means you will grow tired at most 4th of July parades. Don't let it deter you.

3. When you participate in a flag raising ceremony, practice it to get it down perfectly. Do it right. Colors rise quickly; colors retreat slowly.

Half-mast displays are done after the colors rise all the way. Get one of your musically inclined kids to learn "To the colors" and "Retreat" perfectly, and fast.

4. When you participate in a flag posting ceremony, rehearse it before hand to get it down perfectly. Do it right. Have the colormaster know his/her lines perfectly and say them loudly. You will be amazed at how an audience bends to the will of an enthusiastic 12-year old saluting the flag.

5. Get a copy of the Scout publication "Your Flag" (my 1981 printing is No. 3188 -- is that still current?). Whenever you display or present a flag, consult the book on the proper way to do it. Especially when you have flags flanking a podium -- when I worked for a U.S. Senator I noted that better than half the times flags were displayed, they wer displayed on the wrong side of the podium. Recently as I waited for a judge to appear in court I noted an unaccustomed display of the flag -- but on consulting my references I learned it was done correctly (do you know what is the "point of honor?"). We can all learn, and should consult references whenever there are questions.

6. Whenever you say the Pledge of Allegiance, say it loud, with alacrity (and my personal bias: Don't pause after "flag" but say it in phrases). Salute properly.

7. To help kids learn proper flag etiquette, make it fun and meaningful. Let your kids get the satisfaction that comes from being the color guard at an American Legion meeting and getting the cheers of the Legionnaires. Let your kids get the satisfaction of leading the parents of the PTA in showing proper respect. Drill in your troop, post or pack.

If we all do these seven things, others will follow. It seems to me that if we had 60 percent of American homes displaying the flag on special days designated for it, there would be absolutely no question about an amendment on flag desecration. There would be no need. It is sad when we must try to enforce respect, by legislation, when that same respect is not shown voluntarily by so many who should. Let's start the movement. If every Scout's home flew the flag, it would be astounding. If every Vietnam veteran

flew the flag on holidays, the colors would be astounding. If every Gulf War vet joined in, you would hear about a "rise of patriotism" in America. If the vets of Korea joined in, it would be the biggest movement in America. If the surviving WWII vets joined, the space shuttle would be able to see the color change from orbit!

Well, we can hope . . .

Ed Darrell, Duncanville, Texas
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Date: Sun, 18 Aug 1996 01:13:15 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Subject: Re: Flag Retirement #2

The Flag Code section on retiring a U.S. Flag is found at 36 U.S.C. Section 176(k):

(k) The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.

This is all that the law says. When burning is not practical, a dignified burial can be used. There are no restrictions on who may destroy a flag or any prescriptions for a ceremony.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman
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Date: Tue, 20 Aug 1996 23:40:37 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Subject: Re: Flag Retirement #2

Mary,

The U.S. Constitution (including its Amendments) does not address the manner of flag retirement.

From what I read here, it seems that many well-meaning people are not well informed about such things, but happy to give advice anyway. :-) The single authoritative source for disposal of worn out flags is a statute, 36 U.S.C. 176(k). The only requirement is that the destruction be in a dignified manner, preferably by burning. The statute does not require any particular form of ceremony or restrict who may dispose of a flag. Likewise it does not prohibit burial or any other dignified retirement. Consider retirement of a flag at sea. You sure wouldn't want a fire on deck and wouldn't throw it into the boiler as fuel. Burial at sea then makes sense too. :-)

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman
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