

FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY



SM/MASTER OF CEREMONIES:

Patriotism has been and will continue to be one of the major endeavors of the Boy Scouts of America. The observance of proper respect for the Flag of our country and the education of its citizenry in the proper courtesies to be paid to the Flag are essential elements.

It is fitting and proper the Flag which has been used and become unserviceable be collected, inspected, condemned and properly destroyed, preferably by burning, in a solemn ceremony as set forth by the American Legion in 1937 and in accordance with the US Flag Code 176 (k). This ceremony has been adopted and modified to fit this gathering of Boy Scouts, Leaders, parents, brothers, sisters and guest tonight.

Pause

SPL: "Color Guard of Troop 123 present the Flag." [Flag is brought forth by Color Guard, unfurled and held open flat – 4 additional Scouts take up positions around the four sides of the flag]

SM/MASTER OF CEREMONIES:

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....

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MY NAME IS OLD GLORY.

(Adapted from Senior Master Sgt. Don S. Miller, USAF (Ret.) Copyright © 1983)

Scout #1:

I am the flag of the United States of America
I fly atop the world's tallest buildings.
I stand watch in America's halls of justice.
I fly majestically over great institutes of learning.
I stand guard with the greatest military power in the world.
Look up! And see me!

Scout #2:

I stand for peace, honor, truth, and justice.
I stand for freedom.
I am confident.
I am proud.

Scout #3:

When I am flown with my fellow banners, my head is a little higher, my
colors a little truer.
I bow to no one.
I am recognized all over the world.
I am worshipped.
I am saluted.
I am respected.
I am revered.
I am loved.

Scout #4: I have fought every battle of every war for more than 200 years...
I led my soldiers.
I followed them.
I watched over them...
They loved me.

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Scout #1: I have been soiled, burned, torn and trampled on the streets of countries I have helped set free.

It does not hurt . . . for I am invincible.

Scout #2: I have been soiled, burned, torn and trampled on the streets of my country, and when it is by those with whom I have served in battle . . . it hurts. But I shall overcome . . . for I am strong.

Scout #3: I have slipped the bonds of Earth and stand watch over the uncharted new frontiers of space from my vantage point on the moon and in the vacuum of space.

Scout #4: I have been a silent witness to all of America's finest hours. But my finest hour comes when I am torn into strips to be used for bandages for my wounded comrades on the field of battle. When I fly at half-mast to honor my soldiers...and when I lie in the trembling arms of a grieving mother or father at the graveside of her fallen son or daughter.

Scout # 1through 4 together:

I am proud.

My name is Old Glory.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES:

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 in the 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.

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The Red stands for the courage of 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.

We have old friends here tonight, who have fulfilled their duty to our country. They has become worn and tattered and we are here tonight to retire them with honor.

We shouldn't be sad about the retirement of our friends. We are not burning them in anger; we are only releasing their spirits so that they can continue to serve us in our thoughts.

SPL: “Color Guard of Troop 123 present the Flag that has become unserviceable for inspection”.

[Color Guard shall walk forward with the Flag to the Scoutmaster and other adult leaders for inspection. The SM/Master of Ceremonies shall inspect the Flag]

Pause

SM/MASTER OF CEREMONIES:

“This Flag having served us well as a symbol of our great nation has become worn and deemed unfit for continued service”.

SPL: “Color Guard Prepare this flag for proper disposal”.

[Color Guard shall take flag fully opened flat by 4 corners and face fire.]

SM/MASTER OF CEREMONIES:

“Fellow Scouts, Scouters, parents, brother, sisters, relatives and friends, we have been presented a Flag of our Country that has been inspected and deemed

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unserviceable. It has reached its present state by proper service of tribute, memory and love of our country”.

Pause

“A Flag may be a flimsy bit of printed gauze, or a beautiful banner of the finest silk. Its’ intrinsic value may be trifling or great, but its’ real value is beyond price for it is a precious symbol of all that we and our comrades have worked for, lived for and died for. Therefore let no grave of any person defending our country go unmarked without the Flag of our Country”

SPL:

“This Flag is the symbol of a nation of free people, true to the faith of the past, devoted to the ideals and practices of Justice, Freedom and Democracy. Let this worn Flag of our Country be retired and destroyed with respectful and honorable rites and its’ place be taken by a bright new Flag of the same size and kind.

Pause

SPL: “Scout Salute!!”

“Color Guard present the Flag to the flames”

[Bugler plays taps as flag is presented to the flame - Silence is observed while the Flag burns. SM/Master of Ceremonies shall determine the time of silence]

SPL: “Two. Color Guard, dismissed”

SM/MASTER OF CEREMONIES: This concludes our ceremony. However, we have many remaining flags and we invite anyone who would like to help dispose of these flags to come up quietly, reverently, in single-file bring the flags forward and place them on the ceremonial fire.