

# IWLA, Retire Your Old Glory and the NCAC Mattaponi District Boy Scouts Flag Retirement Ceremony, November 9<sup>th</sup> 2013

Randy D. Wilson  
NCAC Mattaponi District Boy Scouts

## Flag Retirement Ceremony:

(Pre-ceremony: Background patriotic music, flags being laid out on the table in or near the pavilion.)

### 1. Introduce the American Flag

- **MC (BSA):** Call to Order and Introduce the Host - President of Fredericksburg-Rappahannock Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America.
- **MC (BSA):** Welcome...Please rise for the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Invocation:** Clergy. If no clergy then: Heavenly Father, please be with us gathered here as we conduct this most solemn flag retirement ceremony. The flag that symbolizes our country founded as one nation under God. Amen.

- **MC (BSA):** We are gathered here and if you notice we have an empty chair for our honored guest "Old Glory". (Place an empty chair on stage for Old Glory.)
- **MC (BSA):** (or someone to be out of sight and read)  
:

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 parade, proudly waving in the breeze. When your Dad 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 yes, 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, and 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...Quadal Canal...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.

## 2. Introduce the Guests and the Retirement Event

- **MC (BSA):** Introduction of the official event VIP's and Guests.

Mayor of the City of Fredericksburg

Retire Your Unserviceable Old Glory Project Coordinator Denise Etter

- **MC (BSA):** Introduce BSA Representative of the National Capital Area Council Boy Scouts of America
- **MC (BSA):** Thank you and Welcome Honored Guests. It is our honor and pleasure to part of this solemn occasion, with the City of Fredericksburg, IWLA and the Retire your old glory organization.

(Craft wording to suit your occasion.)

I find it fitting that we are gathered here for this flag retirement today; most especially this weekend as we celebrate Veteran's day as it has been known since 1954, prior to that it was known as Armistice Day.

We observe Veteran's Day today but, always remember that in the eleventh month on the eleventh day at the eleventh hour World War I ceased. In the following year, November 1919, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed November 11th as the first commemoration of Armistice Day with the following words: "To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in our countries service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations."

How fitting President Wilson's words apply today. Proper flag retirement is defined in United States Federal Law states: "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." (36 U.S.C. 176(k))

The BSA publication "Your Flag" states: "When our national flag is worn beyond repair, cut it into small pieces that will burn easily and completely on a modest, but blazing fire. This should be done in a simple manner with dignity and respect. Be sure the flag is reduced to ashes and is unrecognizable as a former flag."

This duty may be carried out less ceremoniously than we will do today, and it need not be more ceremonious. It is important that the assembled group be participants rather than spectators. I ask all of you here to serve as Honor Guards for this ceremony. Please form a circle around the fire so that the Honor Guards are a part of your circle.

(Insert Readings - Depending on the number of flags you can space the readings.)

### 3. Conclusion:

- Call group to attention and play TAPS.  
(This ceremony used Burl Ives version with the words and everyone sang.)
- The Scouts will maintain a vigil over the fire until no traces of the flag remnants remain. Then the ashes will be collected and buried.
- This concludes this ceremony. Thank you for attending.

Yours in Scouting,

Randy D. Wilson  
NCAC Mattaponi District Boy Scouts

(Optional readings)

#### Reading 1:

#### I Am The Flag

**By: Author Unknown**

I am the flag of the United States of America. My name is Old Glory.  
I fly atop the world's tallest buildings.  
I stand watch in America's halls of justice.  
I fly majestically over institutions of learning.  
I stand guard with power in the world.  
Look up and see me.  
I stand for peace, honor, truth and justice.  
I stand for freedom.  
I am confident. I am arrogant. I am proud.  
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 loved - I am revered.  
I am respected - and I am feared.  
I have fought in every battle of every war for more than 200 years.  
I was flown at Valley Forge, Gettysburg, Shiloh and Appomattox.  
I was there at San Juan Hill, the trenches of France, in the Argonne Forest,  
Anzio, Rome and the beaches of Normandy, Guam. Okinawa, Korea and KheSan, Saigon, Vietnam.  
I was there. I led my troops.  
I was dirty, battle worn and tired but, my soldiers cheered me and I was proud.  
I have been burned, torn and trampled on the streets of countries that I have helped set free.  
It does not hurt, for I am invincible.  
I have been soiled upon, burned, torn and trampled on the streets of my country.  
And when it's by those whom I've served in battle - it hurts.  
But I shall overcome - for I am strong.

I have slipped the bonds of Earth and stood watch over the uncharted frontiers of space  
from my vantage point on the moon.

I have borne silent witness to all of America's finest hours.

But my finest hours are yet to come.

When I am torn into strips and used as bandages for my wounded comrades on the battlefield,

When I am flown at half-mast to honor my soldier, or when I lie in the trembling arms

of a grieving parent at the grave of their fallen son or daughter, I am proud.

MY NAME IS OLD GLORY

LONG MAY I WAVE.

## **Reading 2:**

### **I am the Flag**

**By: Ruth Apperson Rous**

I am the flag of the United States of America.

I was born on June 14, 1777, in Philadelphia.

There the Continental Congress adopted my stars and stripes as the national flag.

My thirteen stripes alternating red and white, with a union of thirteen white stars in a field of blue, represented a new constellation, a new nation dedicated to the personal and religious liberty of mankind.

Today fifty stars signal from my union, one for each of the fifty sovereign states in the greatest constitutional republic the world has ever known.

My colors symbolize the patriotic ideals and spiritual qualities of the citizens of my country.

My red stripes proclaim the fearless courage and integrity of American men and boys and the self-sacrifice and devotion of American mothers and daughters.

My white stripes stand for liberty and equality for all.

My blue is the blue of heaven, loyalty, and faith.

I represent these eternal principles: liberty, justice, and humanity.

I embody American freedom: freedom of speech, religion, assembly, the press, and the sanctity of the home.

I typify that indomitable spirit of determination brought to my land by Christopher Columbus and by all my forefathers - the Pilgrims, Puritans, settlers at James town and Plymouth.

I am as old as my nation.

I am a living symbol of my nation's law: The Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights.

I voice Abraham Lincoln's philosophy: "A government of the people, by the people, for the people."

I stand guard over my nation's schools, the seedbed of good citizenship and true patriotism.

I am displayed in every schoolroom throughout my nation; every schoolyard has a flag pole for my display.

Daily thousands upon thousands of boys and girls pledge their allegiance to me and my country.

I have my own law—Public Law 829, "The Flag Code" - which definitely states my correct use and display for all occasions and situations.

I have my special day, Flag Day. June 14 is set aside to honor my birth.

Americans, I am the sacred emblem of your country. I symbolize your birthright, your heritage of liberty purchased with blood and sorrow.

I am your title deed of freedom, which is yours to enjoy and hold in trust for posterity.

If you fail to keep this sacred trust inviolate, if I am nullified and destroyed, you and your children will become slaves to dictators and despots.

Eternal vigilance is your price of freedom.

As you see me silhouetted against the peaceful skies of my country, remind yourself that I am the flag of your country, that I stand for what you are - no more, no less.

Guard me well, lest your freedom perish from the earth.

Dedicate your lives to those principles for which I stand: "One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

I was created in freedom. I made my first appearance in a battle for human liberty.

God grant that I may spend eternity in my "land of the free and the home of the brave" and that I shall ever be known as "Old Glory," the flag of the United States of America.

### **Reading 3:**

#### **The American's Creed**

"I believe in the United States of America as a Government of the people by the people, for the people, whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a Republic; a sovereign Nation of many sovereign States; a perfect Union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes.

I therefore believe it is my duty to my Country to love it; to support its Constitution; to obey its laws; to respect its flag, and to defend it against all enemies."

## Reading 4:

### Thirteen Folds

#### Rewritten by Roger W Hancock

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In folding America's flag, not many know the meaning,  
Tribute to early society's social principle values.  
Held in respect, stretched flat, freedom's sentry standard.  
Life's symbol folded first, lateral first in half.  
Parallels the ground once folded, that one day we will too,  
Symbolize eternal life belief, we half the flag again.  
Veteran's gift; portion of lives, defending free America,  
World peace enforced, angled thirdly folded . . . honors.  
Angle fourth, our weaker nature, trusting God,  
To Him turn in peace, in war, for His, divine guidance.  
Fifth a tribute; America's might, "May she always be right:  
But it is still our country right or wrong." [Stephan Decatur]  
Angled sixth lay our hearts with we pledge allegiance,  
"to the flag, of the United States of America,  
and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God,  
indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all."  
Armed Forces, seventh fold salute, protects our country's flag,  
From enemies, found within, without, free Republic boundaries.  
"Valley of the shadow of death," entered, to see the light of day,  
Eighth crease honors mothers, whom it flies on Mother's Day.  
Ninth tribute made, womanhood: faith, love, loyalty, devotion;  
Molded character of men and women who made this country great.  
Tenth tribute given father, patriot offers sons and daughters,  
From birth for liberty, defending America, "sea to shining sea."  
Eleventh fold represents bottom of Kings David and Solomon's seal,  
Glorify in the Hebrews' eye, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Eternity and Glory twelfth fold presents, in eyes of Christendom,

God the Father, His Son Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Stars uppermost, remember our motto, "In God We Trust,"

Thirteen folds, completed task, in reverence, flag now folded.

Ready for rest in folded state, triangle banner; cocked hat,

Reminds us: soldiers, sailors . . . marines that served,

Under General George Washington, Captain John Paul Jones.

Those that follow since through peace and war have served...

For our liberty . . . rights and privileges . . . we enjoy today.