

TX & US Flag Retirement Ceremony

Boy Scout Troop 209

(for a number of worn flags)

Script

Flag Retirement Ceremony:

CAMPMASTER:

"We will be closing our day with a flag retirement ceremony. At the conclusion of the ceremony we ask that you leave in silence. The fire will burn out and the ashes given to the earth. There will be no marshmallows, hot dog roasts or other use of this fire tonight. Please welcome _____ who will lead the ceremony."

LEADER:

"We begin with the retirement of Texas State flags."

"Tonight, we will follow the official retirement ceremony for the State Flag of Texas as encouraged for public use. These flags are ready to be retired. They have served state, community, neighborhoods, and families boldly and cheerfully as the Emblem of the State of Texas."

(First Texas flag is presented.)

"I am your Texas flag!"

"I was born January 25, 1839."

"I am one of only two flags of an American state that has also served as the symbol of an independent nation--The Republic of Texas."

"While you may honor me in retirement, the spirit I represent will never retire!"

"I represent the spirit of Texas--Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow!"

"I represent the bravery of the Alamo and the Victory at San Jacinto."

"My spirit rode with the Texas Rangers over the Forts Trail of the Big Country and herded cattle through the Fort Worth stockyards. I have sailed up Galveston Bay and kept a watchful eye over our El Paso del Norte."

"My colors are in the waters of the Red River and in the Bluebonnets of the Texas Hill Country."

"You'll find my spirit at the Light House of Palo Duro and in the sands of Padre Island."

"I am in the space station at Houston and atop the oil wells of West Texas."

"From the expanse of the Big Bend to the Riverwalk of San Antone--all of Texas is my home!"

"I wave over the cotton and grain fields of the High Plains, and I am deep in the rich soil of the Rio Grande Valley."

"I am proudly displayed under the Capitol Dome, and I fly high above the concrete canyons of downtown Dallas."

"You'll find my spirit in the East Texas piney woods and along the Grandeur of the Rio Grande."

"I represent Texas--every Child, Woman, and Man!"

(First Texas flag is placed onto fire.)

LEADER:

"The blue field in me stands for the valor of our ancestors in the battles for our country."

"Let us retire the blue--Salute!" "Two."

"My white field stands for the purity in all our Texas hearts! It represents the honor that each of us should pay to our state each day."

"Let us retire the white--Salute!" "Two."

"The red is for all of the men and women who have died in service of our state--whether as members of the armed services or as citizen Samaritans."

"Let us retire the red--Salute!" "Two."

"My lone, independent star is recognized worldwide because it represents ALL of Texas and stands for our unity as one for God, State, and Country."

"Let us retire the lone star--Salute!" "Two."

(Texas flags bundle is presented.)

"Please, join in the pledge to the Texas flag:

"Honor the Texas flag; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, one state under God, one and indivisible."

(Texas flags bundle is placed onto fire.)

(Pause for staging of U.S. flags.)

US Flags

LEADER:

"We will continue with the retirement of a collection of U.S. flags."

"US Flag Code reads; "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.""

(First team unfolds flag and presents to the audience. The blue field in the upper left from the audience's viewpoint.)

"BSA recommends: "When the national flag is worn beyond repair, burn it thoroughly 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 unrecognizable as a former flag.""

(Pause.)

"Tonight we will retire these American Flags in the tradition of Troop 209."

(Pause)

"These flags are ready to be retired. They have served our nation, state, community, neighborhoods, and families boldly and cheerfully as the Emblem of our Country. Some became faded and worn over the graves of our departed military service men and women and family members. Some served on display in various public places: schools, parks, city office buildings, sports arenas, and airports. All have reached their present unrepairable state through proper service of tribute, memory, and love."

"Please stand, as you are able, for the Pledge of Allegiance."

"Those in uniform salute, all others place your hand across your heart."

(Leader faces flag presented by scouts.)

"Ready...begin"

"I pledge allegiance..."

"Two. Please be seated."

(Wait for audience to settle. Signal for quiet if necessary.)

"Tonight I will read Troop 209's version of "I Am Old Glory."

READER:

"I am Old Glory."

(flag used for Pledge of Allegiance is placed on fire. Wait for flames to die down before proceeding.)

"For more than 11 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."

(First group of flags is placed onto fire.)

"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 people."

"I have gone into every battle into which there have been United States citizens, from the American Revolution to the Civil War, to WW I, to WW II, to the Korean Conflict, Viet Nam, Desert Storm, Iraq and Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. I have flown over battles that were never declared: Pearl Harbor, Beirut, Oklahoma City, and most recently by the rescuers at the World Trade Center. In all of these, you, the American people, have stayed true to the values that I represent. You should always value the sacrifices that have been made for me and the country that I represent."

"So long as people 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."

(Second group of flags is placed onto fire.)

LEADER:

"Please join in singing our National Anthem".

"O say can you see..."

(Star Spangled Banner is sung by audience)

"The U.S. flag is more than just some brightly colored cloth . . . it is a symbol of our nation."

(Third group of flags is placed onto fire.)

"Seven red stripes and six white stripes; together they represent the original 13 colonies that gained us liberty. The red stripes remind us of the lifeblood of brave men and women who were ready to die for this, their country. The white stripes remind us of purity and cleanliness of purpose, thought, word, and deed."

"The blue is for truth and justice, like the eternal blue of the star-filled heavens. The stars represent the fifty sovereign states of our union."

(Pause)

LEADER:

"As these flags are placed in the fire remember . . . Old flags never die, they just get fired up!"

(Fourth group of flags is placed on fire.)

(Pause)

LEADER:

"The flag of the United States of America is an honored symbol of our nation's unity, its hopes, its achievements, its glory and its high resolve."

"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."

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof ..."

"Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or press."

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

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

LEADER:

(as Fifth group of flags is placed in fire.)

"The Blue field or union is the point of honor, the upper corner of the Flag's own right. The union is blue, representing the night sky with stars forming a new and glorious constellation. There is one star for each state in our union."

(Sixth group of flags is placed onto fire.)

"The stripes are symbolic of beams of morning light, rays emanating from the sun. Thirteen red and white stripes; one for each of the original thirteen colonies. The stripes in our flag were inspired by the rattlesnake flag flown on the ships of the Continental Fleet and the striped banner of the Sons of Liberty. Though the pattern has changed, the bars of shining red and gleaming white have remained: the red standing for the courage of those brave men and women who fought and died to establish and preserve our republic; the white representing the purity and high moral resolve on which our country was founded."

(Seventh group of flags is placed on fire.) (last group)

LEADER:

"As the fire consumes the worn and tattered material in its purifying flame, let us remember the words of George Washington when the Star-spangled Banner was first flown by the Continental Army: "We take the stars from heaven and the red from our

mother country. We separate the red by white stripes, thus showing that we have separated from her, and the white stripes shall go down to posterity representing liberty." Thus the Stars and Stripes became what it is; born amid the strife of battle, it has become the standard around which a free people have fought to preserve the greatest nation in the world."

(Last flag is unfolded and presented to the audience. The blue field in the upper left from the audience's viewpoint.)

LEADER:

"Please stand and prepare for prayer."

"Almighty God, Great Master of All Scouts, bless and consecrate this present hour."

"We thank you for our Country and its Flag, and for the liberty for which it stands. To clean and purging flame we commit these Flags, worn out in worthy service. As they yield their substance to the fire, may Your Holy Light spread over us and bring to our hearts renewed devotion to God and Country. Amen."

LEADER:

"Hand Salute."

(Pause as last flag is placed in fire.)

"Please repeat after me: "OUR FLAG, REST IN PEACE."" (audience repeats)

"Two."

"Please join in singing "Taps".

(audience sings)

Day is done, gone the sun,
From the lake, from the hills, from the sky;
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.

LEADER:

"This concludes our flag retirement ceremony. These sacred flames will be allowed to burn down. You are welcome to remain for a while in silent respect. Please depart in silent tribute to those who have fallen. Good night."