

***Sons of The American Revolution
250th Anniversary
Flag Retirement Ceremony***



Scouts from Troop 173 participate in opening ceremony.

The SAR 250th Anniversary Flag Retirement Ceremony is designed to be a tool that a chapter can use to conduct a patriotic and meaningful flag retirement ceremony with the Boy Scouts at camporees and campfire programs. It is a great tool for any gathering of Scouts who would like

to have their units participate in a patriotic and meaningful ceremony. As part of the ceremony the chapter president or master of ceremonies should mention and make the group aware of the upcoming 250th Anniversary. Thus, making it an official 250th Anniversary Event.



Figure 1The Patch given to Scouts

As shown in the pictures below the flag retirement ceremony has been performed during several Scout camporees and campfires. It is designed to not just be a ceremony that the Scouts can observe but can actively participate in. The participation of the Scouts makes the ceremony not only meaningful for those observing but even more so for those individuals participating in the ceremony.



Figure 2 A Scout reads his stripe description before placing it in the fire.

The ceremony requires a flag that has been declared unserviceable and must be disposed of. Also, there should be some type of fire pit or campfire to place the pieces of the unserviceable flag in to burn completely. The flag to be retired or disposed of can be prepared ahead of the ceremony by separating the 13 stripes and the blue star field if time is limited. It is preferred however that the flag be cut apart as part of the ceremony and a piece given to each participant to present during the ceremony. If the flag has metal gromets then they should be removed prior to the ceremony. Each individual should be given a slip of paper with the description of the piece they are disposing of and what it represents. This is included in the script.



Figure 3A Scout participating in the role of Chaplain.





Figure 4 Senior Scouts display the flag to be retired.



Figure 5 A Scout placing the blue star field in the fire.

The shorter version of the ceremony referred to in the script as ceremony 1 disposes of the unserviceable flag by placing it in the fire folded. The folded flag could be soaked in kerosene to help completely burn it. If a chapter is performing the ceremony themselves or before a small group then this could be the ceremony performed.

The longer version of the ceremony referred to in the script as ceremony 2 will require at least 14 individual Scouts along with the chapter president, vice president, sergeant at arms and chaplain to participate. Scouts can fulfill the roles of the chapter if more participation is desired. One Scout for each of the thirteen stripes and one for the blue star field.

This also gives the chapter the opportunity to present flag retirement certificates to any Scout who participates in the ceremony. A flag retirement certificate is a suitable and meaningful recognition of the individual's participation and a testament to their patriotism for them to proudly display. Flag Certificates can also be presented to any Scout unit present that displays their American Flag in a proper manner.



Figure 6 Scout Participants receiving their Flag Retirement Certificates.



Figure 7 A Scout Troop receiving a Flag Certificate for proper display of the American Flag.



Figure 8 A Compatriot fires a musket salute.



Figure 9 A Scout plays taps to end the ceremony.

Chapters can use this ceremony to reach out to Scout units to ask them to participate in this ceremony. It is a great way to build community awareness of our organization and promote patriotism and inform them of the upcoming 250th Anniversary.

***Sons of the
American Revolution***



***Flag Retirement
Ceremony***

Flag Retirement Ceremony

President: *Will everyone please rise for the posting of the colors.*

Posting of Colors: *Color Guard*

President: *Compatriots and guests, let us begin this solemn ceremony with an invocation from our chaplain.*

Chaplain: *Our Dear Heavenly Father, Commander over all, we ask that you bless and consecrate this special occasion. We thank Thee for our Country and the many ideals for which it stands and for our Flag which visibly symbolizes the American aspirations. Amen*

Pledge of Allegiance: *Compatriot Designee*

SAR Pledge: *Compatriot designee*

Scout Oath and Law: *Scout designee*

Sergeant-at-Arms: *Compatriot President, we wish to present this (a number of) unserviceable flag(s) of The United States of America for inspection and retirement. It has become faded and worn and is (are) therefore unserviceable. It is recommended that it (they) be fittingly destroyed.*

President: *Compatriot Vice President, Will you please inspect this (these) flag(s) which has been presented for retirement.*

Vice President: *Compatriot President, I find this (these) flag(s) has become unserviceable as a result of good and worthy service. I recommend it (they) be honorably retired from further service.*

President: *Compatriots and friends, we have presented here a flag(s) of The United States of America which has been inspected and condemned as unserviceable. It has reached its present state in proper service to our country.*

"A flag may be a flimsy bit of printed gauze or a beautiful banner of finest silk. Its intrinsic value may be trifling or great, but it has real value beyond its price, for it is a precious symbol of all that we and our compatriots have worked, lived and died for -a free nation of free men and women true to the faith of the past, devoted to the ideals and practice of justice, freedom and democracy. Let this faded 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.

President: *We will now proceed with the retirement of this (these) flag(s) Compatriot Sergeant-at-Arms please prepare this (these) flags for retirement. Please stand and remain standing if you are able. Our chaplain will now pray.*

Chaplain: *Let us pray. Our Dear Heavenly Father to the clean and purging flame we commit this (these) flag(s). A flag(s) no longer serviceable due to its previous long, and worthy service. As we give up its substance to the fire, may your spirit touch all of us, renewing and strengthening our dedication and devotion to our great country The United States of America. Amen.*

President: *Let us now retire this flag of our country.*

During this time the fire which has already been prepared should be stoked up if necessary.

Ceremony 1: *(Sergeant-at-Arms or a designated individual will proceed to the fire and place the flag in the flames.)*

or

Ceremony 2: *(The Sergeant-at-Arms will then cut away the blue field of stars and present to the president. Each stripe will then be cut away starting with the bottom stripe and presented to the designated participants. Each designee will then approach the fire and place their portion of the flag in the flames after reciting their part.)*

First Stripe: *The 13 stripes represent the 13 original colonies which are, Massachusetts, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and New Jersey.*

Second Stripe: *The white stripe 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 by sea".*

Sixth Stripe: *"We the people of the United States in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessing 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, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."*

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."*

Blue Star Field: *Each state is being represented by a star on a field of blue, which signifies a new constellation being formed. It also represents the union of all states which shall not be broken. As we place it on the fire, let it burn brightly and remind us of how well our flag represents our country.*

President: *We will now have a musket salute and taps.*

Musket Salute: Color Guard

Taps: *Scout designee*

President: *Compatriots and friends. This concludes this ceremony. We will maintain a vigil over this fire until no trace of the remnants of the flag remains. The ashes will be collected and buried.*

President: *Color Guard, retire the colors. Please stand.*

President: *Thank you for coming and dismissed.*

This flag retirement ceremony is a compilation of several organizations published ceremonies. Special recognition should be given to The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, usscouts.org, boyscouttrail.com, The National Society of The Sons of The American Revolution, The Colonel Hugh Crockett Chapter SAR, The Governor Isaac Shelby Chapter SAR all of which were used in the completion of his ceremonial text.

