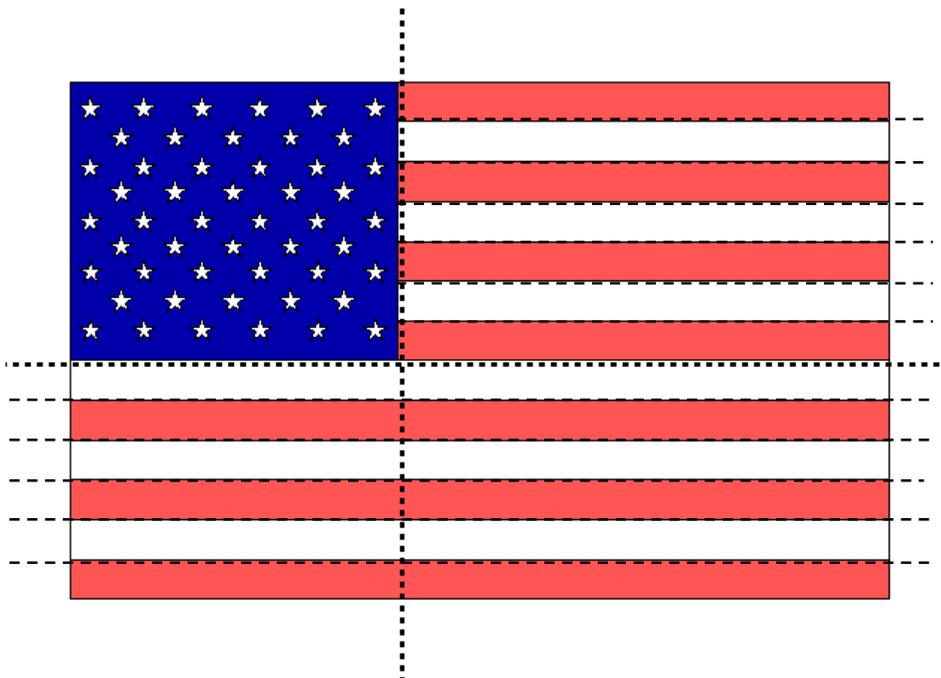


# Retiring Old Glory

When the United States flag (Old Glory) becomes worn, torn, faded or badly soiled, it is time to replace it with a new flag, and the old flag should be "retired" with all the dignity and respect befitting our nation's flag. The traditional method of retirement is to incinerate the flag, but this does not mean that one should simply drop the entire flag (intact) into a fire.

A flag ceases to be a flag when it is cut into pieces. In addition, it is easier to completely incinerate the flag, if it is cut into smaller pieces. A flag should never be torn up like an old bed sheet. It should be cut up with scissors or shears in a methodical manner. The corners of the flag should be stretched out over a table top and someone should cut the union away from the flag and then cut each of the red stripes and white stripes apart so that each group of red stripes and white stripes can be burned together.

**NOTE:** The reason we do not cut the blue star field is it represents the union of the fifty states and one should never let the union be broken.



While the Scouts are performing the flag dissection, other Scouts should start and tend a medium size, wood fire (preferably in a metal drum or incinerator). Once the flag remnants and fire are ready, you perform the following ceremony. The Scouts maintain a vigil over the fire until all traces of the flag remnants are destroyed. Then, the fire is extinguished and the ashes are buried. The burial can be completed with a moment of silence while taps is played by a bugler.

**NOTE:** Before accepting a flag for retirement, the recipient should obtain information about its history. For example: Where has it flown? How long? Any memorable events happen at that site? This information should be used in the ceremony.

### **Flag Retirement Ceremony**

Adult Leader: The U.S. flag is more than just some brightly colored cloth. It is a symbol of our nation.

A flag ceases to be a flag when it is cut into pieces. We cut the union from the flag and then cut the red stripes and white stripes apart. We leave the blue field intact because no one should ever let the union be broken. It represents the union of the fifty states and one should never let the union be broken.

Scout #1: Seven red stripes and six white strips; together they represent the original 13 colonies that gained us liberty.

Scout #2: The red stripes remind us of the lifeblood of brave men and women who died for this country and for the freedoms that we all enjoy.

Scout #3: The white stripes remind us of purity and cleanliness of purpose, thought, word and deed.

Scout #4: The blue is for truth and justice, like the eternal blue of the star-filled heavens.

Scout #5: The stars represent the fifty sovereign states of our union.

Scout #6: The American Creed states, "it is my duty to my country to love it, to respect its Constitution, to obey its laws, to respect its flag, and to defend it against all enemies."

Scout #7: Therefore, we retire flags with dignity and respect when they become worn, torn, faded, or badly soiled.

Adult Leader or SPL: The U.S. flag should be treated with respect when it's flying, and it should be treated with respect when it's being retired. Do not think of this Flag as being burned, But think of her as her spirit is set free, Think about what she represents, Freedom, Innocence, Sacrifice, Unity and continue to Honor her.

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Adult Leader or SPL: This flag is ready to be retired. Its history is as follows:

First Raised (when):

At (location):

Memorable event or fact:

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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.

## ***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 and into the hot sands of Iraq and Afghanistan.*
- *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 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!***