

FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY

Ceremony for the Disposal of Unserviceable Flags The post assembles in meeting, out-of-doors, at night. Members are aligned in two parallel rows about 20 feet apart, facing each other. Officers are at their stations. A small fire is burning opposite the commander and beyond the rows of members.

Sergeant-at-Arms: “Comrade Commander, we wish to present a number of unserviceable Flags of our Country for inspection and disposal.”

Commander: “Comrade Sergeant-at-Arms, advance with your detail and present the Flags for disposal and inspection.”

(Sergeant-at-Arms calls his detail to attention. They form at the Post of the Sergeant-at-Arms, take the Flags which are to be inspected march abreast down center until opposite the Second Vice Commander, turn right and halt two paces in front of the Second Vice Commander. The Sergeant-at-Arms steps one pace forward and salutes.)

Sergeant-at-Arms: “Comrade Vice Commander, we present these unserviceable Flags for your inspection.”

Second Vice Commander: “Is the present condition of these Flags the result of their usual service as the Emblem of our Country?”

Sergeant-at-Arms: “These Flags have become faded and worn over the graves of our departed comrades and the soldier and sailor dead of all our nation’s wars.”

Second Vice Commander: “Present these Flags to the First Vice Commander for his inspection.” (The Sergeant-at-Arms salutes, about faces, commands the detail), “About Face,” (crosses behind the detail and takes his post at its left, commands) “Forward March.” (The detail marches to within two paces of the First Vice Commander, halts and proceeds as before.)

Sergeant-at-Arms: “Comrade Vice Commander, we present these Flags which have been inspected by the Second Vice Commander, for your further inspection.”

First Vice Commander: “Have any of these Flags served any other purpose?”

Sergeant-at-Arms: “Some of these Flags have been displayed in various public places.” First Vice Commander: “Present them to the Commander for final inspection and fitting disposal.”

(The Sergeant-at-Arms salutes, about faces, commands the detail), “About Face,” (crosses behind the detail and takes position on its left commands), “Forward March.” (The detail marches to center, turns left, halts within two paces of the Commander, Sergeant-at-Arms steps one pace forward and salutes.)

Sergeant-at-Arms: “Comrade Commander, we have the honor to present for final inspection and proper disposal these Flags of our Country.”

Commander: “Have these Flags been inspected by the First and Second Vice Commanders?”

Sergeant-at-Arms: “They have.”

Commander: “Comrade Second Vice Commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?”

Second Vice Commander: “Comrade Commander, since these Flags have become unserviceable in a worthy cause, I recommend that they be honorably retired from further service.”

Commander: “Comrade First Vice Commander, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?”

First Vice-Commander: “Comrade Commander, since these Flags have become faded and worn in a tribute of service and love, I also recommend that they be fittingly destroyed.”

Commander: “Comrades, we have presented here these Flags of our Country which have been inspected and condemned as unserviceable. They have reached their present state in a proper service of tribute, memory and love.

“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 its real value is beyond price, for it is a precious symbol of all that we and our comrades have worked for and lived for, and died for a free Nation of free men, true to the faith of the past, devoted to the ideals and practice of Justice, Freedom and Democracy.

“Let these faded Flags of our Country be retired and destroyed with respectful and honorable rites and their places be taken by bright new Flags of the same size and kind, and let no grave of our soldier or sailor dead be unhonored and unmarked. Sergeant-at-Arms, assemble the Color Guard, escort the detail bearing the Flags and destroy these Flags by burning. The members shall stand at attention.”

(Color Guard forms. The detail about faces. Preceded by the Color Guard the detail marches down center to the fire. National Colors cross over and take position on the right of the fire, facing the Commander. Post Standard takes position on left of fire. The detail lines up behind the fire, which is burning low.)

Commander: “The Chaplain will offer prayer.”

Chaplain: “Almighty God, Captain of all hosts and Commander over all, bless and consecrate this present hour.

“We thank Thee 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 Thy Holy Light spread over us and bring to our hearts renewed devotion to God and Country. Amen.”

Commander: “Hand salute.”

(Color Guards present arms. Post Standard is dipped. All officers and members except those on the Flag detail salute. Members of the Flag detail dip the condemned Flags in kerosene and place them on a rack over the fire.)

(Bugler sounds “To the Colors.”)

Commander: (at conclusion of “To the Colors”) “Two.”

(The Color Guard shall resume its station and detail is dismissed.)

(Color Guard advances down center and places Colors. Members of the detail resume their places among the members.)