

# Troop 414 United States Flag Retirement Ceremony

## SUPPLIES:

Book lamp (clip-on type)  
Clip board with MC script  
Scripts (For each color guard Scout – these should be memorized!)  
Scissors  
Channel lock pliers (to remove grommets from embers)  
Shovels  
Garden rake  
Pre-cut flags, each bundled in a set of 13 stripes and one blue union section.

## CEREMONY NARRATION:

*<MC walks to the front of the gathering with script on clipboard; illuminate the script with a clip-on book lamp.>*

**MC:** “Will the audience please rise.”

**MC:** “Scouts, attention! Audience, attention!”

**MC:** “Color guard advance.”

**MC:** Scout salute

*<Two Scouts, side-by-side march to the front of the gathering, one carrying the folded American flag. They are followed by four additional Scouts serving as the color guard. Upon arriving at the front the two flag bearers turn around to face the audience and the four color guard move into position so there are two Scouts to the right and two Scouts to the left of the two flag bearers, everyone facing the audience.>*

**MC:** Flag bearers, display the colors.

*<The flag bearers unfold the flag and hold it up vertically to display it to the audience.>*

**MC:** Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

*<Recite the Pledge of Allegiance>*

**MC:** “Two! Scouts at ease, audience at ease. You may all be seated.”

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

**Color Guard Scout #1:** "Seven red stripes and six white strips; together 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."

**Color Guard Scout #2:** "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."

**Color Guard Scout #3:** "The stars represent the fifty sovereign states of our union. 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."

**MC:** "The U.S. flag should be treated with respect when it's flying, and should be treated with respect when it's being retired."

**Color Guard Scout #4:** "Therefore, we retire flags with dignity and respect when they become worn, torn, faded, or badly soiled. The traditional way to retire a flag is to incinerate it, but that doesn't mean we simply drop the entire flag into a fire. Rather, the flag is retired in a manner that is dignified and respectful. Remember, we are retiring a symbol of America's honor, courage, and strength. A flag ceases to be a flag when it is cut into pieces. We separate the 13 strips that represent the original 13 colonies. We leave the blue field of 50 stars as one piece since it represents the union of the 50 states that together make up this great nation, and that union should never be broken."

**MC:** "This Flag has served its nation long and well. It has worn to a condition to which it should no longer be used to represent the nation. This flag represents all of the flags collected and being retired from service tonight. We honor them all as we salute one Flag."

**MC:** "Scouts, attention! Audience, attention!"

**MC:** "Scout salute!"

*<The flag bearers refold the flag in the traditional triangle>*

**MC:** "Color guard, reform." Color guard, advance."

*<The flag bearers, side-by-side, walk to the back of the gathering followed by the four color guard>*

**MC:** "Color guard, halt." Scouts at ease, audience at ease.

**MC:** "You may all be seated."

**MC:** At this time we will respectfully retire eight American flags. Boy Scouts, will you please take your positions?

*<The Boy Scouts that will be distributing the flag pieces will move into position at the back of the assembly by the table containing the flag pieces. Those assigned to guard the path to from the table to the fire will take their positions at this time.>*

**MC:** Cub Scouts, Webelos, Den Leaders, and Pack leaders, will you all please rise? At my command please walk quietly and form a line at the table containing the flag pieces to be retired. We will retire one flag at a time by burning the 13 red and white stripes and the blue union representing one complete flag, repeating this order until all eight flags are retired.

**MC:** You will each be given a piece of a flag to carry slowly and silently to the fire. Remember that this is a solemn event. As a sign of respect please gently drop your flag piece onto the fire. Do not throw it, but lightly toss it onto the fire. Then silently return to your seat.

**MC:** When all of the Cub Scouts and leaders are in line the remaining audience members are welcome to join them in line to help retire these flags. Everyone should remain silent and thoughtful throughout this ceremony.

**MC:** Cub Scouts and leaders, please rise. Please take your place in line at the flag table.

*<Allow them time to go to the table and form a line. Once all the Scouts and Scout leaders are in line allow the rest of the audience to join the line..>*

**MC:** Guests and family members, you may now rise and join the Scouts and Scout leaders in the flag retirement line.

*<Allow them time to go to the table and form a line. Boy Scouts at the table will begin distributing the flag pieces, 7 red stripes and 6 white stripes first, then a blue union. Repeat this distribution process for each complete flag.>*

*<Once all of the flag pieces have been retired the MC closes the ceremony>*

**MC:** Thank you for respectfully participating in this flag retirement ceremony. As you leave this evening I encourage each of you to remember what the American flag stands for and all the men and women over the years that have given their lives to uphold its values and defend it. You are dismissed.

*<Appointed Scouts and leaders should stay to insure the flag pieces are completely burned and the fire is safely put out.>*