

# FLAG RETIREMENT

1. The words said at these ceremonies vary with the leader and the audience. The flag retirement is a solemn occasion, providing a time for each person present to reflect on the true meaning of the pledge, the nation and our personal patriotism.

The leader begins with a few appropriate words, "We are about to salute this flag of our country for the last time. It has served well, as evidenced by its tattered look, having flown over \_\_\_\_\_ for many months. What do you do with a faded, torn and worn out flag? You burn it." (Contact Past District President Bill Kohler, [mustangcaptbill@aol.com](mailto:mustangcaptbill@aol.com) for a copy of "My Flag."

2. The flag is changed in two pieces of cloth by separating the Union from the Stripes with scissors or knife. The two pieces are no longer a flag.

3. Two fires are readied to receive the cloths, one for the blue field and the other for the stripes. Four symbolic pieces of wood are added to the fire:

REDWOOD, for those who fought and died for this nation;

OAK, for the strength to carry the flag across the nation;

CEDAR, to protect and preserve the American way of life; and

WALNUT, to remind us of America's rich soil and beauty and the fruitful brotherhood of the nation's founders.

4. Caution: Synthetic and nylon flags melt and produce a thick black oil, smoke and dangerous toxic gases. Stay up wind of the fire. Cotton flags tend to smolder and need to be stirred to burn completely. Burn only one at a time.

5. Participation in the burning and feeding the fire by club members or scouts is encouraged with adequate supervision. Safety first!

6. Recommendation: Collect flags during the year and burn them on the weekend of Flag Day in a safe place. At the Exchange Club of Long Beach Family Day picnic, the Sunday nearest Flag Day, June 14th, the flags are torn and burned at the Long Beach Fire Training Station. A firefighter is present with fire hose ready to control the fires and extinguish the embers.

7. Following 9/11, the number of flags displayed on cars, trucks, fire engines, police cars and buildings has increased dramatically. The need for proper disposal of worn out flags can be met by Exchange.