

Dignified Disposal of the American Flag



Adopted by the Calvert Province

Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus

Land of the Free Because of the Brave

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Reverend Father, Honored Guests, my brothers all, ladies and gentlemen.

Today we are gathered here to give final tribute to these worn flags of the United States of America.

The flag represents the many freedoms, rights, and responsibilities not entrusted to the citizens of any other world.

It is considered a living symbol representing a living country emblematic of the respect and pride we have for our country.

This national emblem of red, white and blue is a symbol of our great country, our heritage and our place in the world. These colors are also a reminder of those who fought for us in order to live in freedom and for those who lost their lives in face of terrorism and the terrorist act of September 11th.

We owe reverence and respect to our flag because it represents the highest ideals of our individual liberty, justice, and equal opportunity for all.

Our flag is a precious possession, let us always honor, defend, and display it proudly.

Before we begin let us join in singing the national anthem followed by the pledge of allegiance.

(At this time the commanders of the flag team will give the order to present arms, the flags are dipped and the rest of the color guard will come to present swords. The Faithful Navigator will then address the commanders.)

Commanders you may proceed.

Dignified Disposal of Unserviceable Flags

The Assembly assembles in meeting, out-of-doors. Members are aligned in two parallel rows about twenty feet apart, facing each other. Officers are at their stations as shown. A small fire is burning opposite the Faithful Navigator and beyond the rows of members.

Diagram of arrangements appears on the next page.

Commander: Worthy Faithful Navigator, we wish to present a number of Unserviceable Flags of our Country for inspection and disposal.

Navigator: Commander, advance with your detail and present the Flags for disposal and inspection.

Commander calls detail to attention. They form at the station of the Commander, take the Flags which are to be inspected, march abreast down center until opposite the Faithful Pilot, turn left and halt two spaces in front of the Faithful Pilot. The Commander takes one pace forward and salutes.

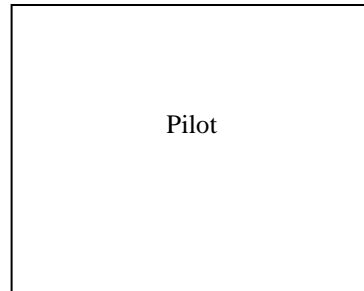
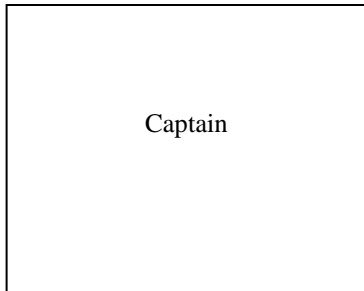
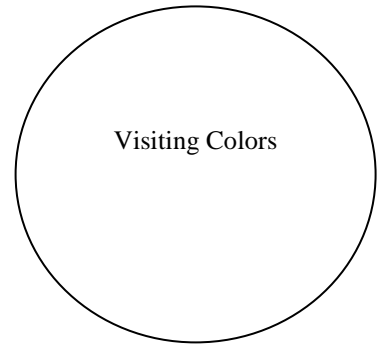
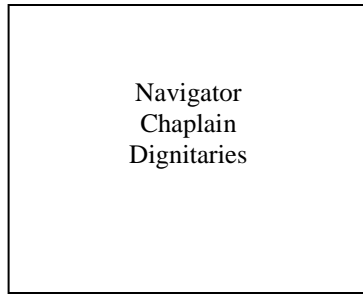
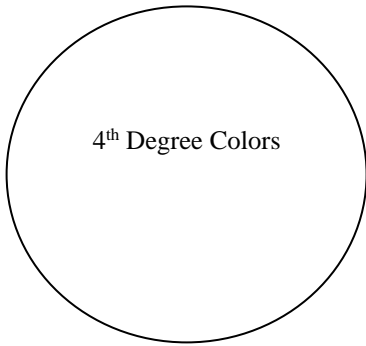
Commander: Worthy Faithful Pilot, we present these unserviceable Flags for your inspections.

Pilot: Is the present condition of these flags the result of their usual service as the Emblem of our Country?

Commander: These flags have become faded and worn over the graves of our departed Sir Knights and the dead marines, soldiers, sailors, and airmen of all our Nation's wars.

Pilot: Present these Flags to the Worthy Faithful Captain for his inspection.

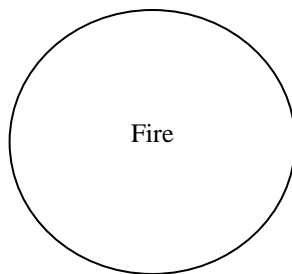
The commander salutes, about faces, commands the detail, About Face, crosses behind the detail, takes post at the left, and commands, Forward March. The detail Marches to within two paces of the Faithful Captain, halts and proceeds as before.



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Commander: Worthy Faithful Captain, we present these flags which have been inspected by the Faithful Pilot, for your further inspection.

Captain: Have these Flags served any other purpose?

Commander: Some of these flags have been displayed in various public places.

Captain: Present them to the Worthy Faithful Navigator for final inspection and dignified disposal.

The Commander salutes, about faces, commands the detail, About Face, crosses behind the detail, takes position on its left, and commands, Forward March. The detail marches to center, turns left, halts within two paces of the Faithful Navigator, Commander steps one pace forward and salutes.

Commander: Worthy Faithful Navigator, we have the honor to present for final inspection and disposal these Flags of our Country.

Navigator: Have these Flags been inspected by the Faithful Captain and the Faithful Pilot.

Commander: They have.

Navigator: Faithful Pilot, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?

Pilot: Faithful Navigator, since these Flags have become unserviceable in a worthy cause, I recommend they be honorably retired from further service.

Navigator: Faithful Captain, what does your inspection show and what do you recommend?

Captain: Faithful Navigator, since these flags have become faded and worn in a tribute of service and love, I also recommend they be fittingly destroyed.

Navigator: Worthy Sir Knights, we have presented 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 the members of all the armed services have worked or and lived for, and died for ----- a free nation of free men and women, true to the faith of the past, and devoted to the ideals and practice of Justice, Freedom, Patriotism, 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 Armed Forces, Firemen or Policemen, dead be unhonored and unmarked.

Navigator: Commander, assemble the Color Guard, escort the detail bearing the Flags and destroy these Flags by burning. I now ask all members to stand at attention.

Color Guard forms. The detail About Faces. Preceded by the Color Guard, the detail marches down center toward the fire. National Colors cross over and take position on the right of the fire, facing the Faithful Navigator. Assembly Colors takes position on the left of the fire. The detail lines up behind the fire.

Navigator: Before these Flags are destroyed, I ask our Faithful Friar to offer a prayer.

Friar: Almighty God, Captain of all hosts and Commander over all, bless and consecrate this present hour. We thank you 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 your Holy Light spread over us and bring our hearts renewed devotion to God and Country. Amen.

Once the final inspection has been given by the Faithful Navigator, the colors will then proceed to the fire. The Commander of the color guard will give the command to present arms. All Sir Knights of the color guard will come to Present Swords.

At this time the flag detail with the worn flags will proceed to the fire through the gauntlet. When everyone is in position, the Navigator will instruct the Chaplain to give a final prayer.

The flags are then placed on a rack for disposal and doused with fluid and then lit. (The Commander may light the flags himself or may escort the Navigator or the highest ranking Officer to light the flags.)

Once the flags are burning, the Commander gives the order to present arms and the flags are dipped. **A gun salute is done at this time with a bugler sounding “Taps” followed by “To the Colors”.**

The entire detail will remain at attention for a few minutes while the flags are burning. After this, the color guard is given the command to carry swords and the flags will come to shoulder arms.

The Navigator will then conclude the ceremony with a brief thank you and any presentations will be done at this time. A final song will be done after this for the final conclusion. This song will be of patriotic in nature and is up to you.

Once the song has been completed, the commander will retire the colors and dismiss the color guard in the usual manner.