What is this U.S. Flag Retirement Box?

This box provides a way for the general public to respectfully dispose of their unwanted U.S. Flags, instead of placing them in the trash. U.S. Flags placed in this box will be retired in a ceremony that honors such a symbol of our great nation.

Why Retire the U.S. Flag?

Retiring the Flag ceremoniously gives us a way to honor the Flag for its service one last time before it is disposed.
According to the U.S. Flag Code,
"*The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing.*"
Therefore, respecting our Flag this way shows respect for our Nation.

When we honor our flag,
we honor what we stand for as a Nation
— Freedom, Equality, Justice, and Hope"
Ronald Regan
Proclamation 4846 - June 1, 1981

When should the U.S. Flag be Retired?

According to the U.S. Flag Code:
"The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning."

Conditions that would warrant retirement include if it is soiled, faded, frayed, torn, tattered, vandalized, or any other condition that would make it no longer fit for display.

About this Project

This donation box is one of 3 such boxes created as an Eagle Scout Project by Maximus Tillman, a member of Woodbury Scouting America Troop 559.

Maximus worked with members of the Men's Club from Guardian Angels Catholic Church, as well as various members of Troop 559, friends, and family members to plan, prepare, and build these boxes.

As a member of BSA Troop 559, and of the Woodbury Jr. ROTC, Maximus has developed a deep love of our country. He wanted to use this project to demonstrate to the public the importance of honoring our flag, and thereby honoring our country and veterans.

This Eagle Project was completed in December 2025.

Maximus earned the Rank of Eagle on February 17, 2026.

Scouting America
NORTHERN STAR SCOUTING
TROOP 559 WOODBURY MINNESOTA

For More Information

https://sites.google.com/view/flagbox



Retiring the United States Flag

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U.S. Code Title 4, Chapter 1 § 8

Who will Retire the Flags?

The organization specified on each collection box will monitor the box and will periodically hold ceremonies to ensure the respectful destruction and/or disposal of each flag.

Additionally, permission is granted to ALL members of the general public to take flags from this bin under the condition that they:

a) use the flag in an appropriate manner if its condition is still acceptable

-or-

b) retire it themselves in a respectful ceremony of their own.

Where can I retire U.S. Flags?

Donation boxes like this one can be found at:

Guardian Angels Catholic Church
Managed by BSA Troop 817

Woodbury Lutheran Church
Located Upstairs near the Bridge Room
Managed by BSA Troop 559

North Star Museum
of Boy Scouting and Girl Scouting

Woodbury City Hall
Located in the entryway.
Managed by American Legion Post 501
and Woodbury VFW Post 9024

Oakdale Fleet Farm (and other locations)
Inquire at the Customer Service Desk

Various American Legion and VFW Posts
Call ahead to verify they are accepting flags.

How are U.S. Flags Retired?

The only requirement
to retire a U.S. Flag is that it
"should be destroyed in a dignified way,
preferably by burning."

A ceremony should be held to perform the retirement, and may include any number of elements, such as an inspirational reading, the playing of taps, or simply a moment of silence. The flag should then be folded and placed on a roaring fire, and burned completely to ashes. Once complete, the ashes and any remnants (such as metal grommets) should be collected and buried.

Unfortunately, many flags these days are made of synthetic materials such as nylon or polyester which give off toxic fumes when burned. Instead of burning, synthetic flags may be retired by cutting the flag into quarters, separating the Union (stars) from the Field (stripes). Once separated, it is no longer considered a U.S. Flag, and can be disposed of by any means available, ideally via textile recycling. Another popular option is to, after the ceremony, individually cut the stars from the Union. These stars can then be gifted to Veterans along with a note explaining that this star came from a flag retired in their honor, and thanking them for their service.

Sample Flag Retirement Ceremony

- Call the audience to attention. Explain to them the importance and symbolism of the ceremony they are about to witness.
- Call on flag bearers to unfold the flag and display it to the audience.
- Tell a short story about the history, meaning, and/or symbolism of the flag.
- If possible, state the owner of the flag, where it was flown, and/or any other significant history of this particular flag.
- Ask the audience to join in saying one final Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.
- Have the flag bearers fold the flag.
- Retire the flag by placing the folded flag into a roaring fire.
- Play Taps (via a recording, bugle, or other instrument) as the flag burns.
- Dismiss the audience, requesting they leave in silence in respect for the flag.
- Ensure that the flag is completely consumed before extinguishing the fire.
- Once cool, collect and bury the ashes.