

A close-up photograph of a Boy Scout uniform's collar and a portion of the American flag. The uniform is olive drab with red embroidery that reads "BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA". The flag shows the blue field with white stars and a red stripe. A silver button is visible on the uniform.

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Flag Etiquette and Ceremonies

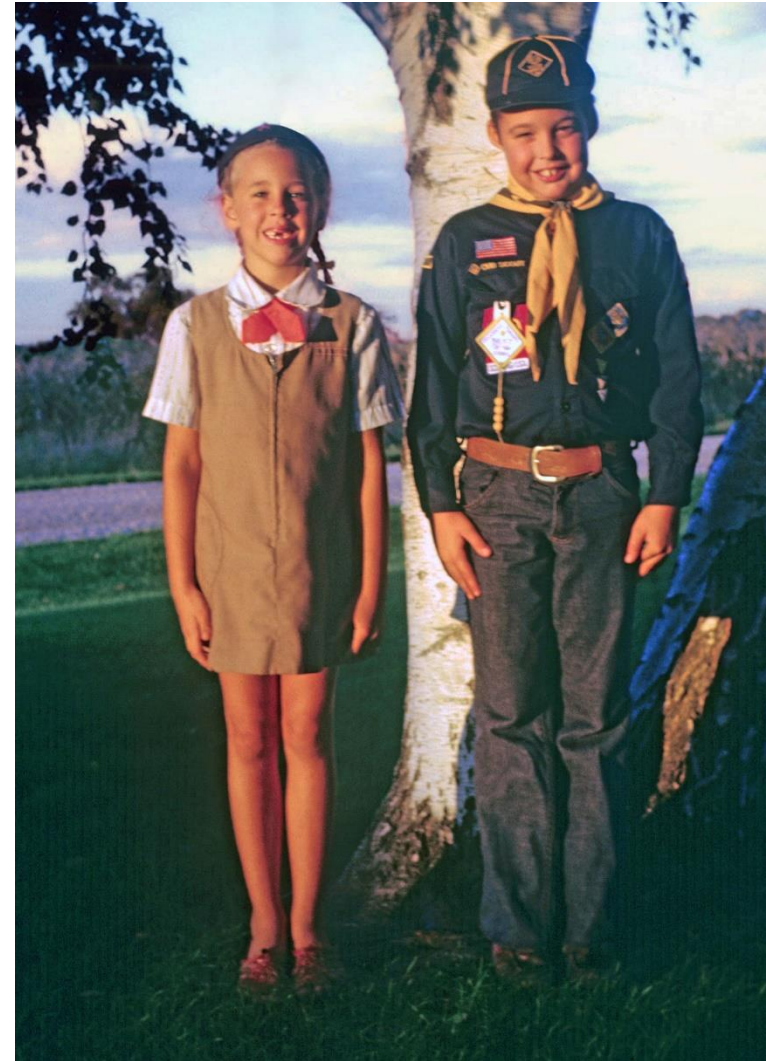
Steve Sarver • 815-751-5186

www.sarverman.org

scouts@sarverman.org

About the Presenter - Steve Sarver

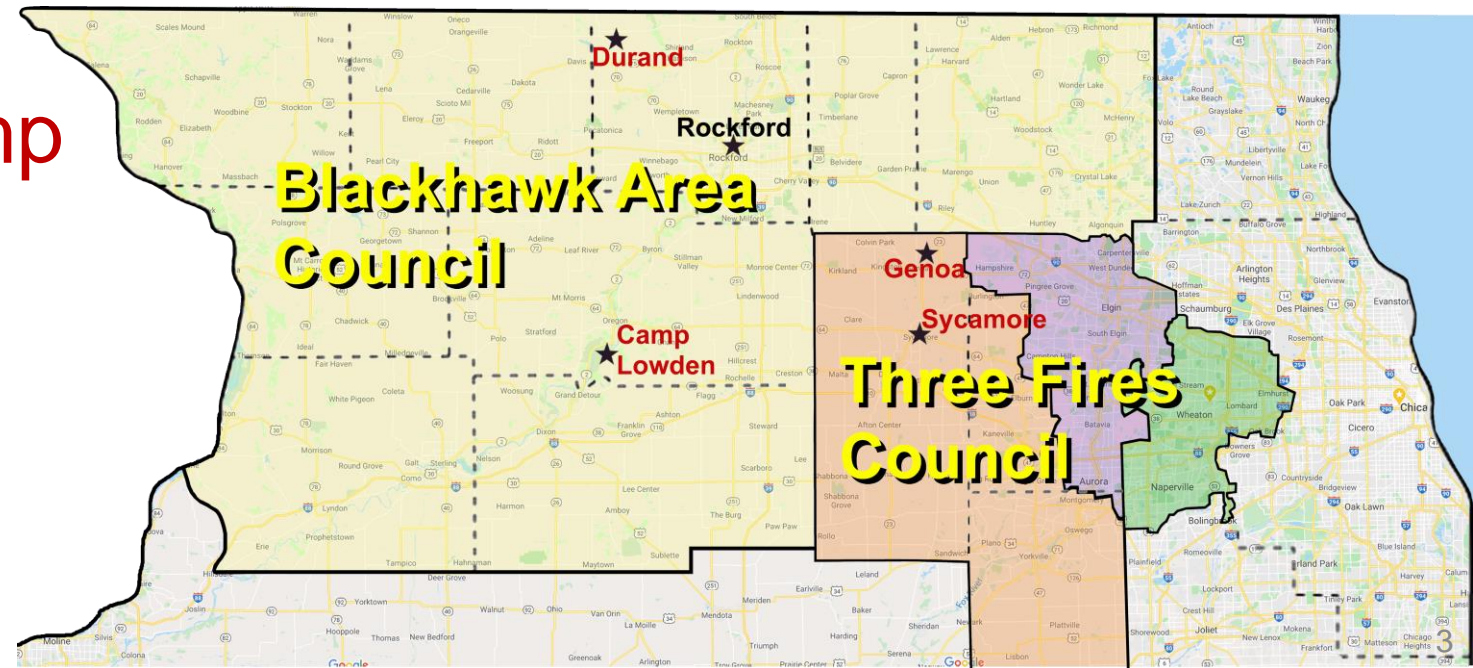
- 47 years in Scouting
- Cub Scout and Boy Scout
 - Arrow of Light
 - Eagle Scout
- Adult Leader
 - Troop Committee
 - Asst. Scoutmaster
 - Den Leader
 - Cubmaster
 - Wood Badge Staff



Steve and Cindy Sarver, 1978

About the Presenter - Steve Sarver

- Originally from Blackhawk Area Council
 - Hometown troop and pack
- Three Fires Council
 - Founded Cub Scout pack
- Camp Lowden Scout Camp
 - Historian





It's a grand old flag...

...and it shouldn't be flown upside down! Little Stevie Sarver wants to make sure that John Oksnevad, Medina Nursing Center director, raises the flag right side up this time. Oksnevad, a Norwegian native, who has adopted America as his home sees to it the flag is raised daily at Medina. Stevie, son of Mr. and Mrs. Russell Sarver, rural Durand, lives south of the Nursing Center. He can see the American flag being raised every day. He has always been intrigued by flags so when one morning he saw it had been raised upside down, he excitedly ran to his mother saying, "Mom, Mom, is it upside down?" It was and his mother called Medina and let them know so they could "fix it". Stevie is very patriotic, his mother said. Although he was just three years old Monday, July 3, he can recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and knows three verses of the Battle Hymn of the Republic. It would do many of us good to take lessons from this young patriot.

Steve at 3 years old

- Nursing home across street
 - Raised flag upside down
- Mother called so they could "fix it"
- Article in newspaper
 - In our small town this was front page news! 😊

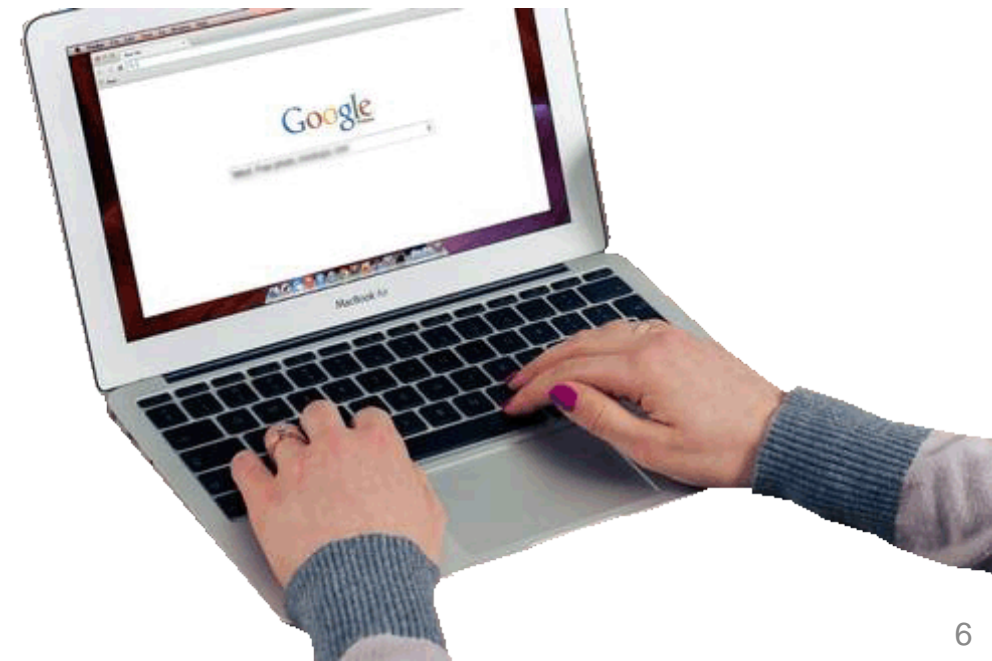


Camp Lowden Flagpole

- Co-chair of project to acquire new flagpole
 - Replaced pole from 60 years earlier
- Arrowhead-shaped base restored
 - Dedicated to staff member killed in Korea

On My Web Site – sarverman.org

- This presentation
- Handouts
 - Ceremonies
 - Etiquette
 - Common Misconceptions
 - Flag-Related Articles
 - Flag Retirement Ceremony
 - Folding the Flag
- And more!



Today's Presentation

- Representation / Respect
- Basic Etiquette
- Displaying
- Saluting
- Misconceptions
- Ceremonies
- Flag Retirements
- Folding the Flag



Representation / Respect

- **Our U.S. flag represents...**

- Our people
- Our land
- Our liberties
- Our way of life



- **Respecting flag respects these ideals**

- Scouts learn to set a good example
- Helps instill citizenship

Why “Rules?”

- **Respect**
 - Help ensure that flag will always be displayed in orderly and respectful manner
- **Pride**
 - Take pride in country and what it stands for!





Basic Flag Etiquette

Basic Flag Etiquette

- **Flag should...**
 - Not touch anything below it
 - Not have anything placed on or above it
 - Be kept clean and in good repair



Basic Flag Etiquette

- If flown after dark
 - Should be illuminated



Basic Flag Etiquette

- When no longer suitable for display
 - Should be properly retired





Displaying the Flag

Proper Ways to Display Flag

- When facing audience
 - On its own right
 - (audience left)



Proper Ways to Display Flag

- **If flat on wall**
 - Union (blue field) always on its own right
 - (audience left)



Proper Ways to Display Flag



- or -

Far right of
other flags



Center and higher
than all other flags

Should Not Carry Flat

- “Technically” incorrect, but who is going to argue?
- Do not do this in your unit



Flying Flag Outdoors

- Can be flown every day
- Should be flown
 - All national and state holidays
 - Other days as proclaimed by president
- Can be flown in any conditions
 - If made of weather-resistant material
 - Never when faded or frayed
- Usually flown from sunrise to sunset
 - Can be flown at night if illuminated





Saluting

How to Salute the Flag

- **When in Scout Uniform**

- Scout Salute (right hand)

- If not wearing hat, fingers touch R eyebrow
- If wearing Scout hat (part of uniform), fingers touch brim



- **When not in Uniform**

- Place right hand over heart

How to Salute the Flag

- Scout Activity Shirt (e.g., T-shirt)
 - NOT a “uniform”
 - There is only ONE uniform
 - No such thing as “Class A” or “Class B”
 - *“When in Rome, do as the Romans do”*
 - Showing *respect* is more important than methodology!



When to Salute the Flag

- **When...**

- Saying Pledge of Allegiance
- National Anthem performed
- Flag passes in front of you at parade
 - Sadly, many people do not do this
 - YOU set the example, and encourage others to do so!



When to Salute the Flag

- **Outdoor Flag Raising Ceremony**
 - From moment flag starts raising up the pole until it reaches the top
- **Outdoor Flag Lowering Ceremony**
 - From moment it starts lowering until in the hands of the color guard





Common Misconceptions

Common Misconceptions

- “The Flag Code prohibits washing flag”
- “The Flag Code enforces penalties for violations of any of its provisions”
- “The colors (red, white, and blue) symbolize something”
- “If flag touches ground it must be destroyed”

Common Misconceptions

- “The Flag Code prohibits washing flag”
- “The Flag Code enforces penalties for violations of any of its provisions”
- “The colors (red, white and blue) symbolize something”
- “If flag touches ground it must be destroyed”



Correct Information

- **Flag Code**
 - Not a “law” per se, simply guideline for proper flag etiquette
 - Does not provide penalties for violation of any provisions
 - No “flag police” will come after you!
- **Basic Philosophy**
 - When it falls out of state of respect, simply return it to state of respect
- **As long as flag is still in good condition**
 - More respectful to continue flying than to destroy for touching ground

Correct Information

- **Washing?**
 - No provisions in Flag Code for washing
 - Flags can be cleaned
 - Suggest hand-washing
 - Fly to dry



Correct Information

- **Meaning of colors?**
 - Red, white, and blue
 - Colors of first flag of American colonies (continental colors)
 - Came from Union Jack of United Kingdom
 - Designer of *Great Seal* of United States
 - Red - hardiness and valor
 - White - purity and innocence
 - Blue - vigilance, perseverance and justice
 - No law or resolution exists for this
 - Not “official,” but great in ceremonies!





Indoor Ceremonies

Scout Flag Ceremonies

- Should be solemn, but not all the same
- Tailor to age of Scouts participating
 - Young Cub Scouts (Lions, Tigers)
 - Short and simple
 - Older Cub Scouts
 - Add a few more lines
 - Scouts BSA
 - Have Scouts plan something more elaborate and deeper in meaning, perhaps w/additional comments by adult or more senior Scout



Simple Den Flag Ceremony

- Parade flags past line of Scouts who stand at attention and salute
- Repeat Pledge of Allegiance, Oath, etc.



Cub Scout Flag Ceremonies

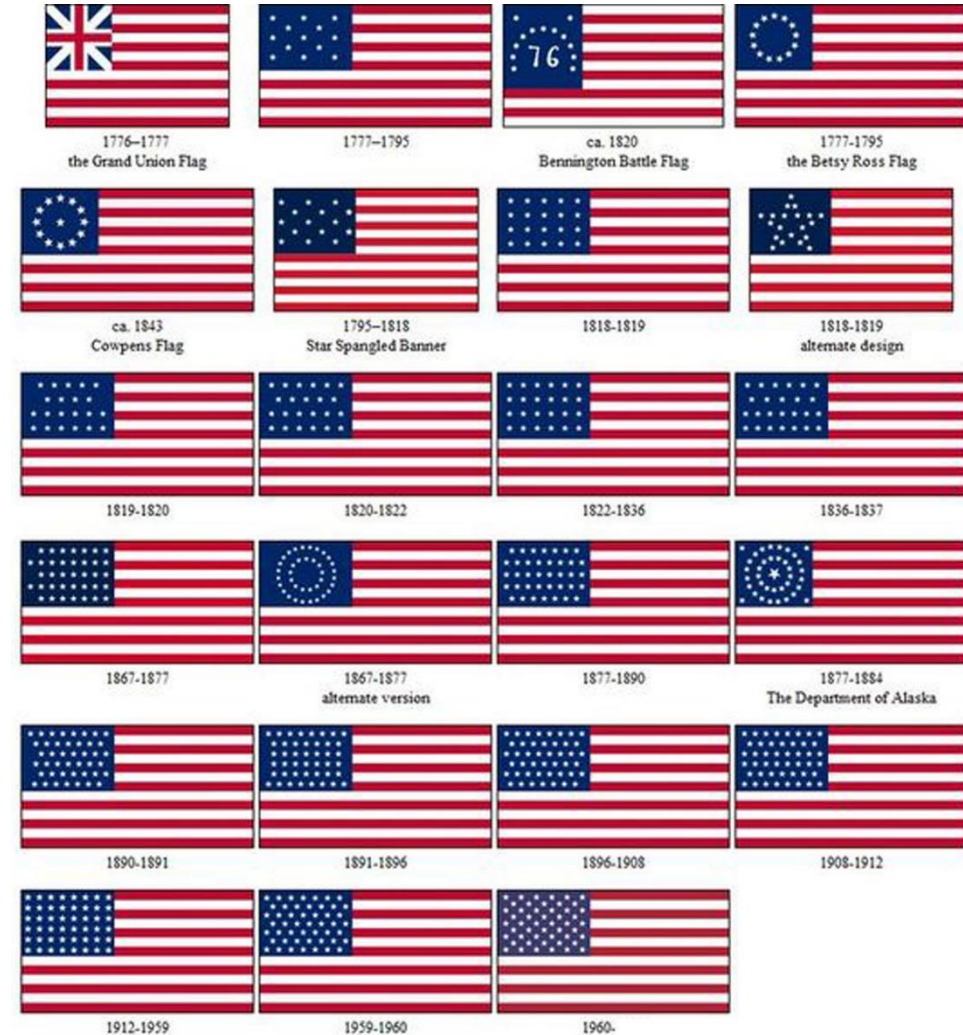
- Make sure flagpole / flag not too heavy for whoever carries!



Cub Scout Activity Idea

- **History of Flag**

- Each Scout makes different paper flag
- Show how present flag developed out of earlier flags



Ceremony Idea

- **Horseshoe Ceremony**

- Form den/patrol into horseshoe, with U.S. flag in front of horseshoe
- Each Scout in turn steps forward, salutes flag and steps back in formation
- When all have finished, den gives Pledge of Allegiance
- Scout Oath and Law could also be recited



Ceremony Idea

- “Lights Out” Ceremony
 - Line up den/pack/troop in single line
 - Bring Scouts to attention, turn out lights
 - Spotlight U.S. flag with flashlight
 - With Cub Scouts, have *older* Scout read first verse of patriotic song
 - Younger Scouts still learning how to read

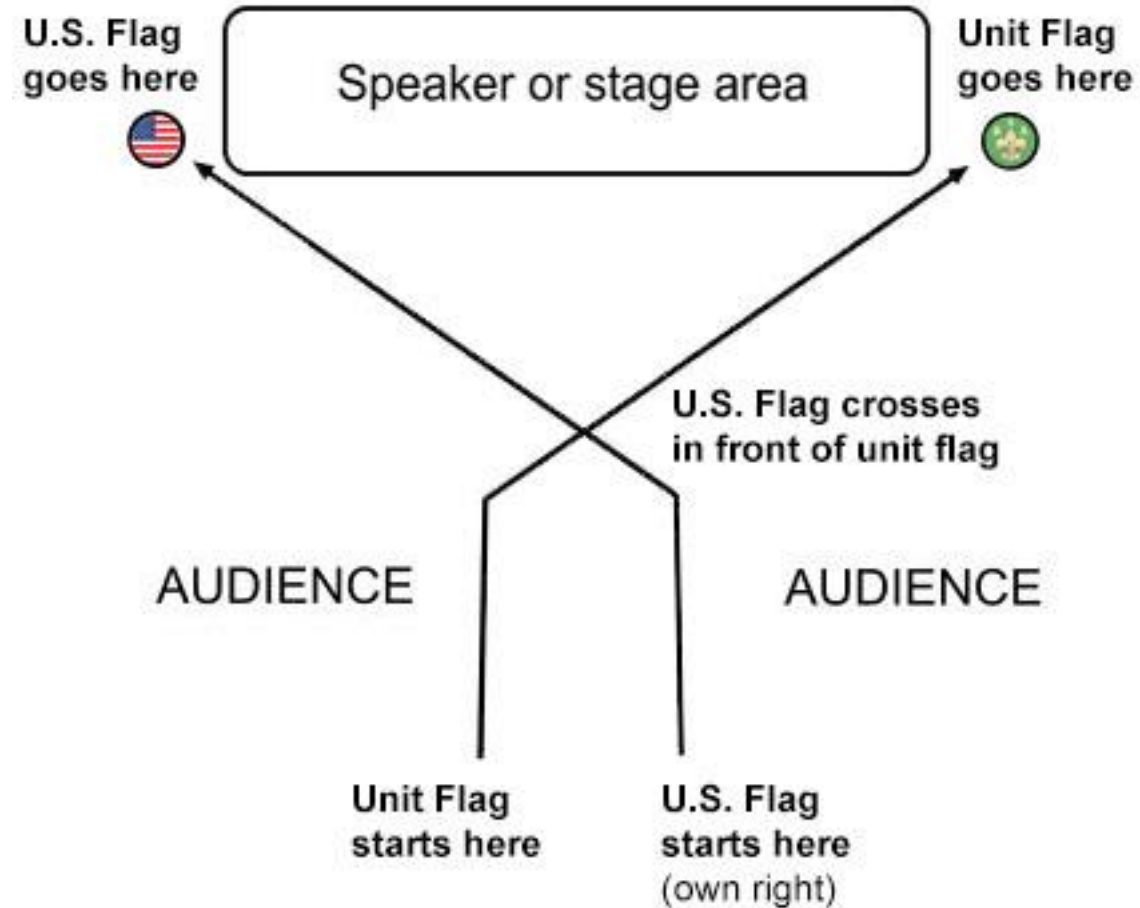


Small Flag Ceremony

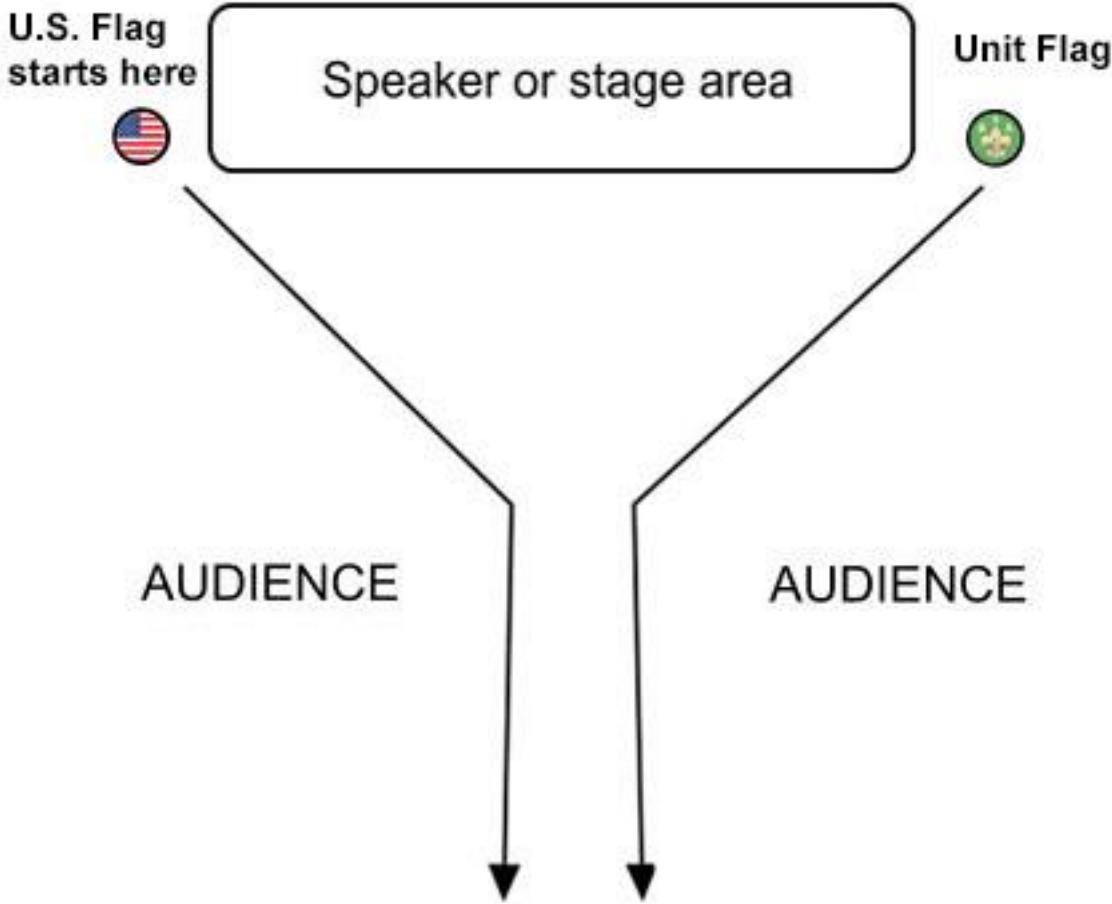
- “Circle around the Flag”
 - Scouts grasp flagpole with left hand
 - Scouts give Scout Sign with right hand
 - Repeat Scout Oath or Law
 - Hard to do if you have a lot of Scouts



Typical Indoor Opening Ceremony



Typical Indoor Closing Ceremony

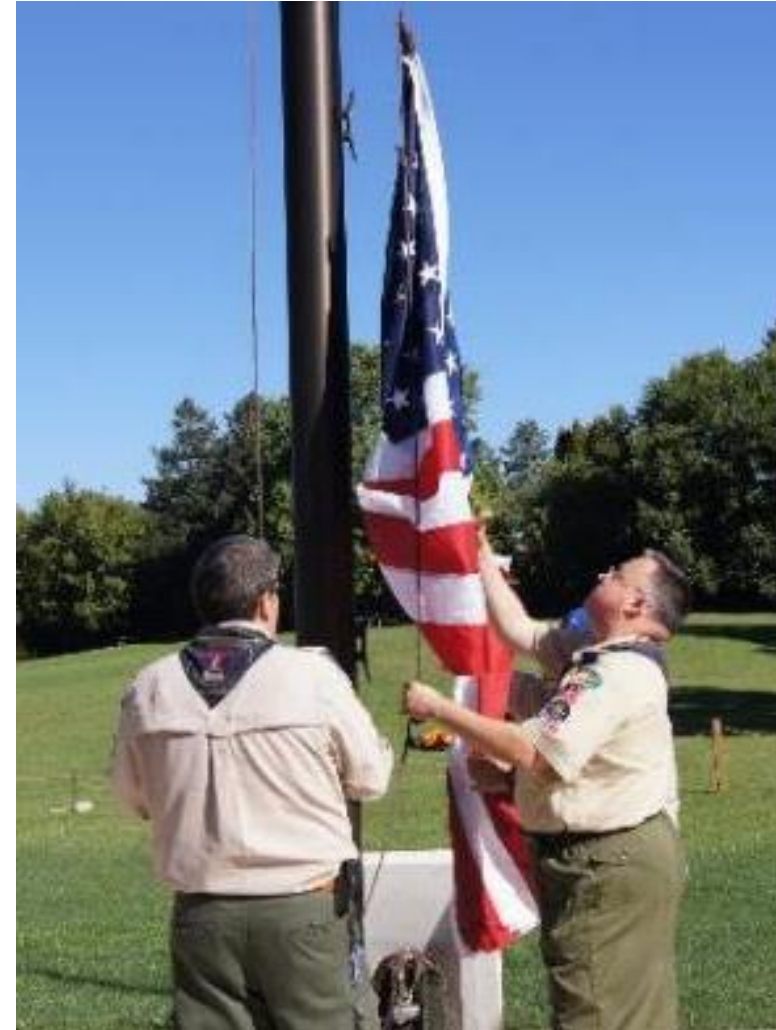




Outdoor Ceremonies

Outdoor Ceremonies

- **Flag should be...**
 - Raised briskly
 - Lowered slowly
- **Color Guard Commander (the “Caller”)**
 - Person who “calls out” parts of ceremony
 - Stands in front of or to side of audience
- **Color Guard**
 - Handles flag – “Guardians of the Flag”
 - Ensure flag does not touch ground



Raising Takes Two People

- **One Person**

- Holds flag
- Prevents from touching ground

- **Other Person**

- Attaches flag to clips on halyard
- Ensures right side up
 - Very important!!!



Raising Takes Two People

- **One Person**
 - Separates flag lines, giving one to second person
- **Both**
 - Hold lines apart
 - Ensure not tangled



Raising Takes Two People

- **Work Together**
 - *“Raise the colors, Scout Salute”*
 - Raise flags briskly, in unison, keeping U.S. Flag higher than others
- **Once Raised**
 - Pledge, Oath, etc.
 - *Then*, one person secures halyard to pole



Lowering Takes Two People

- **One Person**
 - Unfastens halyard
 - Untangles lines and gives one to other person
- **Work Together**
 - *“Retrieve the colors, Scout Salute”*
 - Flags lowered
 - Slowly
 - In unison
 - With U.S. Flag kept slightly above others



Lowering Takes Two People

- **Both**
 - When flag is within reach
 - One person gathers flag without letting it touch ground
 - Other person unclips from halyard, secures halyard to pole
 - Flag(s) folded properly
 - U.S. Flag in triangle
 - All other flags in rectangle



Multiple Flagpoles

- **Can be raised in unison**
 - U.S. Flag must be first to reach top
- **Can be lowered in unison**
 - U.S. Flag must be last to reach bottom
- **U.S. Flag**
 - Always first to be raised
 - Always last to be retrieved



Half-Staff (not half-“mast”)

- **Raising**

- Raise to full height of flagstaff
- Pause momentarily
- Slowly lower to half-staff

- **Lowering**

- Raise to full height of flagstaff
- Pause momentarily
- Slowly lower as normal





Flag Retirements

Flag Retirements

- Any organization or citizen can do
- Not limited to certain organizations
- Suggest working with veterans groups
- Excellent community exposure



Flag Retirements

- **Section 8(k) of Flag Code:**

“When it is in such a condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, [the flag] should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.”

- **Burning**

- Most commonly accepted method
- However, worst option for health
 - Few flags still made from cotton or wool
 - Burning nylon can create hazardous gas



Flag Retirements

- Cutting into smaller pieces
 - Yes, you CAN cut flag
 - Ceases to be flag
 - “Can” be disposed in garbage (if desired)
 - Appropriate when:
 - Flag is large
 - Few flags, but many participants



Flag Retirements

- **Should be burned completely to ashes**
 - Ashes do not need to be buried!
- **Grommets**
 - No special rules, but most cut out first
 - Eliminates need to dig them out before spreading out ashes
 - Some turn them into jewelry



Flag Retirements

- **Wrong Way To Do It**
 - Leave flags folded
 - Place in large pile
 - Douse with gasoline
 - Set on fire

- *Yikes!*



Flag Retirements

- Many techniques and ceremonies
- Guiding principle
 - Do in dignified manner
- **Key:**
 - Talk with Scouts in advance





Next Up – Folding the Flag!

But First! What are Your Experiences / Questions?

Folding the Flag

- Only U.S. Flag is folded into triangle
- When properly folded
 - Only blue field should be visible
 - No stripes should be visible
- Carrying folded flag
 - Arms crossed, folded against chest
 - Triangle points up



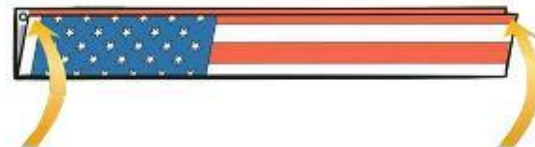
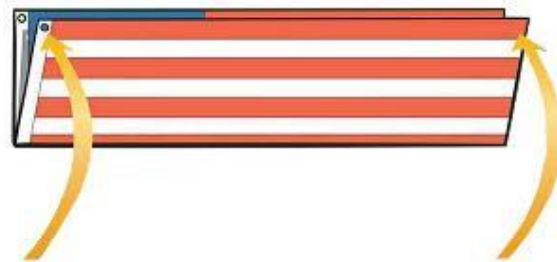
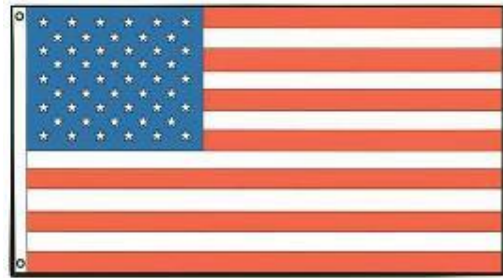
Folding Takes Two / Three

- **Takes Two / Three People**
 - One holds
 - One folds
 - One supports in middle
 - Optional, but highly recommended



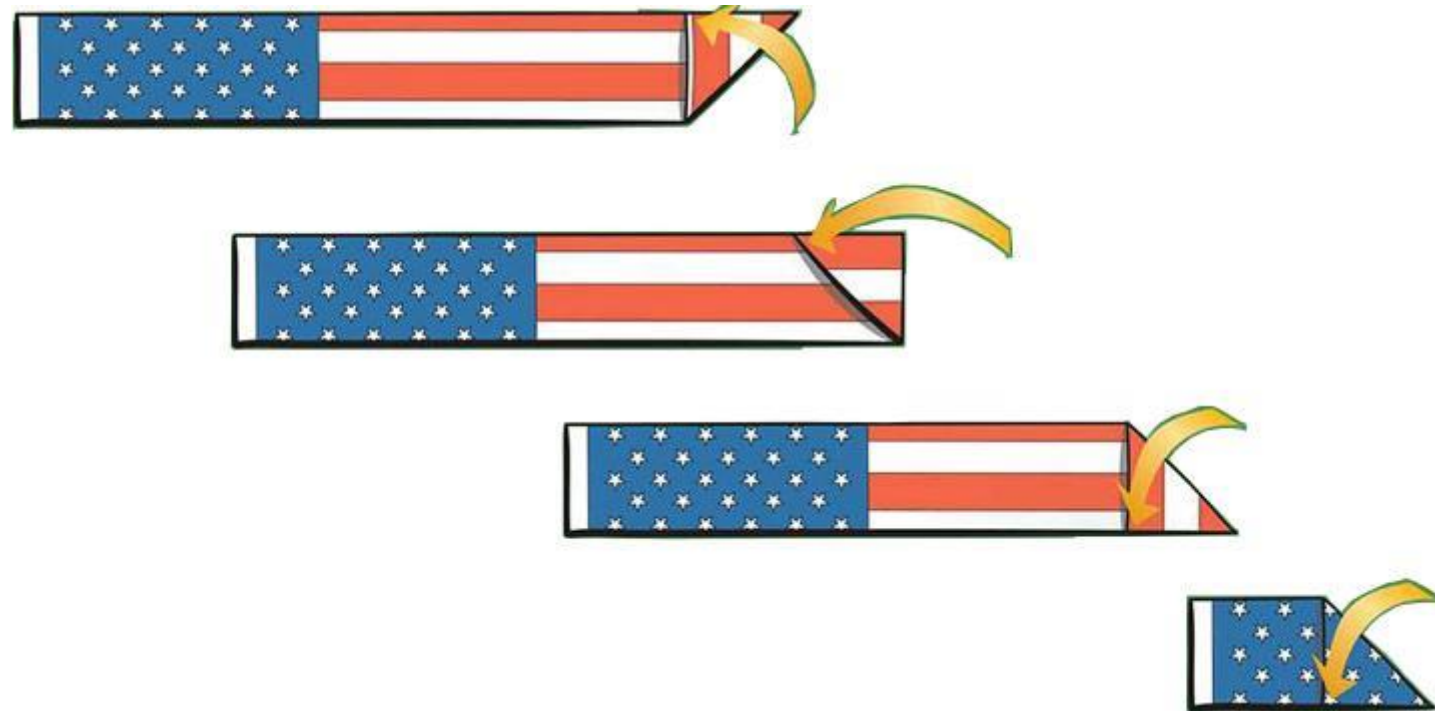
Folding the Flag

- **Fold in half lengthwise**
 - Be sure that blue field is on bottom
- **Fold in half lengthwise again**



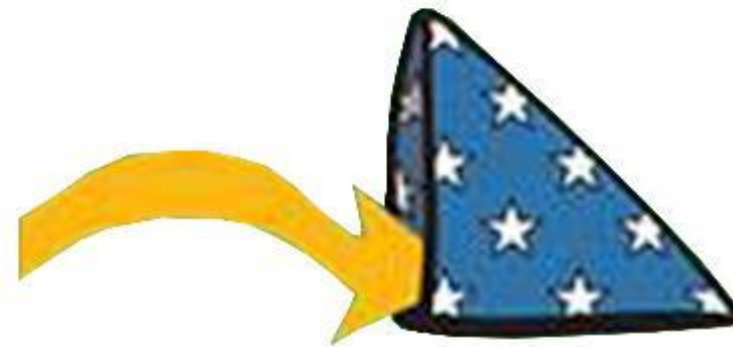
Folding the Flag

- **One person**
 - Holds Flag by blue field
- **Second person**
 - Makes triangular folds in opposite end until entire Flag is in triangle



Folding the Flag

- Tuck loose edge of Flag into pocket formed by folds
 - Only blue field should be visible



Folding the Flag

- Time to practice!

A close-up photograph of a tan Boy Scout uniform shirt with a red embroidered patch that reads "BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA". The shirt is positioned over a portion of the American flag, showing the blue field with white stars and a red stripe. The text is overlaid in a large, bold, yellow font.

**Your Experiences / Questions
Thanks for coming!
Enjoy the rest of your day!**

**Steve Sarver • 815-751-5186
www.sarverman.org
scouts@sarverman.org**