

Disposing Old Glory

A VFW Post in North Carolina receives a new disposal box for worn US flags

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Members of Otway Burns Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and VFW Post 9960 joined forces to bring their community in Swansboro, North Carolina, a revamped means of disposing U.S. flags last November.

Materialized into a disposable box for U.S. flags worth \$1,794, the inspiration came from DAR chapter member Caitlin Phelps-Bourner, a daughter of VFW member and retired Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer-4 Rodney Phelps.

“I brought the idea to the attention of the chapter after asking the local VFW about the flag retirement process,” Phelps-Bourner said. “The collection method was less than ideal because the VFW had to be open for donations, and the flags were being kept in a trash bin.”

Taking it upon herself after receiving approval from her DAR chapter, Phelps-Bourner conducted research and came across American Security Cabinets in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

Phelps-Bourner inquired about drop boxes, piecing together her idea to create a hub for retired U.S. flags that could go outside of VFW Post 9960 for enhanced accessibility.

“The flag drop box is worth every penny,” Phelps-Bourner added. “It is made specifically for the outdoors, which means that it has the perfect functionality and should last for years to come.”

The unveiling ceremony of the drop box for retiring worn and tattered U.S. flags was scheduled for November, but circumstances brought on by COVID-19 forced VFW Post 9960 members to open it without ceremony.

Despite the lack of a ceremony to introduce the community of Swansboro to its new drop flag disposal box, Phelps-Bourner added that members of her Chapter spread the word across social media outlets.

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Phelps-Bourner also took it upon herself to begin printing business cards with U.S. flag code information and a suggestion to use the new disposal box to dispose of unserviceable flags.

“I knew that the community needed a more easily accessible place to drop off flags,” Phelps-Bourner said. “So I hope that this disposal box outside of VFW Post 9960 can now allow more people to get their old flags retired and replaced.”