

Retiring Old Glory

Virginia VFW Post hosts flag retirement event

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A Post in southern Virginia in December conducted a retirement ceremony for worn and unusable U.S. flags.

For several years, members of VFW Post 9954, located in Virginia's Lunenburg County, have collected torn and tattered U.S. flags from area residents. Post 9954's mission is to retire unserviceable flags in a "dignified way," said Don Westerlund, a past VFW Department of Virginia 4th District commander. The undertaking takes place at Post 9954.

"Through this process, we have retired a significant quantity of flags which have been inspected and condemned as unserviceable," Westerlund said. "They have reached their present state in a proper service of tribute, memory and love."

Westerlund said that a year-round U.S. flag collection takes place at the Post. Residents of Victoria, Virginia, and the surrounding areas participated by giving the Post dozens of flags. The flags filled five 33-gallon-sized trash bags, according to Westerlund.

"These faded flags of our country should be retired and disposed of with respectful and honorable rites and their places taken by bright new flags of the same size and kind," Westerlund said.

Here are the proper procedures for flag disposal, according to VFW:

- The flag should be folded in its customary manner.
- The fire must be large and intense enough to ensure the complete burning of the flag.
- Place the flag on the fire.
- Individuals may come to attention, salute the flag, recite the Pledge of Allegiance and have a brief period of silent reflection.
- After the flag is consumed, the fire should be extinguished and then the ashes buried.
- Make sure you are conforming to local and state fire codes or ordinances.

For more information about flag etiquette, visit [vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette](https://www.vfw.org/community/flag-etiquette).

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