

Memorial Day Programming: Full Day of Reverence (250 Flags for 250 Years)

Mon, May 25, 2026 // 5:30am - 8:30pm

Purpose: To commemorate the 250th year of the United States of America and to demonstrate reverence and appreciation for the role our armed service members have played in our nation's history.

The proposal below aims to retire 250 American flags in a very deliberate and mentally present way. The number of flags to be retired, and the duration of the event (the full daylight cycle from sunrise to sunset) are deliberate as a means to convey respect and mindfulness even in moments of discomfort and inconvenience.

Civic Guidelines and Protocol:

Respect for the flag (as excerpted from the [United States flag code](#))

§8. Respect for flag No disrespect should be shown to the flag of the United States of America; the flag should not be dipped to any person or thing. Regimental colors, State flags, and organization or institutional flags are to be dipped as a mark of honor.

(k) 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.

Registration and Participation Roles: (sign up mechanics for each side of council)

- *First started at 4:30 AM (first Fire Warden)*
- *Individual Participant*
 - *Every 7 minutes beginning at 5:30*
- *Unit Level Participation*
 - *Register using multiple individual participant slots as a group*
 - *Must take a full hour block*
 - *May organize their own ceremony during their block time if they so chose provided we maintain the minimum number of flags necessary to retire 125 flags at each location throughout the event.*
- *Fire Wardens*
 - *2 hour shifts beginning at 5:30 AM*
 - *2 Fire Wardens to be on site simultaneously for safety*
- *Overnight Site supervision*
 - *One person per location*
 - *Monday evening into Tuesday morning*
 - *No active registration process: should email event organizer*

Event Timeline: Sunday-Tuesday

- *Monday (Times listed below should be performed at local time per each location)*
 - 4:30 am on Memorial Day morning
 - Ceremonial fires are lit and tended to strong fire and bed of coals
 - 5:30 am
 - Registration Links
 - [East Side Registration Link](#) (The Res, Mishawaka)
 - [Wet Side Registration Link](#) (Camp ToPeNeBee, Michigan City)
 - Two Adult Fire Wardens arrive on site and relieve the Overnight Caretaker.
 - Retirement Ceremony, led by the OA, for the first flag
 - Retirement procession continues for the next 9 hours in silence
 - 3:00 pm
 - All retirement processions are held idle for the playing of taps by single trumpet followed by a minute of silence in observance of the National Moment of Remembrance.
 - 3:05 pm
 - Retirement Ceremony is held once again
 - The retirement procession continues for the next 5 hours in silence
 - 8:15 pm local time
 - A final flag is laid in retirement followed by a slow salute and recession of all remaining parties from the immediate vicinity. One dedicated Overnight Caretaker is left at each location to allow the fire to respectfully burn itself out over the course of the evening.
- *Tuesday (performed by Overnight Caretaker)*
 - 8:00 am local time on Tuesday following Memorial Day
 - The fire is raked and put dead out by use of water if necessary. All tents or signage are collected and removed from the area.
 - Any and all remains collected from the fire ring for burial. The ToPeNeBee remains will be buried on site. The Res location remains will be transported for burial to Wood Lake at a later time.

Spoken Retirement Ceremony (performed twice):

Coordinated by the Order of the Arrow, the recitation of the flag ceremony will happen with our first flag and be repeated at 3:05pm local time after the National Moment of Remembrance.

Flag Retirement Procession:

- *Each event location will have a clearly marked waterproof bin containing pre-folded American flags located at the intersection of a marked trail and the parking lot.*
- *Scouts will exit their parked vehicles in uniform and retrieve one flag from a waterproof bin.*
 - *Cub level Scouts must be accompanied by a parent or guardian*
 - *Troop/Crew/Ship level Scouts may be accompanied by parent or guardian*
- *Scouts will carry their flag against their chest with both arms crossed over the flag with point of flag facing up*
- *Scouts will proceed in silence along marked path to the fire location*
 - *Path will have "storywalk" style signage for Cub level Scouts to understand and appreciate the act of retiring a flag*
- *Day Fire Warden for location will motion for Scouts to approach*
 - *Scouts and accompanying parties will silently unfold their flag and drape for presentation*
 - *Unfurled flags will be laid in the fire and presenters will step back and perform a slow salute until the initial surge of flames concludes or until Adult Leader on site signals*
- *Day Fire Warden will motion for Scouts to exit the fire location along the marked path and for the next Scout to approach.*

Equipment and onsite needs:

- *First Aid Kit with emphasis on burn response*
- *Fuel wood, pre cut and split*
 - *Both locations identified in comment above has existing fuel wood supplied*
- *Firestarting equipment (matches, etc.)*
- *Long pole/rod to reposition flags and wood*
- *10 gallons of water (2 five gallon buckets set to the side)*
- *Tools: Shovel, Rake, Bow saw, camp axe and maul*
- *Safety Equipment: Gloves, Eye protection*
- *Large waterproof bin*
 - *Containing flags*
- *Shelter/canopy with two chairs or bench*
- *Paperwork:*
 - *Roster of sign-ups*
 - *Contact information for Adult Leader shifts*
 - *Laminated copies of retirement ceremony*

Event Organizer:

- *Adam Heet (aheet@nd.edu // 574-220-0310)*