

Boy Scout Troop 45 leads a special Flag Retirement Ceremony

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No photos can be taken of the actual ceremony.

Those participating in a flag retirement ceremony are encouraged to turn off the cell phones and treat the service with the silence and respect given at a funeral.

Allen McBroom, leader of Boy Scout Troop 45, said Saturday's American Flag Retirement Ceremony was a time of reflection on what the American flag means to each of us.

"The flag is not just a physical symbol of our nation," McBroom said. "These are the banners for our service people."

The service was held at the Starkville Senior Enrichment Center Saturday morning. Fourteen flags that were badly faded, tattered and otherwise well-used were collected and prepared for the event.

A fire was set in an open outdoor grill.

The ceremony began as members of Boy Scout Troop 45 had a presentation of the colors and lead the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Boy Scout Steven Jones read the flag retirement service as outlined in the United States Code. Jones explained the flags were not being burned out of protest, but out of honor, according to the official governmental guidelines for retiring well-used flags.

"These flags are worn and tattered, but today, we will retire them with honor," Jones said.

Jones the blue represents valor, white represents purity and honor, and red represents the men and women who have died in service to the United States of America.

One-by-one, participants were given an opportunity to take pieces of the well-used flags and place it on the fire.

The crowd sat in silence as the Boy Scouts burned the remaining pieces of tattered flags.

The grommets from the 14 flags were cut away from the well-worn flags and McBroom encouraged the crowd to take them home to remember the sacrifices made under the banner of the American flag.

After the ceremony, the Boy Scout Troop remained until the flags had completely finished burning. And according to U.S. Code, the scouts confirmed that the ashes would be buried by Jim McKell.

