

## Folding the Flag

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Tradition requires our Nation's flag be folded in the following manner:

First: Hold the flag horizontally, parallel to the ground. The first fold is made lengthwise, so that the striped half covers the blue field.

Second: The second fold is again lengthwise in the same direction as the first. The flag is now one-quarter of its original height.

Third: The third fold begins the process of making a triangle. Begin at the end farthest from the blue field and bring the lower striped corner to the upper open edge.

Fourth: Bring the upper point down to make another triangle. Continue the folding process in triangles working toward the blue field until the entire flag is folded.

Fifth: The folding process ends with only the blue field showing. It leaves a small amount of fabric that is tucked into the final fold. The flag then resembles a neat, triangular blue pillow of stars and is ready for proper storage or presentation.

"The Thirteen Folds" is often read aloud while the flag is being folded. The script that follows has been written especially for yachting associations that, despite their use of uniforms, have their foundation in civilian life. It honors our Nation's military as well as our civil government while restating fundamental concepts of American democracy and acknowledging the great achievements of civilization. The script has a nautical feel and is completely non-denominational.

## The Thirteen Folds

**The First Fold** of our flag brings together two halves; it commemorates the great explorers who brought together the old world and the new world in the land we know as America.

**The Second Fold** calls to mind the pioneers and settlers of our Nation who brought together our east and west coasts and fulfilled the Manifest Destiny of the United States.

**The Third Fold** reminds us of God. The number three has from ancient times been considered the symbol of divine perfection, and our Nation has from its beginning trusted in Divine Providence.

**The Fourth Fold** calls to mind the Four Freedoms our Nation believes people everywhere in the world ought to enjoy: Freedom of speech; Freedom of worship; Freedom from want; and Freedom from fear.

**The Fifth Fold** is made in tribute to our elected representatives. In making our laws, they represent the voice of our People. We pray they will always be right, but we respect them, right or wrong.

**The Sixth Fold** honors those in the executive branch of our government who are charged with carrying out the will of our People. Let them ever be mindful of the fact that although they hold the symbols of authority, here, in our Nation, the People rule.

**The Seventh Fold** is made in honor of our judges. They have the awesome responsibility of interpreting the will of our People. May God, the Great Judge of the Universe, guide them in their quest, and remind them that justice must always be tempered with mercy.

**The Eighth Fold** signifies the eight major points of the compass, and reminds us that no matter how the winds of fate may blow, we must remain true to our course.

**The Ninth Fold** is a tribute to our Armed Forces: through them, through their courage and service, we protect our country and our flag against all enemies.

**The Tenth Fold** reminds us of the first ten amendments of the United States Constitution, our Bill of Rights, the great document that enshrines the basic rights and liberties for which American heroes of every generation have given their lives and fortunes.

**The Eleventh Fold** is made in honor of all those who gave their lives or a portion of their lives in service to our country and to attain peace throughout the world.

**The Twelfth Fold** honors the many religions of our Nation. May we, a free People, continue to worship the God of All Nations in our own diverse ways, without interference from our government or fear of our fellow citizens.

**The Thirteenth Fold** completes the folding of the flag. It reminds us of the thirteen colonies that grew into our great Nation. The stars of the flag are uppermost, reminding us of our true calling to a higher nature.

*NOTE: The flag does not salute. After the flag is folded, the Captain of the Color Guard presents it to the presiding officer, who salutes it. The Captain of the Color Guard, holding the flag, does not return the salute but passes the flag to the presiding officer. After the flag is passed, the Captain of the Color Guard salutes. Again the salute is not returned because the flag never salutes. As the flag is passed the Master of Ceremonies says:*

**As the flag is presented**, our presiding officer salutes it on our behalf, and holds it tightly because it represents the Heart of our Nation.