

**Vietnam Wall Rentschler Field Oct. 18, 2008
Colors Ceremony created & written by Peter Galgano Jr.**





Colors Ceremony – Saturday, October 18, 2008 Vietnam Wall Rentschler Field, East Hartford, CT

What does the American Flag stand for?

By Peter Galgano Jr.

The American Flag stands for courage, camaraderie, safety and protection. Also the flag expresses patriotism and love of the country. Did you know that the colors on our flag stand for something? White stands for purity and innocence. Red stands for hardiness and valor. Last but not least, blue stands for vigilance, perseverance and justice. The stars on the American Flag stand for heaven and divine. The stripes mean rays of light emanating from the sun. The flag also stands for something else. The flag stands for hope, beliefs and accomplishments of our nation.

Flags are the most important symbols in the nation. The flag has stood for character, personality and the American history. The American flag has become an old, familiar symbol. Some people do not take the flag seriously; they make tents, skirts, T-shirts and seats of their jeans. The 13 stripes stand for the 13 colonies. The 50 stars today, represent the 50 US States. There have been a lot of changes in the American flag. Francis Scott Key wrote a poem, which is now known as the Star Spangled Banner.

The flag does not tell us that we are perfect. But, the flag tells us we must always strive to be perfect. Normally the flag is displayed only from sunrise to sunset. For special occasions it may be displayed at night and needs be lighted. The flag should be raised briskly, lowered slowly and ceremonially. At no time should the flag touch anything beneath. You cannot write, draw and no other marks should be on the flag.

Seeing the flag flying, proudly reminds me of my **Marine Corps Boot Camp** in Paris Island, South Carolina. So much drilling and marching, mostly in the rain. Long hours in

classrooms. Running the obstacle course, learning hand to hand combat, and being closeted with tear gas, just to be sure we trusted our gas masks if they should ever be needed.

Many times late at night you'd hear quiet sobbing from the stress and homesickness. I, myself, wondered several times if I'd made a mistake in volunteering to serve my country. It all seemed so ridiculous and grueling the things we had to do, when others were in cushy civilian jobs.

Then on graduation day, when we marched onto the parade field in front of our families and friends (it was the first time my Mom and Dad ever flew on a plane) the Marine Corps band played the Marine Hymn, we all stood so straight and proud, and then they began to play, "She's a Grand Ole Flag". At that moment, they began briskly raising the flag up the flagpole in the center of the field. Every military person present saluted the flag, and civilians put their hands over their hearts.

The words of the song ran through my mind, "She's the emblem of the land I love, the home of the free and the brave..." The flag stands for freedom and all of the lives lost over the many years and the many wars to give us this freedom today.

I cry and pray for all of those who have lost their lives fighting for a free America, and I salute **all** our men and women in uniform, no matter where they are serving, who always answer any challenge that threatens freedom — our freedom!

This Colors Ceremony honors all of our Military and Public Service organizations that put their lives on the line everyday for our Freedom and our Safety.

I will now hand the microphone back to my friend and fellow Marine, Brad Davis, to introduce the Colors we have here for you today. Thank you.