



POLITICAL AGENDAS AND HALF-STAFF FLAGS

"My anxious recollections, my sympathetic feeling, and my best wishes are irresistibly excited whensoever, in any country, I see an oppressed nation unfurl the banners of freedom." --George Washington (1796)

Our noble United States flag has been on my mind and in my heart this week.

At sunrise last Saturday, I took my 90-year-old father, a [World War II Naval Aviator](#), to place flags at National Cemetery here in Chattanooga.

For many years, I have been humbled to join with other veterans, families and Scout Troops ahead of Memorial Day as we post some 50,000 flags on grave markers. We complete our work in about an hour, and the result is a remarkable transformation of this beautiful expanse of hallowed ground.

The morning starts with a moving tribute to [generations of warriors](#) who, in defense of [Liberty](#), gave their lives on beaches and battlefields, high seas and skies. They are saluted with 21 guns, and then Taps.



It was the first time my father had attended this event, and the old warrior was moved to tears. This was apparent to all when he was interviewed by NBC. He was the oldest veteran participating that day.

The final flags I place each year mark the graves of two Vietnam-era F-105 wingmen, one KIA and the other shot down three months later, who then spent five agonizing years as a POW. The latter, [Roger Ingvalson](#), was a life-mentor to me.

On Memorial Day morning, I rose well before sunrise, went to *The Patriot Post's* publishing office and lowered our flag to half its 40-foot staff. I did the same at our local elementary school, and then returned to my home where I lowered our flag. Then, as with most mornings, I retreated to our back porch for morning prayers and to watch the sun rise above the trees, before charging into the day.

In the quiet of that moment, I recalled a question I was asked last December, when Barack Obama ordered flags to half-staff -- and we did not comply.

There are five perennial Presidential Proclamations ordering flags to half-staff. Beyond those, presidents traditionally order flags to half-staff at the death of notable politicians or other national figures.

For example, in the years since he took office, Obama has ordered flags lowered at the death of four senators -- Ted Kennedy, Robert Byrd, Arlen Specter and Daniel Inouye -- the latter being a Medal of Honor recipient. He also ordered flags lowered for Army Corporal Frank Buckles, the last surviving American veteran of World War I, and for Neil Armstrong -- the first man to set foot on the moon.

Fittingly, Obama also memorialized the 2009 murder of 13 Army personnel and the wounding of 30 others

at Ft. Hood by Islamist [Nidal Malik Hasan](#). And he memorialized the 2012 murder of our Ambassador to Libya and three other Americans by Islamists in Benghazi, though days later he was [adulterating the Benghazi talking points](#) in order not to derail his presidential re-election campaign.

As a practice, I always lower our flags on Memorial Day, Patriot Day (9/11) and Pearl Harbor Day, and in honor of military Patriots, law enforcement officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty.

But last December, after the mass murder at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut, a disgruntled Leftist (and a major Obama donor) called to protest the fact that I had not lowered our corporate office flag as Obama ordered. While the Newtown deaths were tragic beyond words, I responded to her that I do not lower our flags to support Obama's political agendas, especially those that are an affront to everything our flag represents. Further, I advised her that I do not take orders from the government on when and how I may post and raise our colors. (Ironically, maybe it would be appropriate to lower our flags in response to Obama's political assaults on Liberty.)

Likewise, for the same reason, I did not lower our flag as Obama ordered after the murders in Aurora, Colorado, or Tucson, Arizona, or Oak Creek, Wisconsin. I certainly meant no disrespect to the dead or their grieving families, and in fact, think Obama showed them great disrespect by politicizing their deaths. Further, I doubt that those flag orders comply with [36 U.S.C. CHAPTER 10](#), and its stipulations about flag placement in sections 174, 175(m) or 176.

To put this into context, consider Obama's visit to the tornado-ravaged ruins in and around Moore, Oklahoma, this week (which he referred to as "Monroe"). There were 24 men, women and children who died in that tragedy, and tens of thousands were left homeless. Why did Obama not order flags lowered to honor those dead -- at least in the state of Oklahoma, as he did in the state of West Virginia after a mining accident there in 2010?

By comparison, there were 12 people killed in Aurora, and six killed in Tucson and Oak Creek. Why were they honored and not those who died in Oklahoma?

That question may sound callous and insensitive, but the obvious answer is that the deaths in Oklahoma did not coincide with Obama's top legislative agenda items -- though a few Democrats did assert that the tornados were the result of "[global warming](#)."

But when a tragedy does coincide with Obama's top legislative priority, he will shamelessly use those deaths to promote it. And the crown jewel for the [NeoComs](#) controlling the [Democrat Party](#) is redefining the Second Amendment, the biggest obstacle to the advance of socialist statism.

I'm reminded this week, with the arrest of an Oregon teenager who was assembling explosive devices and looking to acquire a gun in order to replicate the 1999 Columbine High School massacre, that the Senate's so-called "[assault weapons](#)" ban is fully drafted and awaiting the next mass murder so Leftists can "seize the emotional moment" and attempt to win its passage.

Obama spent a lot of time between January and April of this year using the [coffins of dead children as a political platform](#) to promote his gun control agenda -- and for the left, gun registration followed by gun confiscation is the *coup de grace*, the prerequisite to unmitigated statist power.

If you think this president would not order flags flown at half-staff to promote a political agenda, you're not thinking hard enough.

At present, Obama is besieged with scandals -- the politically motivated [adulteration of the Benghazi talking points](#), the politically motivated [targeting of Patriot groups](#) by the IRS and the politically motivated [prosecution of a Fox News journalist](#).

When his former White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel said, "You never want a serious crisis to go to waste," he was talking about crises that could be

converted to capital for political gain. Obama's current crises are not convertible, but the next mass murder will be.

Footnote: For more information on the proper and respectful display of our national flag, see [The American Flag](#).