

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

On Thursday, May Second, the Times-Standard posted a letter to the editor, written by Wayne Arnold, titled "What Does It Take? Flag deserves Better". Mr. Arnold writes that he was appalled at the sight of the American Flag, in tatters, flying at half-staff at the Post Office located at Fifth and H Streets here in Eureka. The flag in question was made as a burial flag, not to be flown but used to cover the casket of a veteran. He goes on to say that he reported the discrepancy to a female employee, who denied responsibility, and directed Mr. Arnold to call the Clark street office and ask for maintenance. A supervisor answered the phone and told Mr. Arnold that the problem was being taken care of. Eight days later, the same worn-out, tattered flag was raised to full-staff. In my opinion, as a retired postmaster, I find the handling of this problem by the local postal personnel deplorable. Although I held the position twenty five years ago, flag etiquette has not changed that much between then and now. The employee at the Fifth and H Post Office should have written down Mr. Arnold's complaint and his telephone number and then contacted a superior at the Clark Street Post Office. The flag in question should have been immediately replaced and Mr. Arnold contacted. Problem resolved. When any problem, with respect to the display of the American Flag, was reported by a citizen back in my day, it was known by my staff that I was to be made aware of the incident. There is no excuse to fly a tattered flag. If one is damaged by a severe storm or any other act of God, it should be immediately replaced. The incident described by Mr. Arnold was caused by either ignorance or inattention on the part of the contacted postal employee and supervisor. The person in charge of any outlying postal facility should at least have the basic knowledge of the treatment and display of the American Flag. The Eureka postmaster, or in this case the officer-in-charge, has the ultimate responsibility for a ready supply of replacement American flags plus the proper display of this symbol of our nation. Any federal, state, county or city government entity or any other American business or organization who displays the flag of our United States, should be fully aware of the ~~proper~~ etiquette needed for the proper display. The American Flag is not a religious symbol to be worshiped but a symbol of our republic that should be treated with deep respect. Many people, and not all of them Americans, have died over the years protecting the American Flag and all that it stands for. When you disrespect the flag, you trample on the memories of those who have sacrificed so much to keep our nation free.

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