

Salute to the American Flag

An educational tribute to the American Flag

The Amboy News • Wednesday, June 8, 2022

Respect for the American Flag

The Flag Code was adopted to protect our nation's symbol of freedom and accomplishment of those who have served. If you are unfamiliar with the rules of the banner, it's possible to be unintentionally disrespectful.

Learn the basics from Chapter 4 U.S.C. 8, to understand how to honor the flag, per the Government Publishing Office.

- The flag should never be displayed with the union down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property.
- The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, the floor, water or merchandise.
- The flag should never be carried flat or horizontally, but always aloft and free.
- The flag should never be used as wearing apparel, bedding or drapery.
- The flag should never be fastened, displayed, used or stored in such a man-

ner as to permit it to be easily torn, soiled or damaged in any way.

- The flag should never be used as a covering for a ceiling.
- The flag should never have placed upon it, nor on any part of it, nor attached to it any mark, insignia, word, figure, design, picture or any drawing of any nature.
- The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying or delivering anything.
- The flag should never be embroidered on such articles as cushions or handkerchiefs and the like.
- No part of the flag should ever be used as a costume or athletic uniform. However, a patch may be affixed to the uniform of military personnel, firemen, policemen and members of patriotic organizations.
- The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.



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Retiring a Battered American Flag

Laying this symbol of America to rest is a humbling experience and should be done with care. The Flag Code expresses that the preferred way of disposal is through a dignified manner, preferably burning.

Do you know how to tell when your banner is ready for a respectful retirement?

Consider these factors to determine when and how to release Old Glory from its display.

THE RIGHT TIME

Before assuming your flag is due for a replacement, it's important to inspect it carefully. Many times, exposure to outdoor elements takes a toll on a flag's cleanliness and can make it appear too weathered to continue to serve.

However, when its physical integrity is in tact, a simple washing can bring it back to life.

When analyzing the integrity of your flag's material, look beyond easily cleaned obstructions. You will know it is beyond repairable when you notice prominent holes or frayed edges that will alter its size and texture after mending.

WHO IS AUTHORIZED TO RETIRE A FLAG?

The Flag Code doesn't restrict anyone from retiring a banner, so use your best judgment to choose someone who will take the responsibility seriously.

Here are some ideas to consider if you plan to conduct a ceremony, from the Independence Hall Association.

- One flag should be used in the ceremony to represent all banners included in the retirement service. The remainder of symbols should be collectively incinerated;
- The solemn service should be conducted outdoors, in conjunction with a campfire program;
- The ceremony should include two color guards, one representing the flag in use and another for the banner to be retired; and
- A leader of the service should call the group to attention, order a salute, lead the Pledge of Allegiance, order the flag retired and remain at the scene until the fire is safely extinguished and ashes are burned.



OTHER OPTIONS

Of course, the preferred method of a dignified retirement is by burning. If the experience is out of your comfort zone, however, a good avenue to seek is your local

Veterans of Foreign Wars club or American Legion. These knowledgeable experts can point you in the right direction of a flag-retirement service or host a ceremony to ensure it is done properly and respectfully.

Amboy Independence Celebration

Downtown Amboy - Saturday, July 2 from 4 - 11 p.m.
Hosted by the Amboy Fire Department and the City of Amboy

Events from 4 -7 pm

Music, Water Slide, Face Painting, Axe Throwing, Foam Machine, Mobile Game Room, Superhero Characters, Popcorn and Popsicles, Inflatable Bounce Houses, and Bubble Making & Bubble Stations

Events from 7-11 p.m.

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A Historical Look at the American Flag



Elizabeth Griscom Ross "Betsy" Ross 1752-1836

This Betsy Ross Flag is well known and well-loved in America and around the world as the first American flag. Her descendants claimed she made (not designed) the first U.S. flag, using a circular arrangement of five-pointed stars. Evidence shows that a congressman, Francis Hopkinson, is the person responsible for its design.

The First Official United States Flag June 14, 1777

The 13-star flag became official as a result of the congressional action that took place on June 14, 1777. Evidence exists pointing to Congressman Francis Hopkinson to be responsible for its design. Each star and stripe represented a Colony of which there were thirteen, (in order of ratification: Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Maine, Virginia, New York, North Carolina), united nearly one year earlier by the Declaration of Independence. The only president to serve under this flag was George Washington (1789-1797).

The Star Spangled Banner 2nd Official U.S. Flag May 1, 1795

The 15-star flag became official when Vermont and Kentucky were admitted into the union. The 15-star, 15-stripe flag was authorized by the Flag Act of Jan. 13, 1794, adding two stars and two stripes. This was the only official flag to have 15 stripes. The stars were slightly tilted. The five presidents who served under this flag were George Washington (1789-1797), John Adams (1797-1801), Thomas Jefferson (1801-1809), James

Madison (1809-1817) and James Monroe (1817-1825).

20 Star Flag 3rd Official U.S. Flag April 13, 1818

Congress realized that adding another star and stripe for each new state was impractical. So they passed the Flag Act of 1818, which returned the flag design to 13 stripes. This 20-star flag became the official United States flag in April 13, 1818. The five stars were added for the admission of Tennessee, Ohio, Louisiana, Indiana and Mississippi. There was only one president to serve under this flag, James Monroe (1817-1825).

21 Star Flag 4th Official U.S. Flag July 4, 1819

One star was added for the admission of Illinois and lasted for one year. The only president to serve under this flag was James Monroe (1817-1825).

23 Star Flag 5th Official U.S. Flag July 4, 1820

The 23-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1820. Two stars were added for the admission of Alabama (the 22nd state on Dec. 14, 1819) and Maine (the 23rd state on March 15, 1820), and was to last for two years. The only president to serve under this flag was James Monroe (1817-1825).

24 Star Flag 6th Official U.S. Flag July 4, 1822

The 24-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1822. A star was added for the admission of Missouri (Aug. 10, 1821) and was to last for 14 years. The presidents who served under this flag included James Monroe (1817-1825), John Quincy Adams (1825-1829) and Andrew Jackson (1829-1837).

25 Star Flag 7th Official U.S. Flag July 4, 1836

The 25-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1836. A star was added for the admission of Arkansas (June 15, 1836) and was to last for just one year. The two presidents to serve under this flag were Andrew Jackson (1829-1837) and Martin Van Buren (1837-1841).

26 Star Flag 8th Official U.S. Flag July 4, 1837

The 26-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1837. A star was added for the admission of Michigan (Jan. 26, 1837) and was to last for eight years. The four presidents to serve under this flag were Martin Van Buren (1837-1841), William Henry Harrison (1841), John Tyler (1841-1845) and James Polk (1845-1849).

27 Star Flag 9th Official U.S. Flag July 4, 1845

The 27-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1845. A star was added for the admission of Florida and was to last for only one year. The only president to serve under this flag was James Polk (1845-1849).

28 Star Flag 10th Official U.S. Flag July 4, 1846

The 28-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1846. A star was added for the admission of Texas (Dec. 29, 1845) and was to last only one year. The only president to serve under this flag was James Polk (1845-1849).

29 Star Flag 11th Official U.S. Flag July 4, 1847

The 29-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1847. A star was added for the admission of Iowa (Dec. 28, 1846) and was to last for only one year. The only president to serve under this flag was James Polk (1845-1849).

30 Star Flag 12th Official U.S. Flag July 4, 1848


The 30-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1848, and was added for the admission of Wisconsin (May 29, 1848). It was to last three years. The three presidents to serve under this flag were James Polk (1845-1849), Zachary Taylor (1849-1850) and Millard Fillmore (1850-1853).

31 Star Flag 13th Official U.S. Flag July 4, 1851

The 31-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1851. A star was added for the admission of California (Sept. 9, 1850) and was to last for seven years. The three presidents who served under this flag were Millard Fillmore (1850-1853), Franklin Pierce (1853-1857) and James Buchanan (1857-1861).

32 Star Flag 14th Official U.S. Flag July 4, 1858

The 32-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1858. A star was added for the admission of Minnesota (May 11, 1858) and was to last for just one year. The only president to serve under this flag was James Buchanan (1857-1861).



A Historical Look at the American Flag

33 Star Flag **15th Official U.S. Flag** **July 4, 1859**

The 33-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1859. A star was added for the admission of Oregon (Feb. 14, 1859) and was to last for two years. The two presidents to serve under this flag were James Buchanan (1857-1861) and Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865).

34 Star Flag **16th Official U.S. Flag** **July 4, 1861**

The 34-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1861. A star was added for the admission of Kansas (Jan. 29, 1861) and was to last for two years. The only president to serve under this flag was Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865).

35 Star Flag **17th Official U.S. Flag** **July 4, 1863**

The 35-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1863. A star was added for the admission of West Virginia (June 20, 1863) and was to last for two years. The two presidents to serve under this flag were Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865) and Andrew Johnson (1865-1869).

36 Star Flag **18th Official U.S. Flag** **July 4, 1865**

The 36-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1865. A star was added for the admission of Nevada (Oct. 31, 1864) and was to last for two years. The only president to serve under this flag was Andrew Johnson (1865-1869).

37 Star Flag **19th Official U.S. Flag** **July 4, 1867**

The 37-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1867. A star was added for the admission of Nebraska (March 1, 1867) and was to last for 10 years. The three presidents who served under this flag were Andrew Johnson (1865-1869), Ulysses S. Grant (1869-1877) and Rutherford B. Hayes (1877-1881).

38 Star Flag **20th Official U.S. Flag** **July 4, 1877**

The 38-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1877. A star was added for the admission of Colorado (Aug. 1, 1876) and was to last for 13 years. The five presidents to serve under this flag were Rutherford B. Hayes (1877-1881), James A. Garfield (1881), Chester A. Arthur (1881-1885), Grover Cleveland (1885-1889) and Benjamin Harrison (1889-1893).

43 Star Flag **21st Official U.S. Flag** **July 4, 1890**

The 43-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1890. Five stars were added for the admission of North Dakota (the 39th state on Nov. 2, 1889), South Dakota (the 40th state on Nov. 2, 1889), Montana (the 41st state on Nov. 8, 1889), Washington (the 42nd state on Nov. 11, 1889) and Idaho (the 43rd state on July 3, 1890) and was to last for just one year. The only president to serve under this flag was Benjamin Harrison (1889-1893).

44 Star Flag **22nd Official U.S. Flag** **July 4, 1891**

The 44-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1891. A star was added for the admission of Wyoming (July 10, 1890) and was to last for five years. The presidents to serve under this flag were Benjamin Harrison (1889-1893) and Grover Cleveland (1893-1897).

45 Star Flag **23rd Official U.S. Flag** **July 4, 1896**

The 45-star flag became the official U.S. flag on July 4, 1896. A star was added for the admission of Utah on Jan. 4, 1896, and was to last for 12 years. The presidents to serve under this flag were Grover Cleveland (1893-1897), William McKinley (1897-1901) and Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909).

46 Star Flag **24th Official U.S. Flag** **July 4, 1908**

On July 4, 1908, the U.S. flag grew to 46 stars with the addition to the Union of Oklahoma (Nov. 16, 1907). Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909) and William H. Taft (1909-1913) served as president under this flag, which was the official flag for four years.

48 Star Flag **25th Official U.S. Flag**

July 4, 1912

The U.S. flag grew to 48 stars on July 4, 1912, with the addition of New Mexico (Jan. 6, 1912) and Arizona (Feb. 14, 1912). Executive order of President Taft dated June 24, 1912, established the proportions of the flag and provided for arrangement of the stars in six horizontal rows of eight each, a single point of each star to be upward. This flag was official for 47 years, longer than any other flag, through two World Wars and the emergence of the United States of America as the leading nation of the world. Eight presidents served under this flag, from William H. Taft (1909-1913) to Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1961).

49 Star Flag **26th Official U.S. Flag** **Jan. 3, 1959**

The first 49-star flag was made in the Army Quartermaster Depot in Philadelphia and was used in the White House ceremony when President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the proclamation admitting Alaska to the Union. The 49-star flag was official for only one year, until July 4, 1960, when Hawaii achieved its statehood and the 50-star flag was born. President Eisenhower was the only president to serve under this flag.

50 Star Flag **27th Official U.S. Flag** **Aug. 21, 1959**

Executive Order of President Eisenhower dated Aug. 21, 1959, provided for the arrangement of the stars in nine rows of stars staggered horizontally and 11 rows of stars staggered vertically. This is the current flag of the United States. Hawaii was admitted as the 50th state on Aug. 21, 1959. The 27th flag of the United States became the official flag on July 4, 1960. The presidents that have served under this flag are Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1961), John F. Kennedy (1961-1963), Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969), Richard M. Nixon (1969-1974), Gerald R. Ford (1974-1977), Jimmy Carter (1977-1981), Ronald W. Reagan (1981-1989), George Bush (1989-1993), William J. Clinton (1993-2001), George W. Bush (2001-2009), Barack Obama (2009-2017), Donald Trump (2017-2021) and currently Joseph Biden.

Oh Say, Can You See?

On Sept. 14, 1814, amateur poet and attorney Francis Scott Key watched members of the U.S. military raise the American flag over the British bombardment of Baltimore's Fort McHenry during the War of 1812.

He was inspired to capture the moment in verse. He penned "The Star-Spangled Banner" while he was detained on a ship by the British during the bombardment of the fort.

According to the Library of Congress, Key's song wasn't declared the official national anthem until 1931 during Woodrow Wilson's presidency. The song carried a strong sense of American pride long before it was officially recognized.

A FAMILIAR MELODY

While "The Star-Spangled Banner" represents great emotion, the melody was borrowed from a song written by a group in London in the mid- 1760s. The Anacreontic Society was a group of amateur musicians that hired a composer named John Stafford Smith to create music written for the group's president. The tune "To Anacreon in Heaven" was meant to give the society a song to showcase their amateur singers and an excellent vocal range for those more accomplished. Once the melody made its way to North America, it was borrowed to create the campaign song for John Adams' campaign.

HISTORY IN SPORTS

The anthem, flag and American sports have a long and meaningful relationship. It was Sept. 5, 1918, during the first game of the World Series between the Boston Red Sox and Chicago Cubs when the tradition of playing the song during sporting events began. The country was in the midst of World War I and Chicago suffered a bombing only a day earlier. The mood was somber.

During the seventh-inning stretch, the United States Navy band played "The Star-Spangled Banner" everyone sang along. The sense of much-needed unity was so powerful that baseball stadiums began incorporating the anthem as a part of the game.



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FUN FLAG FACTS

Whether you're an educator yourself or a parent who loves their country (and its flag), impress the kiddos in your life with these fun facts about the history of Old Glory.

- The colors of the United States flag are no accident. Red stands for bravery, valor and zeal; white symbolizes purity and innocence; blue for loyalty, devotion, vigilance, perseverance and justice of our ancestors.
- Nicknames for the flag include: the Stars and Stripes, Old Glory and the Star-Spangled Banner.
- The blue union holds 50 stars to represent the states that make up the United States, the stripes symbolize the 13 original states
- The flag was created to celebrate the independence of the 13 American colonies from Britain.
- On June 14, (now Flag Day) 1777, the Continental Congress passed the first Flag Act which ultimately established the new flag for America.
- The first official flag featured its signature red and white stripes but had a bare blue union. Stars were added later to signify the different states as they entered the union.
- The United States banner has similarities in color and design of other countries, such as Liberia, Malaysia, Puerto Rico and Chile.
- The current design of the flag has been the same since 1960, when Hawaii joined the union.
- The United States flag should always be on top of a staff if multiple flags are flown.

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Folding the American Flag

The custom of folding the United States Flag into a triangle is both a sign of honor and deep respect. According to the American Legion, folding ceremony represents the same principles on which our nation was founded.

The legion offers the following steps for folding the flag:

- Fold the Flag in half lengthwise.
- Repeat, fold in half lengthwise again, being careful that the blue field is on the outside.
- As one person holds the flag by the blue field, another makes a triangular fold in the opposite end and continues to make triangular folds until the entire flag is in a triangle.
- Tuck the loose edge of the Flag into the pocket by the folds so that only the blue field and white stars are visible.

There is a great deal of symbolism in folding the flag. The portion of the flag that denotes honor is the blue areas containing the stars representing states our veterans served in uniform.

The canton field of blue dresses from left to right and is inverted only when draped as a pall on the casket of a veteran who has served our country honorably in uniform.

In the U.S. Armed Forces, at the ceremony of retreat, the flag is lowered, folded in a triangle fold and kept under watch throughout the night as a tribute to the nation's fallen heroes.



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