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June 14, 2016

FLAG DAY

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

We salute it, sing songs to it and many of us pledge our allegiance to it daily, and the U.S. government encourages all Americans to pause and pay tribute to the flag on its official holiday, **June 14**. In honor of this year's Flag Day, check out some things you should know about the Stars and Stripes.

- Flag Day occurs on June 14th every year, but it is not an official federal holiday.
- In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson is recorded as officially setting June 14, as Flag Day. Even with Wilson's act, on a federal level the holiday was not passed by Congress.
- According to a popular story, George Washington and two other representatives from the Continental Congress called upon a Philadelphia seamstress, Betsy Ross, to ask her to make a new American flag. This version of events cannot be confirmed by historians, however. Although nobody knows for sure who designed the flag, it may have been Continental Congress member Francis Hopkinson.
- Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes as the American flag on June 14, 1777.
- However, the design of the American Flag was not made official until 1912. At that time, a governmental order adopted the current design.
- The thirteen stripes on the flag represent the thirteen original colonies and the colors of the stripes, red and white, stand for the courage and purity of our nation. The stars stand for the fifty separate but "united" States of our nation.
- The colors of the flag have important meanings. Red symbolizes Hardiness and Valor, White symbolizes Purity and Innocence, and Blue represents Vigilance, Perseverance and Justice.
- On September 14, 1814, as daylight broke, Francis Scott Key saw the American flag still flying over Fort McHenry, after it had been bombarded all night by the British. Inspired, he wrote a poem entitled "The Defense of Fort M 'Henry," which was later set to music and renamed the "[Star-Spangled Banner](#)." Congress made it the official national anthem in 1931

- Over the years the flag has changed 27 times. The last change was on July 4, 1960 to include the 50th state, Hawaii.
- When the flag can no longer be repaired or used, it must be destroyed in a dignified manner, such as burning.
- If a flag touches the ground, it does not have to be destroyed. If dirty or soiled, an American flag may be washed and/or dry cleaned.

The American flag is a source of pride and inspiration for American citizens. It encourages us to play a part in our community, to lend a helping hand and give back to those in need. It calls for us to pledge our allegiance to this great country. It is constant reminder that we are “*One Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.*” “Old Glory” represents Freedom – including the freedom of choice. In America, we have so many opportunities to give our time, energy and talents and to make a difference in the individual lives of others.

So this June 14th, when you see the “Stars and Stripes” flying in all its majesty, please take the time to pause and be grateful for all our liberties and exercise your freedom to make a difference in the lives of others.

Happy Flag Day!

Sincerely,



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