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Flag Day and National Flag Week, 1984

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Over two hundred years ago, in June 1775, the first distinctive American flags to be used in battle were flown by the colonists at the Battle of Bunker Hill. One flag was an adaptation of the British Blue Ensign, while the other was a new design. Both flags bore a common device of the colonial era which symbolized the experience of Americans who had wrested their land from the forest: the pine tree.

Other flags appeared at the same time, as the colonies moved toward a final separation from Great Britain. Two featured a rattlesnake, symbolizing vigilance and deadly striking power. One bore the legend "Liberty or Death"; the other "Don't Tread on Me." The Grand Union flag was raised over Washington's Continental Army headquarters on January 1, 1776. It displayed not only the British crosses of St. Andrew and St. George, but also thirteen red and white stripes to symbolize the American colonies. The Bennington flag also appeared in 1776, with thirteen stars, thirteen stripes, and the number "76."

Two years after the Battle of Bunker Hill, on June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress chose a flag which tellingly expressed the unity and resolve of the brave colonists who had banded together to seek independence. The delegates voted "that the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field representing a new constellation."

After more than two centuries of history, and with the addition of thirty-seven stars, the Stars and Stripes chosen by the Continental Congress in 1777 is our flag today, symbolizing a shared commitment to freedom and equality.

To commemorate the adoption of our flag, the Congress, by a joint resolution approved August 3, 1949 (63 Stat. 492), designated June 14 of each year as Flag Day and requested the President to issue an annual proclamation calling for its observance and the display of the Flag of the United States on all government buildings. The Congress also requested the President, by a joint resolution of June 9, 1966 (80 Stat. 194), to issue annually a proclamation designating the week in which June 14 occurs as National Flag Week and calling upon all citizens of the United States to display the flag during that week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week beginning Sunday, June 10, 1984, as National Flag Week, and I direct the appropriate officials of the government to display the flag on all government buildings during this week. I urge all Americans to observe Flag Day, June 14, and National Flag Week by flying the Stars and Stripes from their homes and other suitable places.

I also urge the American people to celebrate those days from Flag Day through Independence Day, set aside by Congress as a time to honor America (89 Stat. 211), by having public gatherings and activities at which they can honor their country in an appropriate manner.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

Ronald Reagan