

# **Flag Day Celebration Event**

**Eagle Project  
Developed By  
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## **Table of Contents**

- Background
  
- Stations and information
  1. Welcome
  2. Flag Facts
  3. Flag Folding
  4. Rules of the Flag
  5. Flag Display 1
  6. Flag Display 2
  7. Special Days
  8. Flag Display 3
  9. Flag Display 4
  10. How to Raise/Lower a flag
  11. Flag Retirement
    - How to Retire a Flag
    - How to Retire Large numbers of Flags

## **Background**

On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress voted to adopt a flag for a new nation that would be known as The United States of America. Congress mandated that this flag “shall be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white, with a union of 13 stars of white on a blue field, representing a new constellation.” This was the official birthday of the U.S. Flag, as we know it today. June 14 is now a holiday known as “Flag Day.”

On Flag Day, 2003, VFW Post 1503 in conjunction with Boy Scout Troop 1919 (which the post sponsors) set up and ran an event for the celebration of Flag Day. The purpose of the event was to educate the community on proper flag etiquette. The Flag Day celebration took place under the Post’s pavilion. Around the pavilion were decorative paper posters with different pieces of Flag information, such as the Pledge of Allegiance. Also around the pavilion were eleven tri-fold poster boards (stations) each dedicated to a specific aspect of Flag etiquette. At each poster board, or station, were one or two volunteers who explained and in some cases demonstrated the information found on the board. Also, concessions were available for guests.

Another important goal of the Flag Day event was to retire torn, tattered, and faded American Flags. Our community had given the post many flags that had come to the point of needing to be retired. These flags were retired ceremoniously at the Flag Day Event. Since this event, Post 1503 has coordinated with a Wal-Mart store to receive flags that need to be retired. People can simply drop off their tattered flags at Wal-Mart and the post will pick the flags up and retire them.

Before the event could be put on, certain things had to be done. First, we had to purchase tri-fold posters and decorations for the pavilion and to make the different stations. Next, we made the decorations and ensured that all the volunteers knew what station they would be manning and what information was covered at that station. Finally, we set up the stations and decorations under the pavilion and got the event started. The VFW’s “Our Flag: Things You Should Know” pamphlet was extremely useful in finding the information for the stations. We also handed out these pamphlets to guests.

Planning and carrying out the Flag Day Event was not difficult, extremely time-consuming, or costly. The whole event cost Post 1503 less than \$200. Fewer than twenty-five volunteers were required to put on the whole show. We at Post 1503 feel that we succeeded in our goal to educate

our community on proper flag etiquette. We also believe that if we can succeed in that goal in our community, then posts around the country can do the same in their communities. By teaching flag etiquette, we instill patriotism and the high morals of the United States into the hearts and lives of its people, the people and the morals which veterans have fought to protect for centuries. We ask that you at the national level recommend the Flag Day Event to posts across the nation to help the people of the United States better understand their country.

To carry out a Flag Day event similar to the event VFW Post 1503 performed, a few simple steps must be taken first:

1. Decorations and display posters must be purchased.
2. Following these purchases, a small group of people (5-10 volunteers) must get together and make the display posters and decorations.
3. Volunteers must study and learn the information pertaining to the stations that they have been assigned to.
4. In order to perform flag retirement ceremonies, a safe area for a fire must be identified and charcoal and lighter fluid need to be purchased. When Post 1503 carried out its Flag retirement ceremonies, a 50-gallon drum was split in half lengthwise (refer to pictures) and the fires were put in each half of the barrel. Each barrel was safely raised off the ground.
5. Only one step remains, the execution day of the project. Be sure to advertise the event to post members and the community by using ads in newspapers, flyers, or another form of media.

NOTE: In order to make the preparation of the display posters easier, an electronic copy and a print copy of the text found on each poster has been included as well as a write-up submitted to Boy Scouts of America for an Eagle Scout leadership service project. Also included is a copy of the same ceremony for Flag retirement used by Post 1503.

# Stations and Information

## Poster 1

## Welcome

Purpose: To explain the day's events to the visitors and explain the purpose and layout of the event as a whole.

Volunteer Task: No volunteers for this poster.



Next Page: Text for the Welcome Poster

# WELCOME!

Welcome to the First Annual VFW Flag Day celebration. The purpose of this event is to teach our community on the proper respect and care of "Old Glory," our nation's flag. Here you will find ten stations dedicated to different topics that all relate to respect and care of the American Flag. At these stations, you will find volunteers from VFW post 1503, BSA Troop 1919 as well as other patriotic citizens that have given their time to help the VFW execute this event.

At about 6:45 this evening, flag retirement ceremonies will commence. The flags will be retired by ceremonious burning. The flags that will be retired are faded, torn, tattered, and overall no longer a proper representation of our country. These flags have been given to the VFW by citizens who have replaced them with new ones. If you have any flags that are damaged, tattered or faded, place them in the receptacle by the flag retirement station, located behind the pavilion.

Finally, thank you for supporting the VFW and BSA Troop 1919 by coming here. Also, thank you for your patriotism!

## Poster 2

## Flag Facts

Purpose: To give the visitors a basic idea of the Flag's history and some interesting Flag trivia.

Volunteer Job: One volunteer must be able to explain the history of the Flag as well as the Flag trivia contained in the text associated with this station.



Next Page: Text and Materials for the Flag Facts station.

# Flag Facts

## HISTORY

- Early in the Revolutionary War, a variety of Flags were used to represent the 13 colonies. Prominent among these was the “Don’t Tread On Me” Rattlesnake Flag. The Rattlesnake Flag was designed by Benjamin Franklin; the snake is an eight-segmented snake representing the first eight colonies.
- Later on in 1775, the Continental Congress decided on the form of the new flag, the “Grand Union.” The flag consisted of 13 red and white horizontal stripes (like the modern day American Flag) and the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew on a blue field (better known as the British flag). The appearance of the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew showed that the colonies had not yet broken from Great Britain.
- On June 14, 1777 (flag day!), the Continental Congress adopted a national flag sewn by Betsy Ross. The Continental Congress stated that the flag “shall have 13 stripes, alternate red and white, with a union of 13 stars of white on a blue field, representing a new constellation.” This flag design came to be known as “Old Glory.”
- Kentucky and Vermont joined the Union in the early 1790’s, Congress added a new star and a new stripe for each new state so the flag had 15 stars and 15 stripes. This flag is known as the “Star-Spangled Banner,” this is the very same flag that inspired Francis Scott Key to write his poem “The star-Spangled Banner” which was later put to music and adopted as our national anthem.
- As more states joined the Union, Congress realized that a new star and a new stripe for each one would get a little unruly. So, under the advice of Navy Capt. Sam C. Reid, congress decided that the flag should return to 13 horizontal stripes and have a new star added for each new state that joins the Union.
- In 1959, President Dwight David Eisenhower arranged the stars of Old Glory in nine horizontal rows, five rows of six stars, and four rows of five stars. This is the American Flag that we know today.

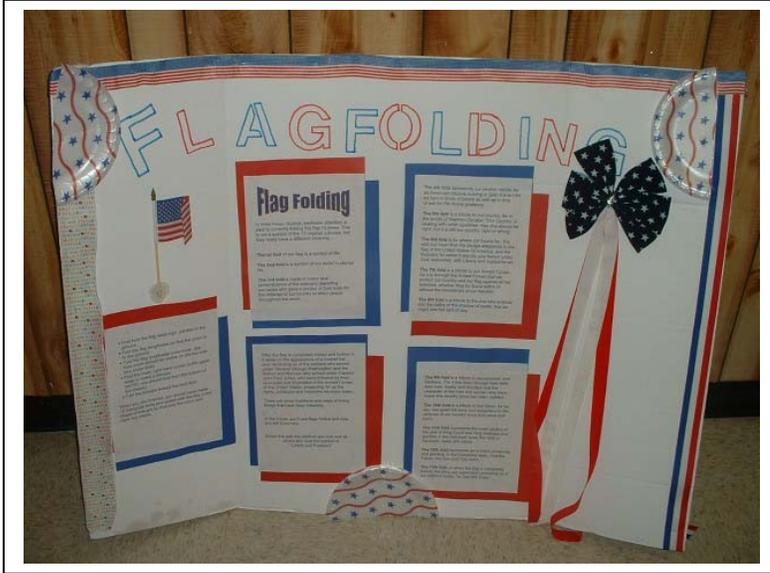
- On July 20, 1969, Old Glory became the first flag to be flown on the moon. Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin raised our nation’s flag on the surface of the moon.

## Poster 3

## Flag Folding

Purpose: To demonstrate to visitors the proper way to fold the flag.

Volunteer Job: Two volunteers must demonstrate how to fold the American Flag. The volunteers should then ask visitors for assistance in folding the flag and also should review the Flag folding chart with each fold.



Next Page: Flag folding chart for station.

# Flag Folding

In most Honor Guards, particular attention is paid to correctly folding the flag 13 times. This is not a symbol of the 13 original colonies, but they really have a different meaning...

The 1st fold of our flag is a symbol of life.

The 2nd fold is a symbol of our belief in eternal life.

The 3rd fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veterans departing our ranks who gave a portion of their lives for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world.

The 4th fold represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in time of war for His divine guidance.

The 5th fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our Country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong.

The 6th fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that We pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States Of America, and the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.

The 7th fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.

The 8th fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day.

The 9th fold is a tribute to womanhood, and Mothers. For it has been through their faith, their love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great has been molded.

The 10th fold is a tribute to the father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born.

The 11th fold represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies in the Hebrews' eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The 12th fold represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in the Christians' eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit.

The 13th fold, or when the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost reminding us of our nation's motto, "In God We Trust."

After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington, and the Sailors and Marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones, who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for us the rights, privileges and freedoms we enjoy today.

There are some traditions and ways of doing things that have deep meaning.

In the future, you'll see flags folded and now you will know why.

Share this with the children you love and all others who love the symbol of "Liberty and Freedom"

- First hold the flag waist high, parallel to the ground.
- Fold the flag lengthwise so that the union is to the ground.
- Fold the flag lengthwise once more. (the blue union should be visible on the top-side and under-side)
- Fold the lower right hand corner to the upper edge to make a triangle.  
(NOTE: you should fold from the bottom of the stripes)
- Fold the triangle toward the blue field.
- When you are finished, you should have made 13 triangular folds and ended with the flag in the shape of triangle so that only the union and stars are visible.

## **Poster 4**

## **Rules of the Flag**

Purpose: To teach visitors the Flag etiquette rules as described by U.S. law.

Volunteer Job: One volunteer should learn all the rules for Flag etiquette described in the attached text for this poster. This volunteer should then be able to translate that information into his own words in order to describe these rules to visitors.



Next Page: Poster text for Rules of the Flag Station.

## **Basic Rules of The Flag**

- Display the flag only from sunrise to sunset, however, the flag may be displayed for 24 hours if properly illuminated.
- The flag should not be displayed on days when weather is inclement, unless the flag is an all-weather flag.
- The flag should be displayed on all special days (see: chart)
- The flag should be displayed daily on or near the main administration building of every public institution.
- The flag should be displayed at every polling place on election days.
- The flag should be displayed during school days in or near every schoolhouse.
- The U.S. flag should never have placed on it any mark or insignia of any kind.

## **Poster 5**

## **Flag Display 1**

Purpose: To teach visitors proper ways to display the United States Flag in for most scenarios they will encounter

Volunteer Job: 1 volunteer must be able to understand and be able to explain the rules and examples for Flag Display given in the text for this station.



Next Page: Text for Flag Display 1

# Flag Display

- When the flag is displayed from a staff projecting from a window, the union of the flag should always be at the peak of the staff unless the flag is at half-staff.
- When displayed over the middle of a street, the flag should be suspended with the union to the north in an east-west street, and the union to the east in a north-south street.
- When carried in a parade front with other flags, the U.S. flag should always be to the marching right of the other flags, or to the front and center of the flag line.
- When displayed on a float in a parade, the U.S. flag should be mounted on a staff or, if displayed flat, it should be so suspended that its folds fall free, as though the flag were staffed.
- The flag should never be draped over the hood, top, back or sides of any kind of vehicle or railroad car or boat. When the flag is displayed on a car, the staff should be fixed firmly to the chassis or clamped to the right fender.
- The flag should never be kept flat and horizontal, instead, aloft and free.

## **Poster 6**

## **Flag Display 2**

Purpose: To teach visitors proper ways to display the United States Flag in for most scenarios they will encounter

Volunteer Job: 1 volunteer must be able to understand and be able to explain the rules and examples for Flag Display given in the text for this station.



Next Page: Text for Flag Display 2

# Flag Display

- The U.S. flag should be a distinctive feature of a ceremony for unveiling a statue or monument, but the Flag should never be used as a cover for the statue or monument.
- On Memorial Day, the flag should be displayed at half staff until noon only, when it should be raised to full staff.
  - By order of the President, the Flag shall be flown at half-staff upon the death of principle figures of the U.S. Government and the Governor of a State, territory, or possession, as a mark of respect to their memory.
- When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union should be the uppermost and to the flag's own right, that is, to the observer's left. When displayed in a window, the flag should be displayed the same way, with the union to the left of the person(s) observing outside.

## **Poster 7**

## **Special Days**

Purpose: To teach visitors the days on which a flag should always be flown, dates and names of national holiday.

Volunteer Job: Volunteer is optional for this station. The text is self-explanatory. If a volunteer is used, he/she should be familiar with all the special days in the text.



Next Page: Text for Special Days

# The Flag Should Be Displayed Every Day, Especially...

<b><i>Special Day</i></b>	<b><i>Date</i></b>
New Year's Day	January 1
Inauguration Day	January 20
Lincoln's Birthday	February 12
Washington's Birthday	3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon. February
Easter Sunday	Variable
Mother's Day	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in May
Armed Forces Day	3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday in May
Memorial Day (half staff until noon)	Last Monday May
Flag Day	June 14
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday in Sept.
Constitution Day	September 17
Columbus Day	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday in Oct.
Navy Day	October 27
Veteran's Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday in Nov
Christmas Day	December 25

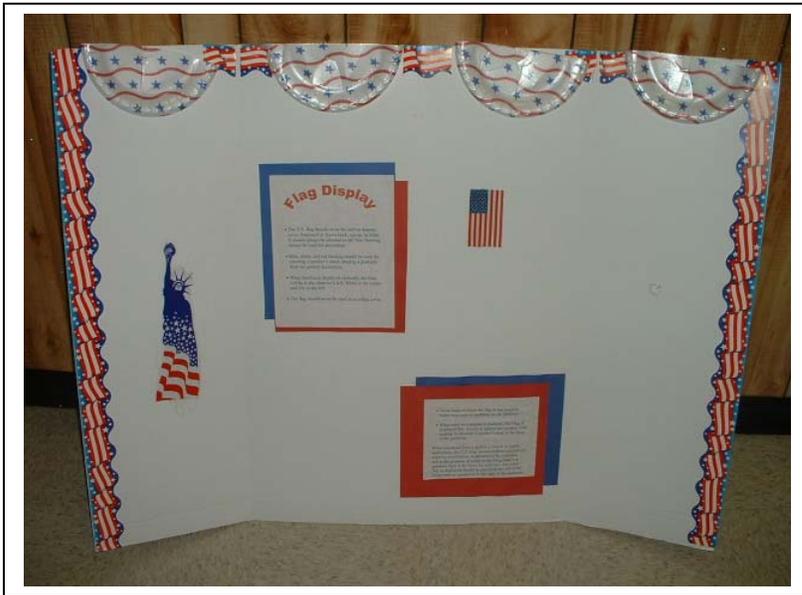
Any other day proclaimed by the President of the United States.

## Poster 8

## Flag Display 3

Purpose: To teach visitors proper ways to display the United States Flag in for most scenarios they will encounter

Volunteer Job: 1 volunteer must be able to understand and be able to explain the rules and examples for Flag Display given in the text for this station.



Next Page: Text for Flag Display 3

# Flag Display

- The U.S. flag should never be used as drapery, never festooned or drawn back, nor up, in folds. It should always be allowed to fall free. Bunting should be used for decoration.
- Blue, white, and red bunting should be used for covering a speaker's stand, draping a platform front for general decoration.
- When bunting is displayed vertically, the blue will be to the observer's left, White in the center and red on the left.
- The flag should never be used as a ceiling cover.
- Never hang or drape the flag in any position below any seats or anything on ant platform.
- When used on a speaker's platform, the Flag, if displayed flat, should be behind the speaker. Use bunting to decorate a speaker's desk or the front of the platform.
- When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, the U.S. Flag should hold the position of superior prominence, in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor at the clergyman's or speakers right as he faces the audience. Any other flag so displayed should be placed on the left of the clergy man or speaker or to the right of the audience.

Purpose: To teach visitors proper ways to display the United States Flag in for most scenarios they will encounter

Volunteer Job: 1 volunteer must be able to understand and be able to explain the rules and examples for Flag Display given in the text for this station.



Next Page: Text for Flag Display 4

# Flag Display

- When flags of two or more nations are displayed, they should be flown from separate staffs of the same height and the flags should be approximately equal in size.
- When flags or pennants of states, cities, or societies are flown on the same halyard with the flag of the United States, the latter should always be at the peak. When flown from adjacent staffs, the U.S. flag should be hoisted first and lowered last.
- No other flag or pennant should be placed above or (if on the same level) to the right of the U.S. Flag except during church services conducted by naval chaplains at sea, when the church flag may be flown above the U.S. Flag during church services for navy personnel.
- When displayed with another flag, the U.S. flag should be to its own right, or the observer's left, with the staff over that of the other flag.
- The U.S. flag should not be dipped to any person or thing. Regimental colors, state, city, organizational or other flags are dipped as a mark of honor.
  - NOTE: There is one exception to the above rule: U.S. Navy vessels that have received the salute from vessels of other nations of the national flag dipping must return the salute in the same fashion.
- Never display "Old Glory" upside down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to "life or property."

## Poster 10

## How Raise and Lower the Flag

Purpose: To teach visitors how to properly raise and lower an American Flag on a flagpole.

Volunteer Job: Two volunteers should use the text and other materials, such as the VFW pamphlet “



Next Page: Text for How to Raise/Lower a Flag

## How to Raise and Lower The Flag

- The Flag should be hoisted briskly and lowered slowly and ceremoniously
  1. First, if the Flag is folded, unfold only the triangular folds (you don't even have to unfold it all the way), taking care not to let the flag touch the ground.
  2. Next, hook the grommet on the union to the top hook on the lanyard (or rope.)
  3. Gently hoist the flag about one foot, the flag should unfurl and also be high enough that it won't touch the ground (still have someone hold it).
  4. Next, briskly hoist the flag until it reaches the top of the staff.
  5. Wrap the Lanyard.

Purpose: To demonstrate to visitors how to properly retire American flags ceremoniously

Volunteer Job: Three volunteers are needed for this station. Descriptions of what they do are listed below.

How to Retire Flags: To retire one flag, start a fire using charcoal in a container, preferably some kind of metal barrel (for Post 1503's event, one 55-gallon drum was cut in half lengthwise and each half was raised off the ground. Fires were set using charcoal in each of these halves and flags were retired on those fires). Next, cut the Flag into its separate parts, meaning cut off each individual stripe from the flag, but cut the blue Union as a whole, not as individual stars. You should have six white stripes, and seven red stripes. One volunteer holds the red stripes, another holds the white stripes and the union. The remaining volunteer reads the phrases from the attached text as the stripes are placed carefully onto the fire (begin with red stripes and alternate by color, the Union should be burned last). To retire many flags at once, you should retire at a minimum the first and last flags using the aforementioned ceremony. Other flags can simply be placed on the fire, but with extreme reverence for what the flag stands for.



Next Page: Retirement ceremony text.

*READINGS as the Stripes are put on .the flames:*

*FIRST STRIPE; The 13 stripes stand for the original 13 colonies which are:*

*Massachusetts, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York.*

*Connecticut, Rhode Island. New Hampshire. Delaware.*

*Maryland. North Carolina. South Carolina, Georgia, and*

*New Jersey.*

*SECOND STRIPE; The white stands for purity*

*THIRD STRIPE; The red stands for courage*

*FOURTH STRIPE; "Give me liberty or give me death"*

*FIFTH STRIPE; "One if by land, two if the sea"*

*SIXTH STRIPE; We the people 'of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union" establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the Common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America.*

*SEVENTH STRIPE; We hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal. They are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. Among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*

*EIGHTH STRIPE; Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof*

*NINTH STRIPE; Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or press.*

*TENTH STRIPE; "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth to this continent a new nation. "*

*ELEVENTH STRIPE; The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the, United States or by any state on account of sex.*

*TFVELFTH STRIPE; "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."*

*THIRTEENTH STRIPE; "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."*