

Title:

Hooray for Flag Day - why do we celebrate it on June 14?

Word Count:

493

Summary:

On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress passed the first Flag Act that stated that the new flag of the United States be made of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen white stars in a blue field. This became Flag Day as we now celebrate it.

Keywords:

flag hanger, rebel flag, flag display case

Article Body:

What are the important dates in American Flag history?

- January 1, 1776, George Washington ordered the Grand Union flag hoisted above his base at Prospect Hill. It had 13 alternating red and white stripes and the British Union Jack (no stars) in the upper left-hand corner.
- May of 1776, Betsy Ross sewed the first American flag.
- June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress passed the first Flag Act that stated that the new flag of the United States be made of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen white stars in a blue field.
- Between 1777 and 1960, Congress passed several acts that changed the shape, design and arrangement of the flag and allowed for additional stars and stripes to be added to reflect the admission of each new state.
- May of 1795, 2 additional stars and stripes were added for the states of Vermont & Kentucky for a total of 15 stripes and 15 stars. This is the only American flag that began with a white stripe at the top of the flag.
- April 4, 1818, this act provided for 13 stripes and one star for each state, to be added to the flag on the 4th of July following the admission of each new state, signed by President Monroe. The following states were added on July 4th for the following years:

- o 1818 - Tennessee, Ohio, Louisiana, Indiana, Mississippi, 20

total stars

- o 1819 - Illinois, 21 total stars
- o 1820 - Alabama, Maine, 23 total stars
- o 1822 - Missouri, 24 total stars
- o 1836 - Arkansas, 25 total stars
- o 1837 - Michigan, 26 total stars
- o 1845 - Florida, 27 total stars
- o 1846 - Texas, 28 total stars
- o 1847 - Iowa, 29 total stars
- o 1848 - Wisconsin, 30 total stars
- o 1851 - California, 31 total stars
- o 1858 - Minnesota, 32 total stars
- o 1859 - Oregon, 33 total stars
- o 1861 - Kansas, 34 total stars
- o 1863 - West Virginia, 35 total stars
- o 1865 - Nevada, 36 total stars
- o 1867 - Nebraska, 37 total stars
- o 1877 - Colorado, 38 total stars
- o 1890 - North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Washington, Idaho, 43 total stars
- o 1891 - Wyoming, 44 total stars
- o 1896 - Utah, 45 total stars
- o 1908 - Oklahoma, 46 total stars
- o 1912 - New Mexico, Arizona, 48 total stars

- June 24, 1912, by order of President Taft, proportions of the flag were established that provided for arrangement of the stars in six horizontal rows of eight each, a single point of each star to be upward.

- January 3, 1959, by order of President Eisenhower, the flag arrangement was changed to stars in seven rows of seven stars each, staggered horizontally and vertically. This arrangement allowed for Alaska, admitted on July 4, 1959, 49 total stars.

- August 21, 1959, by order of President Eisenhower, the flag arrangement was changed to stars in nine rows of stars staggered horizontally and eleven rows of stars staggered vertically. This arrangement allowed for Hawaii, admitted on July 4, 1960, 50 total stars.

What do the colors of red, white and blue stand for on the American Flag?

Today the flag consists of thirteen horizontal stripes, seven red alternating with 6 white. The stripes represent the original 13 colonies, the stars

represent the 50 states of the Union. The colors of the flag are meaningful as well: Red stands for Hardiness and Valor, White stands for Purity and Innocence and Blue stands for Vigilance, Perseverance and Justice.