

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

Proclamation 5204 of May 31, 1984

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.

36 USC 157.

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.

36 USC 157a.

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. 36 USC 157b.

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

Proclamation 5205 of May 31, 1984

Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, 1984

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

September 17, 1984, marks the 197th anniversary of the signing of our Constitution. As the bicentennial of this dynamic and timeless document nears, all Americans should become reacquainted with its role as our great country's guiding beacon. With this document as its blueprint, this Nation has become the finest example in history of the principle of government by law, in which every individual is guaranteed certain inalienable rights. Exemplifying this precept, a newly naturalized citizen once wrote:

"After our arrival here we very soon realized that the U.S.A. is really a wonderland: It is the first one among the few countries in the world where liberty, justice, democracy, and happiness are not only not empty slogans, but real benefits for all; where the Constitution is still as valid as it was in those days when the people of the U.S.A. ordained and established it in order to secure the blessings of liberty for themselves and their posterity. It was just natural that our next wish could not be other than to become a citizen of this wonderful country.

"And now, a few minutes after we solemnly pledged allegiance to the flag of the United States, we have just one more wish, that may God give us a long life, and ability to help at our very best in holding this flag straight up, flying as free and clear forever as it has been doing from the beginning of this country."

The Constitution provides a framework for our continuous striving to make a better America. It provides the basic balance between each branch of government, limits the power of that government, and guarantees to each of us as citizens our most basic rights. The Constitution, however, is only the outline of our system of government. It is through each individual citizen living out the ideals of the Constitution that we reach for a full expression of those ideals. Therefore, while we celebrate Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, let us rededicate ourselves to a full realization of the potential of the great country which the Founding Fathers struggled to create more than two hundred years ago.

Once each year, on September 17, all four pages of the original signed Constitution are placed on public exhibition in the Rotunda of the National Archives building in Washington, D.C. I encourage all Americans to take the opportunity to view this document, which embodies our national commitment to freedom.

In recognition of the importance of our Constitution and the role of our citizenry in shaping our government, the Congress, by joint resolution of February 29, 1952 (36 U.S.C. 153), designated September 17th of each year as Citizenship Day and authorized the President to issue annually a proclamation