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Flag Day and National Flag Week, 1981

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes as our national flag. Ever since, the American flag has embodied the continuity of our original ideals and principles.

The stars in varying constellations and the stripes of alternating red and white have accompanied Americans from the Marne to the Moon. The flag was flying when the British surrendered to General Washington at Yorktown, when Admiral Peary reached the North Pole, and when our soldiers battled at Iwo Jima. Recently, we saw the American flag proudly on the side of the Space Shuttle Columbia as she circled the Earth.

Yet the flag flies not only over the great events of our history but also over the more personal moments of American life. Who cannot recall the vivid images of children at parades waving small flags in patriotic delight, of immigrants solemnly reciting the oath of allegiance before a flag in a judge's chambers, or of a grieving military widow clutching the folded Stars and Stripes?

The American clergyman Henry Ward Beecher conveyed the full meaning of the flag when he wrote, "A thoughtful mind, when it sees a nation's flag, sees not the flag only, but the nation itself; and whatever may be its symbols, its insignia, he reads chiefly in the flag the government, the principles, the truths, the history which belongs to the nation that sets it forth."

When we honor our flag we honor what we stand for as a Nation—freedom, equality, justice, and hope. Flag Day and National Flag Week are our traditional means to commemorate the Nation's beliefs as symbolized by the Stars and Stripes. In more recent times, the twenty-one days from Flag Day through Independence Day have been set aside as a period to honor America during which Americans reflect upon the Nation's character, heritage, fortifying principles and future well-being.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week beginning Sunday, June 14, 1981, as National Flag Week, and I direct the appropriate officials of the Government to display the flag on all Government buildings during that week. I urge all Americans to observe Flag Day, June 14, and National Flag Week by flying the Stars and Stripes from their porches, windows and storefronts. I further urge the people of America to observe Honor America Days, from Flag Day through Independence Day, by appropriate activities which reflect upon our good fortune at being Americans.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 1st day of June, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifth.

Ronald Reagan