

Commander's Call Topics



June 12, 2015

“Then, in that hour of deliverance, my heart spoke.
Does not such a country and such defenders of their country,
deserve a song?”

Francis Scott Key (1779-1843)
American lawyer, author and amateur poet
Author of “The Star Spangled Banner”

The History of Flag Day
explains
why June 14th
is the observance of
“the birthday of Old Glory”

Flag folding has been and will continue to be part of Air Force ceremonies. Below are two examples of a variety of scripts available. The first example is the version that should be used for official ceremonies. The second example may be used at personal ceremonies as long as the participants are volunteers. For personal ceremonies, script preference is at the discretion of the individual being honored.

Flag Folding Ceremony Air Force Script

The following script should be used in official ceremonies that don't have a personal preference element. It can be found in Air Force Pamphlet 36-2241, Figure 8.18.

For more than 200 years, the American flag has been the symbol of our nation's unity, as well as a source of pride and inspiration for millions of citizens.

Born on June 14, 1777, the Second Continental Congress determined that the flag of the United States be 13 stripes, alternating between 7 red and 6 white; and that the union be 13 stars, white in a blue field representing a new constellation.

Between 1777 and 1960, the shape and design of the flag evolved into the flag presented before you today. The 13 horizontal stripes represent the original 13 colonies, while the stars represent the 50 states of the Union. The colors of the flag are symbolic as well; red symbolizes hardiness and valor; white signifies purity and innocence; and blue represents vigilance, perseverance, and justice. (1)

Traditionally a symbol of liberty, the American flag has carried the message of freedom and inspired Americans, both at home and abroad.

In 1814, Francis Scott Key was so moved at seeing the Stars and Stripes waving after the British shelling of Baltimore's Fort McHenry that he wrote the words to The Star Spangled Banner. (2)

In 1892, the flag inspired Francis Bellamy to write the Pledge of Allegiance -- our most famous flag salute and patriotic oath. (2)

Flag-folding Procedure is Uniquely American and Uncommonly Symbolic

Ask anyone: When was the first time you saw a traditional flag-folding? Almost everyone can recall the ceremony when they first saw the traditional lengthwise-to-triangle ritual. Some have participated -- as a scout, a member of the military, or as part of an honor guard -- in folding the flag, first lengthwise (so that the union of stars in the blue field remains outward and in full view) and then corner-to-edge, starting at the striped corner to form a triangle, continuing over and over until only the blue field is showing.

The United States is the only country that folds their flag in this manner, and the source and symbolism of the flag-folding procedure is largely unknown. However, according to the American Legion, some attribute it to an Air Force chaplain stationed at the United States Air Force Academy. What makes this a bit more believable than an urban legend is that the symbolism attached to each fold:

The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life.

The second symbolizes our belief in eternal life.

The third is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks.

The fourth represents our weaker nature; as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace, as well as in times of war.

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In July 1969, the American flag was flown in space when Neil Armstrong planted it on the surface of the moon. (2)

Today, our flag flies on constellations of Air Force satellites that circle our globe, and on the fin flash of our aircraft in harm's way in every corner of the world. Indeed, it flies in the heart of every Airman who serves our great nation. The sun never sets on our United States Air Force, nor on the flag we so proudly cherish. (2)

Since 1776, no generation of Americans has been spared the responsibility of defending freedom ... Today's Airmen remain committed to preserving the freedom that others won for us for generations to come.

By displaying the flag and giving it a distinctive fold, we show respect to the flag and express our gratitude to those individuals who fought and continue to fight for freedom, at home and abroad. Since the dawn of the 20th century, Airmen have proudly flown the flag in every major conflict on lands and skies around the world. It is their responsibility ... our responsibility ... to continue to protect and preserve the rights, privileges, and freedoms that we, as Americans, enjoy today.

The United States flag represents who we are. It stands for the freedom we all share and the pride and patriotism we feel for our country. We cherish its legacy as a beacon of hope to one and all. Long may it wave.

Legend:

(1) From a report Secretary of Congress Robert Thompson wrote to define the Seal of our Nation (1777).

(2) Based upon historical facts.

The fifth fold is a tribute to our country. 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 sixth fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag.

The seventh fold is a tribute to our armed forces.

The eighth 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, and to honor our mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.

The ninth fold is a tribute to womanhood, for it has been through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that the characters of the men and women who have made this country great have been molded.

The 10th fold is a tribute to fathers who have given their sons and daughters for the defense of our country.

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

The 12th fold, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit.

When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost, reminding us of our national motto, "In God We Trust."

► CURRENT ISSUES

Leaders from 11 nations meet to discuss Arctic security

The Icelandic Coast Guard hosted military leaders from across Europe and North America during the annual Arctic Security Forces Roundtable to discuss security issues within the Arctic Circle.

► ENVIRONMENT, SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY

Gaming research laboratory debuts new website

Air Force STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) educational outreach through gaming is an investment in the future workforce and introduces young people to the Air Force, creating a pipeline for recruitment of potential scientists and engineers.

► PERSONNEL ISSUES

Chief EPRs to be accomplished on new Form 912

A separate evaluation form for chief master sergeants in the Air Force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard is now part of the ongoing Air Force Enlisted Evaluation System and promotion process changes.

► TRENDING ...

"The Air Force Medical Service provides trusted care, anywhere," said Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Mark A. Ediger, who was promoted to Air Force Surgeon General. "Trust can't be assumed, it is earned every day. I am privileged and honored to serve and I pledge my continued commitment to the health and resilience of our Airmen and their families."

► RESOURCES

Website access to the following resources can be gained by clicking on the name.

[AF.mil](#)

[Airman magazine](#)

[MilitaryOneSource/HomeFront](#)

[Air Force Personnel Center](#)

[Air Reserve Personnel Center](#)

[Department of Defense News](#)

[Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

[TRICARE](#)

[U.S. Government Website](#)

[Air Force Association Scholarships](#)

[Air Force Safety Center](#)

[Civil Service Employment Opportunities](#)

[NAF Employment Opportunities](#)

[Air Force Bands/Outreach](#)

► THIS WEEK IN AIR FORCE HISTORY

June 11, 1993 - AC-130 Spectre gunships joined a UN raid on Somali warlord forces to retaliate for a June 5 attack on UN forces in Mogadishu.

June 12, 1973 - Early Warning Space Satellites joined the aerospace surveillance system. Fourteenth Air Force operated the satellite system that augmented the ground-based, missile-launch detection sensors.

June 13, 1983 - Pioneer 10 became the first spacecraft to leave the solar system.

June 14, 1957 - In flying an Aero Commander 680 to 30,300 feet at Tulsa, Oklahoma, aviatrix Jerrie Cobb set a world altitude record for light two-engine planes.

June 15, 1944 - Brig. Gen. LaVerne G. Saunders, XX Bomber Command, led the first B-29 strike against Japan. In that raid, 47 B-29s flew from bases in Chengtu, China, to attack steel mills at Yawata on Kyushu.

June 16, 1959 - The first F-105s arrived at Seymour Johnson AFB.

June 17, 1997 - A C-5A Galaxy from the 436th AW at Dover AFB flew from Andrews AFB to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on the 500th humanitarian airlift mission supporting Operation Provide Hope.

Chances are, if you're one of the more than 104,000 civilians who work for the Air Force, your personnel data was compromised in the cybersecurity incident at the Office of Personnel Management earlier this month. You can find the next steps [here](#).

For more information on Air Force heritage, visit <http://www.airforcehistory.af.mil>

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