



THE AMERICAN LEGION  
*Veterans Strengthening America*

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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**Suggested Speech  
For Flag Day  
2026**

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Ladies and gentlemen, fellow Legionnaires, honored guests, and members of our community:

Some of you may ask, “why are we here? Why does The American Legion place such an emphasis on a day that is not an official federal or even a state holiday in most places?”

The answer is simple. Respect. Since the founding of our organization, The American Legion has recognized that the Flag of the United States is our nation’s most enduring symbol of freedom, sacrifice and unity.

We gather here not only to honor the flag adopted by the Continental Congress on June 14, 1777, but also to rally our communities in a powerful expression of patriotism as we approach America's 250th birthday on July 4th.

Today, we pause to reflect on what Old Glory truly represents. It is more than fabric and colors; it is a **badge of honor**, as one of our own recently described it—a reminder of the values and traditions that have bound us as one nation for two-and-a-half centuries. The red stripes stand for the courage and bloodshed of those who fought for liberty, from the Revolution through our current wars and conflicts. The white stripes symbolize purity and innocence in our ideals. The blue field and fifty stars represent vigilance, perseverance, and the unbreakable union of our states.

These are values that we believe are worth celebrating. We honor the cloth embodying these values by teaching flag etiquette in our schools and communities. American Legion posts in communities throughout the country and overseas conduct dignified flag retirement ceremonies to ensure unserviceable flags are disposed of with the reverence they deserve—often on this very day.

We stand against desecration and work tirelessly to protect the flag's sanctity. And in this semi quincentennial year, our role has never been more vital.

Just months ago, at The American Legion's annual legislative conference, National Commander Dan K. Wiley and America250 Executive Vice President Jennifer Condon signed a memorandum of understanding, making the Legion an official national resource partner for **America250**. This partnership builds on the work our posts and departments have already done locally to promote the nation's 250th anniversary.

Two pathways from America250 align perfectly with our mission:

First, America Gives, an initiative which encourages a record-setting year of volunteer service. Since its launch on January 1<sup>st</sup>, two million hours have been logged nationwide.

Our American Legion Family USA250 Challenge—which calls on members to complete 250 or more acts of fitness, wellness, and community service in honor of this milestone—counts toward that total. These hours support our Veterans & Children Foundation and can position posts, units, and individuals for a share of \$1 million in charitable donations. Service is the essence of the American spirit embodied by veterans, public servants, and community volunteers every day.

The second pathway is especially fitting for Flag Day, America Waves. This initiative calls on all Americans to raise the U.S. flag in unison on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, creating a "sea of red, white, and blue" from town squares to the National Mall, from neighborhoods to stadiums. Imagine millions of Americans of all generations lifting the same symbol at the same moment in a powerful wave of national pride.

Our American Legion Riders are leading the way with Sojourn 250. They will be escorting a special U.S. flag that has traveled the world and has flown at every overseas military cemetery, visited all U.S. territories, soared over the Super Bowl in a military jet, and touched every state. Next month, on Independence Day, an entourage of 250 Riders will carry it from Pittsburgh to Washington, D.C., culminating its epic journey. This flag will remind all who see it that our service and sacrifice extend far beyond our borders.

Closer to home, Legionnaires like Jeffrey Unger in Panama City, Florida, are exceeding expectations. His goal for the USA250 Challenge was to fly flags at 250 homes in his community. He has already surpassed that—437 homes in his neighborhood were flying Old Glory proudly every day as of early spring. Veterans and neighbors have joined in, installing and maintaining flags, turning "Villa Row" into a patriotic landmark that impresses locals as well as visiting busses full of tourists. Unger's story shows that one person—and one American Legion post—can spark a contagious wave of patriotism.

We can all contribute toward making Flag Day a launchpad for greater efforts. Display your flags high and proud. Rally your neighbors, schools, and businesses to join America Waves on Independence Day. Log your service hours on the America250 website and through our USA250 Challenge. Share your events and photos on Legiontown.org under the America250 category.

When you honor our flag, you are honoring a symbol that has been an inspiration not just to America but for all who love freedom and excellence. It is the same banner that was raised so bravely by the Marines at Iwo Jima. The same cloth that was planted on the moon by our Apollo astronauts in 1969. And is the same Stars & Stripes that gave us all great comfort when it was displayed by firefighters in the rubble of the World Trade Center in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

Seventy-seven years ago, a proud and active Legionnaire by the name of Harry S. Truman signed an act of Congress which designates June 14<sup>th</sup> as Flag Day. It also happens to be the birthday of the greatest Army on earth. This is not a coincidence. Those who defend our freedom can celebrate the symbol of that same freedom on the very same day.

In a few weeks, we will celebrate not just 250 years of history, but a renewed commitment to the next 250 years of service, sacrifice, and pride. As Commander Wiley said, you cannot celebrate a great nation without celebrating its greatest heroes—our veterans.

So today, let us renew our pledge to honor the flag, to serve our communities, and to inspire future generations with the spirit that has carried America forward since 1776.

God bless the flag of the United States of America,  
God bless our veterans, and God bless the United States  
of America!

Thank you.