



THE AMERICAN LEGION
Veterans Strengthening America

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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**Suggested Speech
For Flag Day
2025**

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

Today we honor one of our nation's most powerful and enduring symbols — our American flag.

Each year, on June 14th, we pause to observe **Flag Day**, commemorating the day in 1777 when the Continental Congress officially adopted the Stars and Stripes as the flag of the United States. More than just a piece of fabric, our flag stands for something far greater — it represents the ideals upon which this great nation was built: **liberty, unity, sacrifice and hope.**

These ideals were certainly at the forefront of President Truman's thoughts as he stood at attention watching the U.S. Flag being raised in Berlin, Germany, on July 20, 1945. He wasn't observing the hoisting of just any flag, however. It was the same banner that flew over the U.S. Capitol on the day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

The war in Europe was now over and Truman committed that the same flag would soon be raised over Tokyo.

“We are here today to raise the flag of victory over the capital of our greatest adversary,” Truman said. “In doing that, we must remember that in raising that flag we are raising it in the name of the people of the United States, who are looking forward to a better world... a world in which all the people will have an opportunity to enjoy the good things in life, and not just a few at the top. Let us not forget that we are fighting for peace, and for the welfare of mankind.” – unquote.

True to his word, that same flag would be hoisted high once again on the mast of the USS Missouri in Tokyo Harbor on September 2, 1945, while the Japanese signed the surrender of World War II.

It was one of many iconic flags in American history. There was the flag placed by Marines under fire at Mount Suribachi during the Battle of Iwo Jima.

On display at the Smithsonian is the battle-torn flag from the Revolution which inspired Francis Scott Key to pen the poem, “The Defense of Fort McHenry,” – also known by its more famous title, “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

Americans were deeply moved in 1963 when 3-year-old John F. Kennedy, Jr., saluted the flag-draped casket of his World War II veteran father. It is not uncommon for burial flags to become the most treasured possession of a veteran’s next-of-kin, often passed down to succeeding generations as symbols of the loved one’s service and sacrifice.

In 1969, the U.S. Flag travelled further than ever before when it was placed on the surface of the moon by astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin. It not only

became a symbol of the world's greatest nation but also remarkable achievement.

It is during tragic and challenging times that people are most inspired by the sight of Old Glory. Who can forget the image of three New York City firefighters raising the flag in the middle of the rubble and ash of the World Trade Center after the 9/11 attacks?

As members of **The American Legion**, we have sworn to uphold and promote the values that our flag represents. We advocate for our veterans, support our communities, and educate our youth — because service does not end when the uniform comes off. It continues in how we live, how we remember and how we lead.

The red in our flag represents valor and sacrifice — the courage of those who fought for our nation's freedom. The white stands for purity and innocence — the noble ideals of democracy and justice. And the blue represents

vigilance, perseverance, and justice — virtues we strive to nurture every day.

Let us also take a moment to recognize that Flag Day is not just about remembering — it's also about **renewing**. It's about renewing our commitment to unity in a time that often feels divided. It's about teaching the next generation not just how to fold the flag, but how to **live by the principles** it represents.

In 2021, Donald E. Corson, Senior, of Newark Valley, New York, submitted an essay to The American Legion's national Legiontown website. He stated, and I quote:

“As a retired sailor AND soldier, so very grateful for the freedoms, liberties, opportunities and privileges this country offers and affords every citizen, I proudly fly my flag every day for the entire world to see. I have traveled the world and seen the way the rest of it lives. And NOWHERE have I seen the beauty, and opportunity to succeed or the benefits America offers. From the farmers'

hayfields to the covered bridges, to the Golden Gate Bridge, America is truly the land of opportunity for anyone who chooses to participate. I LOVE this, the greatest country in the world, and I am PROUD and THANKFUL to be part of it and able to fly the symbol that represents it.

– unquote.

As we look upon our flag today, whether it waves in the wind or hangs silently in ceremony, may we be reminded that freedom is not free. It was earned with sweat, defended with blood, and preserved through the collective will of a people determined never to take it for granted.

This Flag Day is particularly significant, as it is also observed on the 250th anniversary of the United States Army. A flag is only as strong as the people it represents and our Army has bravely protected and defended the world's greatest force for freedom.

Let us resolve to pass this legacy on to those who will come after us — the next generation of soldiers, mothers, fathers, and leaders — so that they may carry the flag with the same pride and devotion with which we do today.

Thank you for being here. God bless you; God bless the flag of the United States and God bless America!

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