

In the United States, **Flag Day** is celebrated on June 14. It commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States on June 14, 1777 by resolution of the Second Continental Congress. The United States Army also celebrates the U.S. Army birthday on this date.

When the American Revolution broke out in 1775, the colonists weren't fighting united under a single flag. Instead, most regiments participating in the war for independence against the British fought under their own flags. In June of 1775, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia to create the Continental Army—a unified colonial fighting force—with the hopes of more organized battle against its colonial oppressors. This led to the creation of what was, essentially, the first "American" flag, the Continental Colors.

For some, this flag, which was comprised of 13 red and white alternating stripes and a Union Jack in the corner, was too similar to that of the British. George Washington soon realized that flying a flag that was even remotely close to the British flag was not a great confidence-builder for the revolutionary effort, so he turned his efforts towards creating a new symbol of freedom for the soon-to-be fledgling nation.

Bernard Cigrand, a small-town Wisconsin teacher, originated the idea for an annual flag day, to be celebrated across the country every June 14. In 1885, Cigrand led his school in the first formal observance of the holiday.

In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation that officially established June 14 as Flag Day. On June 14, 1937, Pennsylvania became the first U.S. state to celebrate Flag Day as a state holiday, beginning in the town of Rennerdale. New York Statutes designate the second Sunday in June as Flag Day, a state holiday.

In the 1950s, when it seemed certain that Alaska would be admitted to the Union, designers began retooling the American flag to add a 49th star to the existing 48. Meanwhile, a 17-year-old Ohioan named Bob Heft student borrowed his mother's sewing machine, disassembled his family's 48-star flag and stitched on 50 stars in a proportional pattern. He handed in his creation to his history teacher for a class project, explaining that he expected Hawaii would soon achieve statehood as well. Heft also sent the flag to his congressman, Walter Moeller, who presented it to President Eisenhower after both new states joined the Union. Eisenhower selected Heft's design, and on July 4, 1960, the president and the high school student stood together as the 50-star flag was raised for the first time. Heft's teacher promptly changed his grade from a B- to an A!!