

## CELEBRATING FLAG DAY

- Set little flags around the chapter room (if possible, at each station)
- Ask members to wear patriotic attire
- Have a drawing at the end of the meeting for one full size flag to be flown at home

### Evolution of the United States Flag

- On **June 14, 1777**, in order to establish an official flag for the new nation, the Continental Congress passed the **first Flag Act**: "Resolved, That the flag of the United States be made of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation."
- Act of April 4, 1818 - provided for 13 stripes and one star for each state, to be added to the flag on the 4th of July following the admission of each new state, signed by President Monroe.
- Executive Order of President Eisenhower dated January 3, 1959 - provided for the arrangement of the stars in seven rows of seven stars each, staggered horizontally and vertically. (Alaska became a state)
- Executive Order of President Eisenhower dated August 21, 1959 - provided for the arrangement of the stars in nine rows of stars staggered horizontally and eleven rows of stars staggered vertically. (Hawaii became a state)

### Four Special Days

Each year, Americans can enjoy four special days set aside specifically to honor our veterans and comrades in arms. These four days are intended to, in some small way, express the sentiments of a grateful nation.

I hope each of us were able to honor all our heroes last November 11<sup>th</sup> on Veterans Day. But what about the other days?

Beginning during the Civil War, and originally called Decoration Day, this special day, now called Memorial Day (last Monday in May), was set aside to recognize the nation's war dead by decorating their graves.

And what about Armed Forces Day? Who even knows what that is all about anyway? In 1950, President Harry S. Truman spearheaded efforts to set aside a single holiday when Americans could gather and collectively thank

our military personnel for their service to the nation. Armed Forces Day is the third Saturday in May (May is Military Appreciation Month).

Then there is that fourth special day, June 14th, set aside to honor another veteran - a faithful comrade who has accompanied each of us - every service member before us, to battlefields and stations in virtually every corner of the globe. Of course, I am speaking of Old Glory, our flag. No doubt each of us can recall an example of our friend being present which might evoke strong emotions in each of us - perhaps in a parade, at a funeral for a loved one, on the battlefield, on the tail of a plane, or over an embassy in a foreign land.

### **The History of Flag Day**

The Fourth of July was traditionally celebrated as America's birthday, but the idea of an annual day specifically celebrating the Flag is believed to have first originated in 1885. BJ Cigrand, a schoolteacher, arranged for the pupils in the Fredonia, Wisconsin Public School, District 6, to observe June 14 (the 108th anniversary of the official adoption of The Stars and Stripes) as 'Flag Birthday'.

Inspired by three decades of state and local celebrations, Flag Day - the anniversary of the Flag Resolution of 1777 - was officially *established* by the Proclamation of President Woodrow Wilson on May 30th, 1916. While Flag Day was celebrated in various communities for years after Wilson's proclamation, it was not until August 3rd, 1949, that President Truman signed an Act of Congress designating **June 14th** of each year as **National Flag Day**.

## Excerpts from: "I am the Flag"

by Ruth Apperson Rous

I embody American freedom: freedom of speech, religion, assembly, the press, and the sanctity of the home.

I am a living symbol of my nation's law: the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights.

I voice Abraham Lincoln's philosophy: "A government of the people, by the people, for the people."

Dedicate your lives to those principles for which I stand: "One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

God grant that I may spend eternity in my "land of the free and the home of the brave" and that I shall ever be known as "Old Glory," the flag of the United States of America.

**ALL SING** (print out words for all present)

### "Grand Old Flag" Refrain

You're a grand old flag  
You're a high-flying flag  
And forever in peace may you wave  
You're the emblem of  
The land I love  
The home of the free and the brave  
Ev'ry heart beats true  
Under red, white and blue  
Where there's never a boast or brag  
But should old acquaintance be forgot  
Keep your eye on the grand old flag

DRAWING FOR FLAG