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PHILADELPHIA'S STRIPES AND STARS FESTIVAL COMMEMORATES JOINT BIRTHDAYS OF THE U.S. FLAG AND ARMY

Daylong festival to take place on Friday, June 14, 2019, in Philadelphia's Historic District

Philadelphia, PA (May 29, 2019) – From star-spangled banners to five-star generals, Philadelphia celebrates the shared birthday of two of our country's greatest institutions—the American flag and the U.S. Army. This year's **Stripes and Stars Festival** commemorates the U.S. Army's 244th anniversary and the American flag's 242nd birthday. The festival will take place on **Friday, June 14, 2019**, at locations throughout Independence National Historical Park and Historic Philadelphia, including Independence Hall, the Betsy Ross House, Christ Church Burial Ground, and the National Constitution Center. Events include flag raising ceremonies, a patriotic parade, a swearing-in of Army recruits, a dramatic skydiving performance, displays and demonstrations of U.S. Army equipment, giant flag folding activities, performances by the United States Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps, and a moving naturalization ceremony. Visitors can also participate in special Soldier Talks, in partnership with the "Meet Your Army" Campaign, at the National Constitution Center.

Most Stripes and Stars Festival events are free and open to the public, unless otherwise noted below.

Special Events

13-Star Flag Raising

10 a.m., *Betsy Ross House, 239 Arch Street*

To kick off the day's events, the 13-star flag raising in the Betsy Ross House courtyard will also include a

reading of a mayoral proclamation recognizing the Betsy Ross House as the site of the city of Philadelphia's official Flag Day celebration.

50-Star Flag Raising and Grand Parade

10:30 a.m., *National Constitution Center Front Lawn, 525 Arch Street*

Following a moving 50-star flag raising ceremony, troops—past and present—will join a patriotic parade to Independence Hall. This year, during the parade, the Stripes and Stars Festival will pay tribute to late co-founder, James “Jim” Donahue, who passed away unexpectedly this past year. Jim worked for the Department of the Army and served as president of the William Penn Chapter of the AUSA. He was a dedicated and enthusiastic member of the Stripes and Stars planning committee, and will be greatly missed. In honor of his years of service, Jim has been posthumously named this year's Honorary Parade Marshal.

Stripes and Stars Festival Opening Ceremony

11 a.m., *Independence Hall, 520 Chestnut Street*

Independence National Historical Park's Deputy Superintendent **Patrick Suddath** will provide remarks followed by the raising of the Philadelphia Flag Day Association's specially-commissioned 13-star flag. After a reading of the Continental Congress resolution establishing the U.S. Army, Major General **Mark Palzer**, U.S. Army, will deliver a keynote address to mark the Army's birthday and will administer the enlistment oath to assembled Army recruits. Philadelphia Councilman At-Large **David Oh** will also present a special citation to veterans of the 75th Ranger Regiment. Observing a long-standing tradition, the youngest and oldest soldiers present will cut the Army birthday cake provided by Mission BBQ. **David Spunt**, correspondent at Fox News, will emcee the ceremony. Musical accompaniment will be provided by the United States Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps.

Team Fastrax Professional Skydiving Team

12 p.m., *Independence Mall*

Visitors on Independence Mall will have the opportunity to witness a spectacular skydive demonstration by the [Team Fastrax Professional Skydiving Team](#).

Naturalization Ceremony

1 p.m., *Betsy Ross House*

As part of its 77th annual Flag Day festivities, the Philadelphia Flag Day Association (founded 1934) will welcome 13 new citizens who will take the Oath of Allegiance in a ceremony at the Betsy Ross House. All are welcome to join them in their first Pledge of Allegiance as new American citizens. Musical accompaniment will be provided by the United States Army Field Band Brass Quintet.

Performance by the United States Army Old Guard Fife and Drum

1:30 p.m., *National Constitution Center Front Lawn*

2:30 p.m., *Independence Visitors Center*

History comes alive with this performance by the United States Army Old Guard Fife and Drum. The musicians of this unit recall the days of the American Revolution as they perform in uniforms patterned after those worn by the musicians of General George Washington's Continental Army—a proud tradition that began with the musicians of the Continental Army and continues today.

Giant Flag Folding Challenge

2 p.m., *National Constitution Center Front Lawn*

3 p.m., *Independence Hall*

The day concludes as festival visitors help fold a giant American flag.

All Day Events

Stripes and Stars Community Fair

10 a.m. – 3 p.m., *National Constitution Center Front Lawn*

Admission: FREE

Throughout the day, families can stop by the Stripes and Stars Community Fair on the National Constitution Center's front lawn, where veterans organizations and museums will host special activities as well as displays featuring military vehicles and equipment.

Flag Day Celebration

9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., [National Constitution Center](#)

Admission: Programs included with general admission

Visitors can enjoy arts and crafts activities, lawn games, educational programs on the history of the flag, and much more. Visitors will also be able to participate in special Soldier Talks at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., in partnership with the "Meet Your Army" Campaign. Reservations are recommended for Soldier Talks, call group sales at 215-409-6800.

Meet the Flag Ladies of the Defense Logistics Agency!

10 a.m. – 8 p.m., [Betsy Ross House](#)

Admission: FREE, courtesy of Dr. Jeffrey Kenneth Kohn

Did you know that presidential flags have been handmade exclusively here in Philadelphia for more than 150 years? On June 14 during the Meet the Flag Ladies Program from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., visitors to the Betsy Ross House will have the unique opportunity to meet the artisans from the Defense Logistics Agency who hand embroider the flags that are displayed behind U.S. presidents and vice presidents, and to see how they do their detailed work.

As a part of their annual **Flag Fest**, the Betsy Ross House will be hosting events all week long. Visit <http://historicphiladelphia.org/flagfest/> for more information.

Christ Church Burial Ground

12 – 2 p.m., [Christ Church Burial Ground](#)

Admission: \$1

Visitors can explore this historical burial ground for a reduced rate from noon to 2 p.m., and pick up a special self-guided map highlighting notable graves, like that of Francis Hopkinson, designer of the first American flag and signer of the Declaration of Independence.

For a full schedule of events, visit constitutioncenter.org/stripesandstars.

Featured Stripes and Stars partner organizations include: the National Constitution Center, Independence National Historical Park, the Betsy Ross House, the Philadelphia Flag Day Association, the United States Army, the Association of the United States Army: William Penn Chapter, and Historic Philadelphia, Inc.

Additional partners include Christ Church, Spirit of Liberty Foundation, Daughters of the American

Revolution (Flag House Chapter), and Sons of the American Revolution (Philadelphia Continental Chapter).

Origins of U.S. Flag and U.S. Army Commemorations

Flag Day commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States, which happened on June 14, 1777, by resolution of the Second Continental Congress. In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation calling for an official national Flag Day observance. Then in 1949, President Harry S. Truman signed an Act of Congress designating the 14th day of June every year as National Flag Day. The United States Army also celebrates its birthday on this date; Congress authorized “the American Continental Army” on June 14, 1775.

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About the National Constitution Center



The [National Constitution Center](http://constitutioncenter.org) in Philadelphia brings together people of all ages and perspectives, across America and around the world, to learn about, debate, and celebrate the greatest vision of human freedom in history, the U.S. Constitution. A private, nonprofit organization, the Center serves as America’s leading platform for constitutional education and debate, fulfilling its congressional charter “to disseminate information about the U.S. Constitution on a nonpartisan basis.” As the **Museum of We the People**, the Center brings the Constitution to life for visitors of all ages through interactive programs and exhibits. As **America’s Town Hall**, the Center brings the leading conservative and liberal thought leaders together to debate the Constitution on all media platforms. As a **Headquarters for Civic Education**, the Center delivers the best educational programs and online resources that inspire citizens and engage all Americans in learning about the U.S. Constitution. For more information, call 215-409-6700 or visit constitutioncenter.org.

About Independence National Historical Park



A unit of the National Park Service, Independence National Historical Park was created by an Act of Congress on June 28, 1948. Accredited by the American Association of Museums, Independence NHP covers almost 54 acres in Philadelphia’s Old City, and includes Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, Congress Hall, Franklin Court, and other historic buildings associated with the founding of the United States. The park is open from 9 a.m. daily with the exception of Christmas day. A visit to Independence National Historical Park should start at the Independence Visitor Center, located at 6th and Market Streets. Here, visitors can pick up a park brochure, park map, and the free, timed tickets required for Independence Hall. For more information, visit the park’s website, <http://www.nps.gov/inde>, or follow us on social media by searching @IndependenceNHP.

About the Betsy Ross House and Historic Philadelphia, Inc.



The Betsy Ross House is open extended hours 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. from June 10 to July 31. Admission is \$5 for adults; \$4 for children/students/seniors/active military. An optional audio guide is \$8 and \$7, which includes admission. Meet Betsy Ross as she works in her upholstery shop daily 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Thursdays until 8 p.m. As part of the **Women at Work in Revolutionary America** exhibit, guests will also meet Phillis the laundress 12-5 p.m. Thursdays through Sundays. Phillis was a free African American woman, born into slavery in Philadelphia. She was educated and given her

freedom at age 21, after which she was part of a vibrant community of Free Blacks in 18th century Philadelphia.

The Betsy Ross House caps off Flag Fest, its weeklong celebration of Old Glory with the 11th annual **Stars & Stripes Saturday** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, June 15. This popular event features daylong family-friendly entertainment, including old-fashioned carnival games, magic, a puppet show, juggling, an aerial circus performance, and more. Admission is free, and tours of the House are just \$5.

The Betsy Ross House is managed by Historic Philadelphia, Inc. HPI enhances the visitor experience and helps strengthen Philadelphia's tourism industry through interpretation and interaction, making our nation's history relevant and real. Historic Philadelphia, Inc.'s other programs include Once Upon A Nation storytelling, living history tours and Franklin Square. For more information, call 215-629-4026 or visit www.historicphiladelphia.org.

About the Philadelphia Flag Day Association



The Philadelphia Flag Day Association (PFDA) was founded in 1934 as a patriotic nonprofit to promote the celebration of Flag Day and respect for the United States Flag – remaining the nation's oldest continually operating organization commemorating Flag Day. Over its 84-year history, PFDA has stayed true to its mission, expanding its reach to invite the Betsy Ross House, Independence National Historic Park, the National Constitution Center, and the City of Philadelphia to celebrate both Flag Day and the Birth of the US Army through the Flag Day Stripes and Stars Celebration.

PFDA has produced a number of outreach programs to educational, historical, and civic groups and cosponsors, with the City's Fire Department, Philadelphia's official 9/11 commemoration. In 2007, PFDA established its **Collection of Historic American Flags and Banners**, an assemblage of almost 200 historic American flags, banners, and related items – portions of which have been displayed throughout the region.

About the Association of the United States Army, William Penn Chapter



Since 1950, the Association of the United States Army has worked to support all aspects of national security while advancing the interests of America's Army and all the men and women who serve.

AUSA is a private, nonprofit, professional, and educational organization that supports America's Army – Active, National Guard, Reserve, Army Civilians, Retirees, Veterans, and family members. AUSA provides numerous educational and professional development opportunities at a variety of events, on both the local and national levels.

The William Penn Chapter of AUSA serves the Greater Philadelphia region and is a founding co-sponsor of the Stripes and Stars Festival, celebrating the Army's Birthday and Flag Day.