



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

National Constitution Center Contact:

Merissa Blum, 215-409-6645, [mblum@constitutioncenter.org](mailto:mblum@constitutioncenter.org)

Independence National Historical Park Contact:

Gina Gilliam, 215-597-0060, [gina\\_gilliam@nps.gov](mailto:gina_gilliam@nps.gov)

Association of the United States Army – William Penn Chapter Contact:

Jim Donahue, 267-808-7402, [jadonahue@rcn.com](mailto:jadonahue@rcn.com)

Betsy Ross House and Historic Philadelphia, Inc. Contact:

Heather Kincade, 267-278-1505, [heather@historicphiladelphia.org](mailto:heather@historicphiladelphia.org)

Philadelphia Flag Day Association Contact:

Patricia Coyne, 215-697-8403, [cameo1200@gmail.com](mailto:cameo1200@gmail.com)

United States Army Contact:

Mike Halloran, 732-408-4427, [michael.j.halloran.civ@mail.mil](mailto:michael.j.halloran.civ@mail.mil)

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

***Daylong festival to take place on Thursday, June 14, 2018, in Philadelphia's Historic District***

Philadelphia, PA (May 14, 2018) – 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 243rd anniversary and the American flag's 241st birthday. The festival will take place on **Thursday, June 14, 2018**, at locations throughout Independence National Historical Park and Historic Philadelphia, including Independence Hall, 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, and a moving naturalization ceremony.

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

## Special Events

### **13-Star Flag Raising**

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

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**

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

Following a moving 50-star flag raising ceremony, troops — past and present — will join a patriotic parade to Independence Hall.

### **Stripes and Stars Festival Opening Ceremony**

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

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 Troy Kok, U.S. Army**, will deliver a keynote address to mark the Army's birthday and **Brigadier General Mark T. Simerly, U.S. Army**, will administer the enlistment oath to assembled Army recruits. Observing a long-standing tradition, the youngest and oldest soldiers present will cut the Army birthday cake provided by Mission BBQ. Musical accompaniment will be provided by the U.S. Army Field Band Brass Quintet.

### **Team Fastrax Professional Skydiving Team**

Independence Mall, 12 p.m.

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

### **Naturalization Ceremony**

Betsy Ross House, 1 p.m.

As part of its 76th 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 U.S. Army Field Band Brass Quintet.

### **Flag Retirement Ceremony**

Betsy Ross House, 2 p.m.

Visitors can watch as Scouts from the Boy Scouts of America, Roosevelt District, Cradle of Liberty Council retire worn American flags.

### **Giant Flag Folding**

National Constitution Center Front Lawn, 2:30 p.m. and Independence Hall, 3:30 p.m.

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

## All Day Events

### **Stripes and Stars Community Fair**

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

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**

[National Constitution Center](#), 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., Soldiers Talks at 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., and 12:30 p.m.

Admission: Programs included with general admission

Visitors can enjoy arts and craft 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, in partnership with the "Meet Your Army" Campaign. Reservations recommended for Soldier Talks, call group sales at 215-409-6800.

### **Meet the Flag Ladies of the Defense Logistics Agency!**

[Betsy Ross House](#), Open 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Meet the Flag Ladies Program, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

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 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/betsy-ross-house/flagfest/> for more information.

### **Christ Church Burial Ground**

[Christ Church Burial Ground](#), 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Admission: \$3 for Adults, \$1 for Children

Visitors can explore this historical burial ground from noon to 3 p.m., and take part in special history hunts throughout the day. Guided tours of the burial ground highlighting the grave of Francis Hopkinson, designer of first American flag and signer of the Declaration of Independence, will be available for an additional fee.

**For a full schedule of events, visit [constitutioncenter.org/stripesandstars](http://constitutioncenter.org/stripesandstars).**

Featured Stripes and Stars partner organizations include: the National Constitution Center, Independence National Historical Park, the Betsy Ross House, 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.

### About the National Constitution Center



The [National Constitution Center](#) in Philadelphia inspires citizenship as the only place where people across America and around the world can come together 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 center for **Civic Education**, the Center delivers the best educational programs and online resources that inspire, excite, and engage citizens about the U.S. Constitution. For more information, call 215-409-6700 or visit [constitutioncenter.org](http://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 \$7 and \$6, which includes admission. Meet Betsy Ross as she works in her upholstery shop 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Wednesday and until 5 p.m. Thursday through Sunday. 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 16. This popular event features daylong family-friendly entertainment, including old-fashioned carnival games, magic, puppet show, juggling, an aerial circus performance is 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](http://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, National Constitution Center and 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.

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