

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FLAG



Where In The World



Trivia

The current 50-star flag of the United States was originally created by a 17-year-old Robert G. Heft, for a school project. The work originally received a B-.

Technical Specification

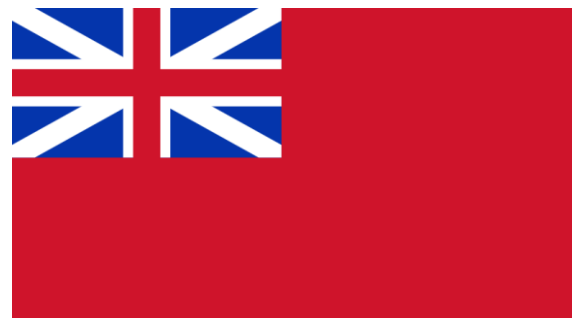
Adopted:	1777
Proportion:	10:19
Design:	Thirteen evenly-placed horizontal stripes, in red and white alternating; in the canton, a blue background adorned with one star for every state in the Union.
Colours:	PMS - Old Glory Red: 200C, Old Glory Blue: 281C CMYK - Old Glory Red: 19.6% Cyan, 100% Magenta, 75.7% Yellow, 11.8% Black; Old Glory Blue: 88.6% Cyan, 85.1% Magenta, 24.3% Yellow, 12.2% Black

Brief History

From the early days of British colonial settlement in the New World, until the American Revolution, it was the red British civil ensign which saw official use.



The Red Ensign of the Kingdom of England

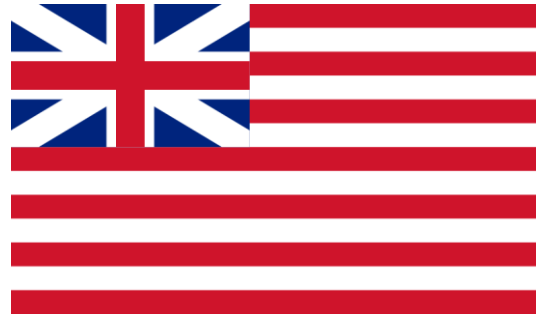


The Red Ensign of Great Britain

The Continental Colours flag, or "Grand Union" flag, was made official by George Washington and Benjamin Franklin in 1775. With its white stripes, it bore remarkable similarity to that of the East India Company. The use of flags bearing the crosses of St George and St Andrew could be indicative of convenience, or retention of British colonial identity.



Continental Colours (Grand Union) Flag

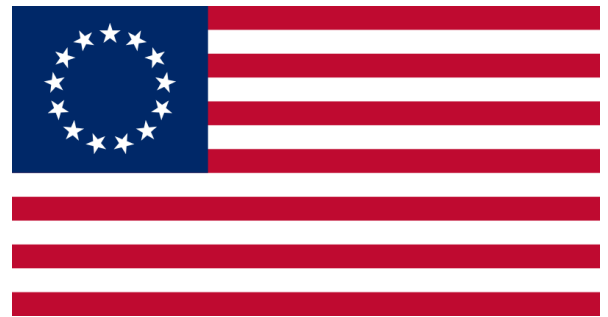


The Red Ensign of Great Britain

In 1777, Congress determined the elemental principles of the United States flag.

They designated that thirteen stripes in red and white, and thirteen white stars in a blue field for the canton should make up the flag.

The arrangement of the stars was open to interpretation, and remarkably remained so until 1912.

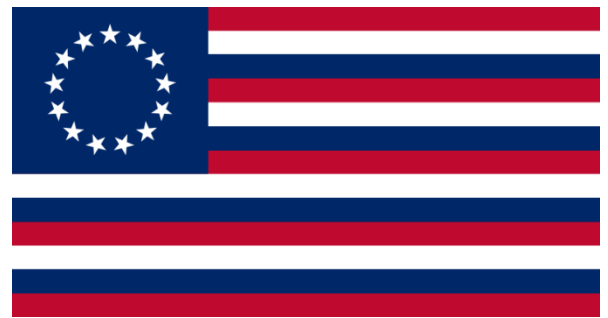


13-Star Flag of the USA - "Betsy Ross" Arrangement

Even the stripes were not always coloured as they are now.

Benjamin Franklin and John Adams were on record in 1778 stating that the stripes are coloured alternately red, white and blue.

The design is reproduced with a "Betsy Ross" star arrangement.



Alternate Stars and Stripes Colouring

1795 saw the introduction of two new states, and the number of stars and stripes was raised to fifteen.

This was the "Star-Spangled Banner" of which Francis Scott Key sang.



15-Star Flag of the USA - "Star-Spangled Banner"



During the American Civil War the south became Confederate States and chose a new flag to fly.

The Flag of the Confederate states of America went through three changes between 1861 and the end of the civil war in 1865. The first was a “stars and bars” flag it started off with 7 stars on the flag and increased to 13 stars in 1863. The second “stainless banner” flag was the first to have the southern cross, two blue bars crossing a red square with stars. The final “blood stained banner” was adopted in March 1865; the reason for its change was the worry that the pure white flag would be seen as a flag of truce. Even though the south lost the Civil War the flag has remained for office and personal use in the ex-confederate states.

		
First National Flag with 13 Stars (1861 – 1863)	Second National Flag (1863 – 1865)	Third National Flag (1865)

Since then, countless designs emerged as more and more territories were granted statehood. The number and arrangement of the stars would change continually, throughout the 19th Century. However, the number of stripes was permanently limited to thirteen. This was in order to reduce clutter and to honour the original states of the Union.

There have been two designs of the United States Flag that have achieved longevity since then. The forty-eight star flag of 1912, which established international fame through two World Wars, and the present-day fifty star flag, featuring a grid of twenty stars overlaid with a grid of thirty, and instated by President "Ike" Eisenhower in 1960.



	
48-Star Flag of the USA	50-Star Flag of the USA

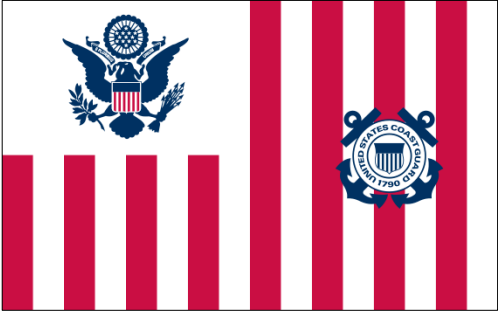
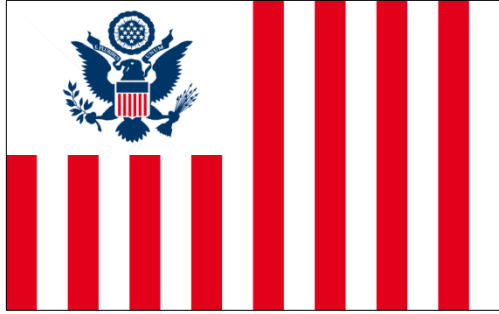
Navel Ensign of the United States of America

Generally speaking, the naval ensign of the USA is exactly the same as the national flag.

For private, non-commercial vessels, a yacht ensign also exists, and may be freely flown by any personal yacht within US waters.

The Coast Guard, and Customs officials, also bear their own ensigns in order to signal the authority to board and search other vessels. It should be noted that these latter ensigns are always flown as secondary to the US national ensign.

	
Naval Ensign	Yacht Ensign

	
<p>Coast Guard Ensign</p>	<p>Customs Ensign</p>

Conventions of the Flag

The Federal Flag Code is the most important document regarding what is considered acceptable use of the nation's flag.

One of the founding principles of the United States of America is freedom of speech and expression, and so the Flag Code is not enforced by the government.

It is nevertheless widely observed, apart from one particular edict; while the Flag Code prohibits personal clothing to bear its design, flag-based attire is ever-popular in the States.

The correct vertical display of the flag maintains the upper-left position of the canton, which means displaying the reverse of the flag.

When the flag is attached to a vehicle, the canton is supposed to lead the rest of the flag, as if flown against the wind. Subsequently, racing cars that bear the flag appear to display it backwards, on the car's right side.

