

# Old Glory

By John Grand

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Today, I am honored to speak about our flag. Think about what it means to you as I tell you what it means to me.

This flag is known by many names, it is often called “The Stars & Stripes”, “The Star-Spangled Banner” or Old Glory and the National Anthem of the United States is a reference to our Flag. My personal favorite is “Old Glory”.

Since the founding of the United States in 1776 there have been twenty-seven different versions of the flag featuring the stars and stripes. Each new flag represented the addition of one or more states as the United States grew westward to fulfill what it believed to be its manifest destiny of expansion in North America.

Today the flag consists of thirteen horizontal stripes—seven red stripes alternating with six white. The stripes represent the original thirteen colonies and the stars represent the current fifty states of the Union.

This is our flag. It has been trampled on, burned and shot full of holes, it has accompanied the American Military in all of our battles. We know that the preference would be the untroubled times of world peace because it represents the freedom of humanity and it shall fly high, thundering in silence for the world to hear for it is our flag, our symbol of unity for all of the people of United States. It does not cater to any one political party, its glorious shadow covers and protects all Americans, and those that come to our shores to become Americans, without regard to race, color or creed.

Our flag has been carried into battles in faraway lands - always for the cause of freedom. It flew high and majestic leading us into battle displaying our might, it also laid in solemn respect covering the caskets which carried the men and women who gave their lives for our causes. Our flag is blood stained, torn and many times wearied and saddened by millions who've paid the supreme sacrifice. Do not let it all be for nothing.

Today, we raise Old Glory above the streets of Soledad to tell the world that that the brave have died for a worthwhile cause; that we who live in Soledad are proud of what Old Glory represents; and, we proudly display this flag for all to see, a symbol of our unity as proud American citizens.

With Old Glory, we also raise a flag in tribute to our doctors, nurses, and all first responders who put their health and lives in jeopardy every day to provide protection, care, and comfort for the rest of us. We plan on this flag flying with Old Glory until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. On January 1st, 2021 a flag paying tribute to each branch of the military will accompany Old Glory at different times during the year.

Old Glory shall fly forever as a symbol of our freedom as it did for our ancestors and shall do so for our heirs.