OLD GLORY:
A GUIDE TO DISPLAYING AND HONORING OUR NATION’S FLAG
YET AS OFTEN as we salute it and take comfort from its presence in times of national crisis, few of us know the entire story of its evolution or the proper protocol about its treatment and display. As part of The Patterson Foundation’s Legacy of Valor, we’re proud to present this guide about the American flag.

This guide was developed through a collaborative effort between The Military Officers Association of Sarasota (MOAS)* and the Sarasota County School District to provide useful information regarding the origin, history and meaning of the American Flag and the proper etiquette and respect that should be afforded it.

*To learn more about MOAS visit SARASOTAMOAA.COM.

A SERENE AND ART-FILLED amphitheater named Patriot Plaza at Sarasota National Cemetery will open in 2014. Patriot Plaza, conceived of and fully funded by Sarasota-based The Patterson Foundation, will be donated to the National Cemetery Administration during a ceremonial dedication. It will provide a place for ceremonial gatherings and for visitors to reflect on the service of veterans and their families and the meaning and price of patriotism.

As an extension of the Patriot Plaza initiative, The Patterson Foundation also created the Legacy of Valor campaign. The campaign was created to honor all veterans and their families in Southwest Florida, to inspire patriotism and embrace freedom. A mosaic of community-driven partnerships will educate and focus the community to use time, talent and treasure to recognize the service and sacrifice of all veterans and their families.

For more information, PLEASE VISIT FreedomPassItOn.org.
THE UNITED STATES FLAG

THE UNITED STATES FLAG is one of the best-known, most widely respected national emblems in the world. To its citizens, and to our neighbors beyond our borders, the flag is a symbol of America’s courage, compassion and strength. It is also the symbol of the oldest continuing democracy in the world. It represents the stability of our system of government, the noble ideals to which the Nation was pledged long ago and remains pledged today.

The flag has undergone many changes over the decades. The first flag was the Grand Union flag, with 13 stripes of red and white representing the 13 colonies and a British Union Jack in the upper left corner. (The latter was eventually replaced by stars.) Soon after, in either June 1776 or June 1777, Betsy Ross reportedly sewed the first American flag, based on designs suggested by George Washington and his committee.

The Continental Congress adopted the first flag on June 14, 1777; additional stars have been added as states have been added to the Union. In 1959, our 50th and final state, Hawaii, was added, and a new flag created. This is the flag that we now use; on July 4, 2007, it became the longest-serving flag of the United States.

Today the flag consists of 13 horizontal stripes, seven red alternating with six white. The stripes represent the original 13 colonies; the stars represent the 50 states of the Union. The colors of the flag are symbolic as well: Red symbolizes Hardiness and Valor, White symbolizes Purity and Innocence and Blue represents Vigilance, Perseverance and Justice.
WHEN TO DISPLAY THE FLAG

- Display the flag only from sunrise to sunset on buildings and on stationary flagstaffs in the open. (The flag may be displayed 24 hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.)
- The flag should be hoisted briskly and lowered ceremoniously, and not displayed on days when the weather is inclement, except when an all-weather flag is displayed.
- The flag should be displayed on all days, but especially on New Year’s Day, Inauguration Day, Martin Luther King Jr.’s Birthday, Lincoln’s Birthday, Washington’s Birthday, Mother’s Day, Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day (half-staff until noon), Flag Day, Fathers’ Day, Independence Day, and National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, Labor Day, Constitution Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and other days proclaimed by the President; and also on the birthdays of states and on state holidays.
- The flag should be displayed daily on or near the main administration building of every public institution; in or near every polling place on election days; and during school days in or near every schoolhouse.

HOW TO POSITION THE FLAG

- The flag, when carried in a procession with another flag or flags, should be either on the marching right (the flag’s own right), or, if there is a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line.
- The flag should not be displayed on a float in a parade except from a staff.
- The flag should not be draped over the hood, top, sides, or back of a vehicle or a boat. When the flag is displayed on a motorcar, the staff should be fixed firmly to the chassis or clamped to the right fender.
- No other flag or pennant should be placed above or, if on the same level, to the right of the flag.
- The flag should be at the center and at the highest point of the group when a number of flags of states or localities or pennants of societies are grouped and displayed from staffs.
- When flags of states, cities, or localities, or pennants of societies are flown on the same halyard with the flag of the United States, the latter should always be at the peak. When the flags are flown from adjacent staffs, the flag of the United States should be hoisted first and lowered last.
- When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union or blue field should be uppermost and to the flag’s own right, that is, to the observer’s left. When displayed in a window, the flag should be displayed in the same way, with the union to the left of the observer in the street.
- When used on a speaker’s platform, the flag, if displayed flat, should be displayed above and behind the speaker. When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, the flag should hold the position of superior prominence, in advance of the auditorium, and in the position of honor at the clergyman’s or speaker’s right as he faces the audience.
- The flag, when flown at half-staff, should be first hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half-staff position. The flag should be again raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day. (For more specifics of the proper usage of the flag at half-staff, go to http://vfw.org/Community/Flag-Education/)
RESPECT FOR FLAG

- The flag should never be used for advertising in any manner whatsoever.
- The flag should never be displayed with union down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property.
- The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, the floor, water, or merchandise.
- The flag should never be carried flat or horizontally, but always aloft and free.
- The flag should never be used as wearing apparel, bedding, or drapery.
- The flag should never be fastened, displayed, used, or stored in such a manner as to permit it to be easily torn, soiled, or damaged in any way.
- The flag should never have placed upon it nor attached to it any mark, insignia, letter, word, figure, design, picture, or drawing of any nature.
- The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying, or delivering anything.

- No part of the flag should ever be used as a costume or athletic uniform. A flag patch may be affixed to the uniform of military personnel, firemen, policemen, and members of patriotic organizations. The lapel flag pin should be worn on the left lapel near the heart.
- The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.

HOW ARE UNSERVICEABLE FLAGS DESTROYED?

- The Code suggests that, “when a flag has served its useful purpose, it should be destroyed, preferably by burning.” For individual citizens this should be done discreetly so that the act of destruction is not perceived as a protest or desecration. Many American Legion posts conduct Disposal of Unserviceable Flag Ceremonies on June 14, Flag Day, each year.

CONDUCT DURING HOISTING, LOWERING OR PASSING OF FLAG

- During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag or when the flag is passing in a parade or in review, all people present in uniform should render the military salute. Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute. Others present should face the flag and stand at attention with the right hand over the heart, or remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Citizens of other countries should stand at attention. All conduct toward the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes.
OTHER SYMBOLS OF THE UNITED STATES

1. A LIBERTY BELL was ordered by William Penn in 1751 and inscribed, “Proclaim LIBERTY throughout all the Land unto inhabitants thereof.” The bell was used to summon lawmakers to legislative sessions and to alert citizens to public meetings and proclamations.

2. THE GREAT SEAL OF THE UNITED STATES features a bald eagle clenching a scroll and an olive branch. The eagle represents freedom and strength; the olive branch and arrows symbolize our country’s strong desire for peace but readiness for war.

3. THE BALD EAGLE became our National Bird on June 20, 1782. In 1787 this quintessentially American bird was officially adopted as the emblem of the United States.

4. UNCLE SAM became a nickname for the United States during the War of 1812. Barrels of beef were supplied to the military by meat packer Samuel Wilson, and soldiers called the food “Uncle Sam’s.” Political cartoonist Thomas Nast began the popular image of Uncle Sam seen here.

5. A gift of friendship from the people of France to the United States was the STATUE OF LIBERTY, dedicated on Oct. 28, 1886, designated as a National Monument in 1924 and restored for her centennial on July 4, 1986. Her torch lights the way to liberty and freedom.
THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE received official recognition by Congress in an Act approved on June 22, 1942. On Oct. 21, 1892, the pledge was recited for the first time.

“I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

According to the Flag Code, the Pledge “should be rendered by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. When not in uniform men should remove any non-religious headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Persons in uniform should remain silent, face the flag, and render the military salute.”

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER is the national anthem of the United States. The lyrics came from a poem written by Francis Scott Key on Sept. 14, 1814, after witnessing the bombardment of Fort McHenry in the War of 1812. The poem was set to the tune of a popular song and renamed The Star-Spangled Banner. The Star-Spangled Banner was made the national anthem by a congressional resolution on March 3, 1931.

During a rendition of the national anthem, when the flag is displayed, individuals in uniform should give the military salute at the first note of the anthem and maintain that position until the last note. Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute in the manner provided for individuals in uniform. All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over their heart, and men not in uniform, if applicable, should remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. When the flag is not displayed or is not visible to the public, all present should face toward the music and act in the same manner they would if the flag were displayed.
HOW TO FOLD A FLAG:

1. Fold the lower half of the stripe section lengthwise over the field of stars.

2. Repeat, fold in half lengthwise again, being careful that the blue field is on the outside.

3. As one person holds the flag by the blue field, another makes a triangular fold in the opposite and continues to make triangular folds until the entire flag is in a triangle.

4. Tuck the loose edge of the flag into the pocket formed by the folds so that only the blue field and white stars are visible.

Each fold represents a certain aspect of American character and principles.