

## FLAG DAY

Mr. BYRD. Well, the next subject I want to talk about today—and may I say to any other Senator who wishes to have the floor, I will be glad to give it up at any time. So I do not want to hog the floor, if I may use that word, “hog.”

Tomorrow is Flag Day.

Now, from time to time, I speak on events such as Flag Day, these national holidays—Independence Day, Father’s Day, Mother’s Day, Columbus Day, and so on. When I first came to the Congress, now over a half century ago, there were Senators and there were Members of the House who spoke on these subjects. I do not see much of that anymore. So I try to preserve that way of Senate tradition, talking about these days every year as they come along. It enables us to be still and know and to remember the things that are our heritage, the things that made America great. We hear a lot about family values, and so I speak on Mother’s Day about our mothers, I speak in advance of Father’s Day—as I will a little later this morning—about Father’s Day, to preserve this heritage.

Mr. President, since 1885, Americans have observed Flag Day on June 14. In 1949, President Truman signed an Act of Congress designating June 14 of each year as National Flag Day. That day, June 14, which this year falls on Saturday, was chosen because it was on June 14, 1777, that the Continental Congress adopted the Flag Act establishing an official flag for the new Nation.

The first Flag Act was a model of brevity. Here is what it said in its entirety:

Resolved, That the Flag of the United States be made of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the Union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation.

As many Senators may remember from their schooldays, in the early years of the Nation there were a number of different variations of the flag including, of course, the one consisting of a circle of 13 stars that was attributed in our schoolbooks to Betsy Ross.

As the Nation grew, however, changes were made to the flag. Each change was authorized by an Act of Congress or, in later years, by an Executive order of the President.

In 1818, Congress provided for a flag of 13 stripes, 1 for each of the original 13 Colonies, and 1 star for each State to be added to the flag on the Fourth of July following the admission of each new State to the Union.

The most recent change was made by Executive order of President Eisenhower on August 21, 1959. His order provided for the arrangement of the stars in 9 rows of stars staggered horizontally and 11 rows of stars staggered vertically. That is the flag that flies over this Capitol Building today, and that is the flag that stands majestically as it does beside the desk of the President of the Senate, to the right of the Presiding Officer.

Today that Presiding Officer is from the State of Tennessee, and he presides over the Senate with great dignity and aplomb.

While we are on that subject, people all over the country watch the United States Senate, which is the premier upper legislative body in the world today. Aren’t you proud that you serve in this body? Always keep in mind that the world is watching. It is watching that Presiding Officer, how he or she presides, and that is why I try to suggest to new Members that they preside in a way that lets the world know that here is truly the greatest body of all.

I suggest they not read mail, they not read newspapers while they are presiding; that they give their full attention to the Senate, to the Chamber, to the individual Senator who is speaking. Members of State legislatures watch this Presiding Officer, believing that here is the best, and we have to be conscious of that when we preside. We should be. Professors, students, coal miners, housewives—people in every walk of life—watch that desk.

There used to be a telephone at that desk. When I became majority leader, I took it out. I believe I was majority leader at that time, or perhaps majority whip. But I took that telephone out so the Senators would not sit at that desk and be talking on the telephone while they were presiding. A few of them did that, so I just moved out the telephone.

So there is the flag right there by the Presiding Officer. We see it every day when we address the Chair. That is the flag, as I say, that flies over the Capitol Building today.

This very abridged, short history now of the flag does not, of course, do justice to the emotions that we all feel as we look at that flag. Imagine the excitement in each new State as a new flag is unfurled for the first time with its new constellation of stars. Imagine the excitement in the State of Alaska when that new flag was unfurled. Imagine the excitement in the State of Hawaii in 1959, when I first came to the Senate—there was a new star in that constellation. Imagine the excitement in Hawaii as the people saw that flag with the new star. West Virginia was the 35th star on the flag.

We have but to think of the explorers who have carried the American flag to the ends of the Earth and into space. We have but to look at the classic photograph of the American flag being erected at Iwo Jima to share in the determination and triumph of that moment. And in the wake of September 11, 2001, who was not touched to the core by the sight of all the American flags that sprang up defiantly, as it were, across the Nation immediately after that attack, showing our sympathy, our resolve.

There is no doubting the love and the sorrow when you catch a tear creeping down the face of a man in uniform as taps is played and another flag is carefully and ceremoniously folded from

atop the coffin and preserved for a grieving widow.

Mr. President, our flag is our Nation’s greatest symbol, the icon by which we are recognized around the world. Old Glory—there is nothing, nothing, that can match it is our flag. That is the way we feel about it. It has withstood war. It has withstood assaults upon its fabric. But no assault has yet bested the fabric of this Nation or the ideals upon which the Nation was founded.

I firmly believe that if we hold true to our Constitution—here it is; I hold it in my hand, the Constitution of the United States—our flag will never fail, and this great constellation of stars and States will shine on through ages to come.

So I close with one of my favorite poems by Henry Holcomb Bennett, entitled “The Flag Goes By.”

Hats off.

Along the street there comes  
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums,  
A flash of color beneath the sky;

Hats off.

The flag is passing by.  
Blue and crimson and white it shines,  
Over the steel-tipped, ordered lines.

Hats off.

The colors before us fly;  
But more than the flag is passing by.  
Sea-fights and land-fights, grim and great,  
Fought to make and to save the State:

Weary marchers and sinking ships;  
Cheers of victory on dying lips;  
Days of plenty and years of peace;  
March of a strong land’s swift increase;

Equal justice, right in law,  
Stately honor and reverend awe.

Sign of a nation, great and strong  
To ward her people from foreign wrong;  
Pride and glory and honor—all  
Live in the colors to stand or fall.

Hats off.

Along the street there comes  
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums;  
And loyal hearts are beating high;

Hats off.

The flag is passing by.

## FATHER’S DAY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, this Sunday, June 15, is Father’s Day. It is a day of lovely chosen, if sometimes unstylish, ties; a day of lumpy clay bowls and golf tee puzzles; of handmade cards and big brunches. It is a day for family members to struggle over what to get dad, in a reflection of both the many hours that fathers spend away from home working and of his proclivity for just buying himself what he wants.

What does dad need? Nothing, really. What he wants is more time with his family and more time for fun, but that cannot be purchased. That is something that cannot be purchased at the mall.

This Father’s Day will be even more special for the men returning from service in Iraq in time to meet newborn sons and daughters for the first time. They will be coming home to a precious new life that they see for the first time in many instances. It is difficult to imagine the poignant first