

**Good afternoon distinguished guests, friends and family. Thank you for inviting me to speak today. It is an honor.**

**As we gather together on this day, let's remember the recent terrorist attacks as we have lowered our countries banner out of respect for American lives.**

**Flag Day was originally the celebration of the official adoption of the United States flag designed by the Marine Committee of the Second Continental Congress at Philadelphia on June 14, 1777.**

**In 1916, the anniversary of the flag resolution of 1777 became a nationally observed event by proclamation by President Woodrow Wilson. It was not designated as National Flay Day until August 3, 1949, when an act of congress designated June 14<sup>th</sup> of each year as National Flag Day.**

**While not a Federal holiday, Flag Day is celebrated each year at gatherings such as this - Thank you!**

**There is one official nickname for the American flag; “Stars & Strips”. Many songs and poems refer to other popular nicknames, Old Glory; the Red, White and Blue; and the Star-Spangled Banner.**

**Our flag is symbolic in many ways – the stars each represent an individual state – all fifty.**

**As a veteran, this flag holds a special meaning to me. As a child in civic class, I learned its history and symbolic meaning of country. As a young marine, the flag became my symbol of the entire United States of America and was with me in peace times and war.**

**I have lived abroad, deployed to foreign nations and traveled, and I can say, we are extremely fortunate to be American citizens and live in the United States. When you are away, as many military men and women are today, the flag is more than a banner; the flag is a symbol of security and a sense of safety – a source of comfort.**

**I was stationed in Hawaii during the Vietnam conflict, and as a young corporal, I was detailed to the Punchbowl National Cemetery on Flag Day to place flags on the grave sites of fallen “soldiers” meaning to include soldiers, airmen, marines and cost guardians.**

**While placing the flag toe to heel, I caught sight of a lady who was coming my way. She had traveled from New York to place a flower at her son’s grave. She came up to me and said thanks for keeping watch over her son’s grave, as she never wanted him to not feel the safety of the flag. This was a moving event for me as a young marine and this remains with me today.**

**So to all of you gathered today, my hope to you is that you always enjoy the safety of the United States flag and that you remember all of those who are first responders, all that served and are serving in our nation's military that give the ultimate sacrifice defending our flag so that we, Americans, can enjoy the safety we have in this country's banner; "The Flag".**

**May God bless our flag, and God bless the United States of America.**