

West Barnstable Flag Day 2015

2:00 PM Meetinghouse Farm

Remarks by West Barnstable Fire Chief Joe Maruca

Welcome.

Today we gather to celebrate one of the first symbols of this great country.

In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation officially establishing June 14th as Flag Day. Although it is not a federal holiday, Flag Day is observed today in communities across our great nation.

Flag Day isn't simply about honoring a particular design on a cloth. It is about taking time to reflect on our freedoms and the principles of our great nation.

The flag is a reminder of who we are.

A reminder that we are a nation where many races, creeds, cultures and religions live and prosper together as one in a manner that defies the experience and history of most other nations. No place else on earth can you find so many different ways coexisting together than in the United States of America. Each and everyone one of us here today is the descendant of people from a different culture who came to America to escape economic tyranny, religious intolerance, dictators and monarchs.

The Flag is a reminder that we are a nation of laws not dictators. We have a great legal system that protects and balances the rights and responsibilities of all its citizens, visitors, businesses and its government.

The Flag is a reminder that America is a land of freedom and opportunity unlike any other nation.

When the Second Continental Congress adopted the flag of the United States by resolution on June 14, 1777 it could not possibly

have imagined our journey as a nation. Today, we should reflect upon how our flag has evolved and changed greatly over the years, and so has our nation. One of the great secrets to our success as a nation and our liberties as individuals is our ability to evolve and change when faced with new challenges. So, as we celebrate our flag, we celebrate what people in many places around the globe don't have, the freedom to redefine and change who we are.

Our Flag should remind us that we Americans have more freedoms than any other people on the earth:

- We are free to say and write whatever we want.
- We are free to practice or not practice any religion.
- We are free to complain to and about our government.
- We are free to own guns.
- We are free to associate or not associate with others.
- We are free to change our government and its leaders.

Our Flag also stands for the proposition that our government has limited powers:

- We are free from invasions of our privacy by the government.
- We are free from unwarranted arrest and in our legal system the rights of the accused are greater than the rights of the government.
- Government doesn't choose the leaders.
- Government has only the powers that we, the people, give to it.

All of these rights and freedoms are what our Flag stands for and what we pause to celebrate here today, for without these rights and freedoms there would be no American Flag.

In the words of President Woodrow Wilson, "Old Glory, this flag which we honor and under which we serve is the emblem of our unity, our power, our thoughts and purpose as a nation".

May we honor Old Glory always and respect the freedoms she represents.