

WHY THE AMERICAN FLAG IS FOLDED 13 TIMES

Have you ever noticed on TV or at military funerals, the honor guard pays meticulous attention to correctly folding the American flag 13 times? I've known how the 21 gun salute was determined (adding the individual digits of 1776), but only recently learned why the flag was folded 13 times when it is lowered or when it is folded and handed to the widow at the burial of a veteran.

Here it is:

The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life.

The second fold is a symbol of our belief in eternal life.

The third fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veterans departing our ranks who gave a portion of their lives for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world.

The fourth fold represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in time of war for His divine guidance.

The fifth fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our Country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong."

The sixth fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we 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.

The seventh fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.

The eighth fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.

The ninth fold is a tribute to womanhood; for it has been through their faith, their love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great has been molded.

The tenth fold is a tribute to the father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born.

The eleventh fold represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies in the Hebrews' eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The twelfth fold represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in the Christians' eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit.

When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost reminding us of our nation's motto, "In God We Trust."

After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington, and the sailors and marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones, who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for us the rights, privileges and freedoms we enjoy today.

There are some traditions and ways of doing things which have deep meaning.

Attributed to the Chaplain of the USS ENTERPRISE

I AM the Flag of the

UNITED STATES

Of America

I am the flag of the United States of America.

My name is Old Glory.

I fly atop the world's tallest buildings.

I stand watch in America's halls of justice.

I fly majestically over institutions of learning.

I stand guard with power in the world

Look up and see me.

I stand for peace, honor, truth and justice.

I stand for freedom.

I am confident.

I am arrogant.

I am proud.

When I am flown with my fellow banners

My head is a little higher.
My colors a little truer.

I bow to no one!
I am recognized all over the world.
I am worshipped - I am saluted.
I am loved - I am revered.
I am respected - and I am feared.

I have fought in every battle
of every war
for more than 200 years.

I was flown at Valley Forge,
Gettysburg, Shiloh and Appamatox
I was there at San Juan Hill,
the trenches of France,
in the Argonne Forest,
Anzio, Rome and the beaches of Normandy.

Guam, Okinawa, Korea and
KheSan, Saigon, Vietnam know me.
I was there.
I led my troops, I was dirty, battleworn and tired,
But my soldiers cheered me and I was proud.

I have been burned, torn and trampled on the
Streets of countries I have helped set free.
It does not hurt for I am invincible.
I have been oiled upon, burned, torn and
Trampled in the streets of my country.
And when it's done by those
Whom I have served in battle - it hurts.
But I shall overcome - for I am strong.

I have slipped the bonds of Earth
and stood watch over the uncharted
frontiers of space from my vantage point on the moon.
I have borne silent witness to all of America's finest hours.

But my finest hours are yet to come.

When I am torn into strips and used as bandages
For my wounded comrades on the battlefield,

When I am flown at half-mast to honor my soldier
Or when I lie in the trembling arms of a grieving parent
At the grave of their fallen son or daughter,
I am proud.

Please forward my message to all who still love
And respect me that I may fly proudly
For another two hundred years.