



# THE FLAG CODE



As Adopted by the National Flag Conference, Washington, D. C., June 14-15, 1923, and Revised and Endorsed by the Second National Flag Conference, Washington, May 15, 1924

NATIONAL AMERICANISM COMMISSION

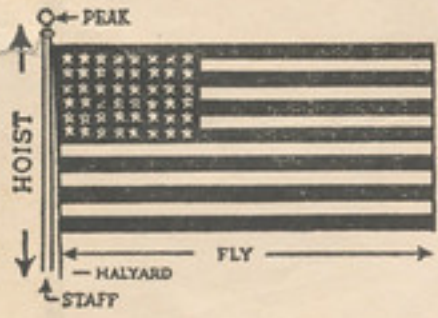
THE AMERICAN LEGION

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., U. S. A.

## How to Display the Flag of the United States of America

### DESCRIPTION OF THE FLAG

The flag of the United States of America has 13 horizontal stripes—7 red and 6 white—the red and white stripes alternating, and a union which consists of white stars of five points on a blue field placed in the upper quarter next the staff and extending to the lower edge of the fourth red stripe from the top. The number of stars is the same as the number of States in the Union. The canton



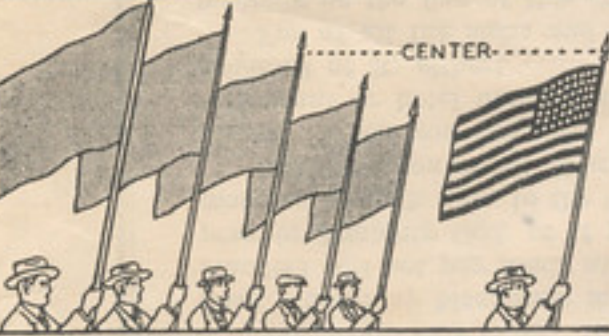
or union now contains 48 stars arranged in six horizontal and eight vertical rows, each star with one point upward. On the admission of a State into the Union a star will be added to the union of the flag, and such addition will take effect on the 4th day of July next succeeding such admission. The proportions of the Flag as prescribed by Executive Order of President Taft, October 29, 1912, are as follows:

- Hoist (width) of flag..... 1.
- Fly (length) of flag..... 1.9
- Hoist (width) of union..... 7/13
- Fly (length) of union..... 0.76
- Width of each stripe..... 1/13
- Diameter of each star..... .0616

### PROPER MANNER OF DISPLAYING THE FLAG

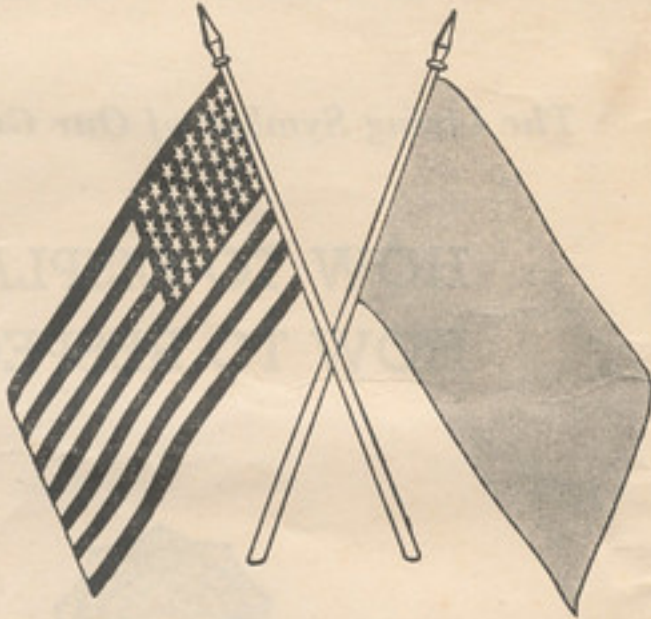
There are certain fundamental rules of heraldry which, if understood generally, would indicate the proper method of displaying the Flag of the United States of America. The matter becomes a very simple one if it is kept in mind that the Flag represents the living country and is itself considered as a living thing. The union of the Flag is the honor point; the right arm is the sword arm and therefore the point of danger and hence the place of honor.

1. The Flag should be displayed only from sunrise to sunset, or between such hours as may be designated by proper authority. It should be hoisted briskly, but should be lowered slowly and ceremoniously. The Flag should be displayed on all National and State holidays and on historic and special occasions. (However, being the emblem of our country, it ought to fly from every flagpole every day throughout the year, weather permitting.)



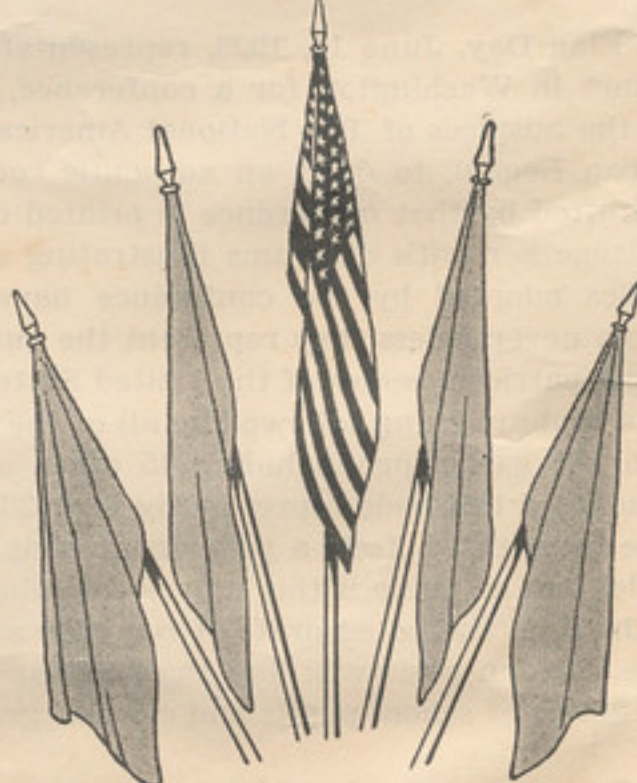
2. When carried in a procession with another flag or flags, the Flag of the United States of America should be either on the marching right, i. e., the Flag's own right, or when there is a line of other flags, the Flag of the United States of America may be in front of the center of that line.

3. When displayed with another flag against a wall from crossed staffs, the Flag of the United States of America



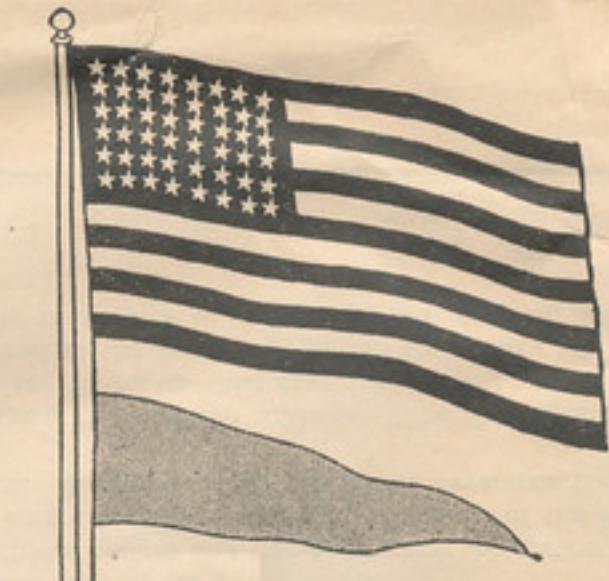
should be on the right, the Flag's own right, and its staff should be in front of the staff of the other flag.

4. When a number of flags of States or cities or pennants of societies are grouped and displayed from staffs with



the Flag of the United States of America, the latter should be at the center or at the highest point of the group.

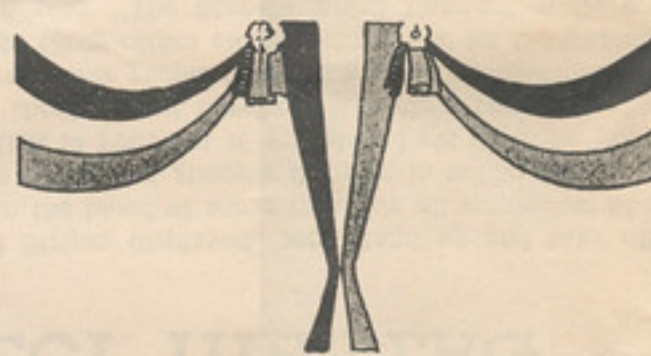
5. When flags of States or cities or pennants of societies are flown on the same halyard with the Flag of the United States of America, the latter should always be at the peak. When flown from adjacent staffs the Flag of



the United States of America should be hoisted first and lowered last. No such flag or pennant flown in the former position should be placed above, or in the latter position to the right of the Flag of the United States of America, i. e., to the observer's left.

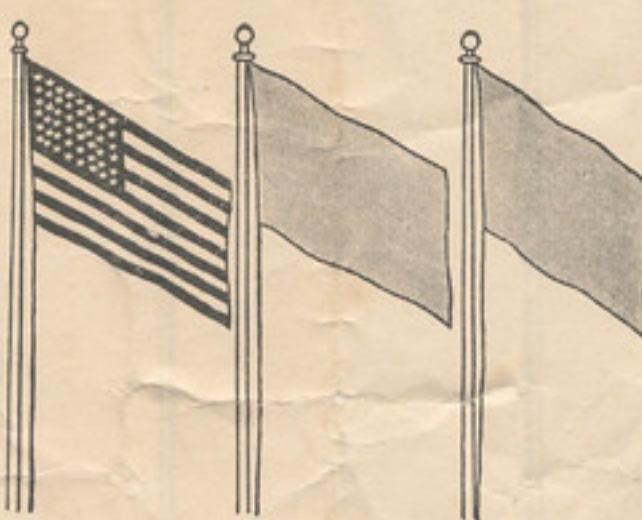
### PROPER USE OF BUNTING

Bunting of the National colors should be used for covering a speaker's desk, draping over the front of a platform



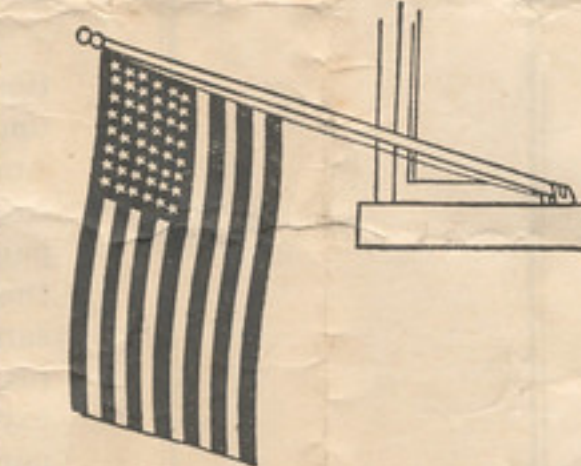
and for decoration in general. Bunting should be arranged with the blue above, the white in the middle, and the red below.

6. When flags of two or more nations are displayed they should be flown from separate staffs of the same height and

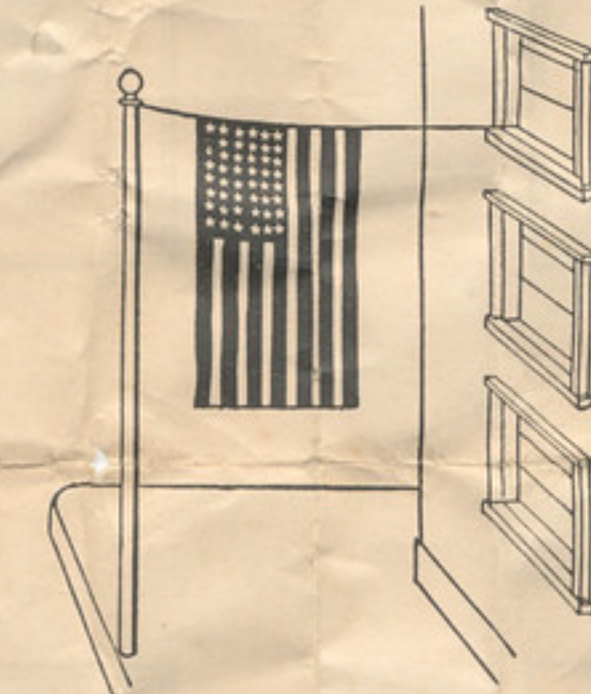


the flags should be of approximately equal size. International usage forbids the display of the flag of one nation above that of another nation in time of peace.

7. When the Flag is displayed from a staff projecting horizontally or at an angle from the window sill, balcony or front of building, the union of the Flag

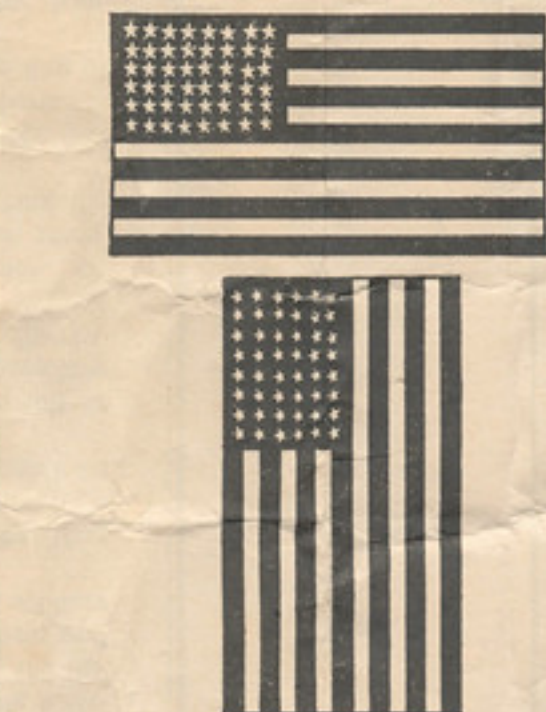


should go clear to the peak of the staff unless the Flag is at half-staff. (When the Flag is suspended over a sidewalk from a rope, extending from a house to



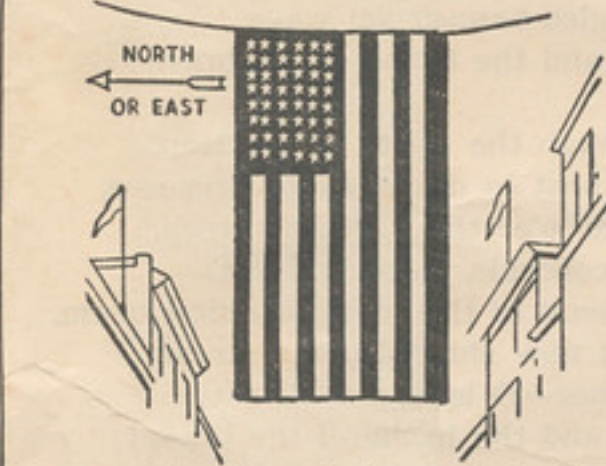
a pole at the edge of the sidewalk, the Flag should be hoisted out from the building towards the pole, union first.)

8. When the Flag is displayed in a manner other than by being flown from a staff, it should be displayed flat, whether indoors or out. When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union should be uppermost



and to the Flag's own right, i. e., to the observer's left. When displayed in a window it should be displayed the same way, that is, with the union or blue field to the left of the observer in the street. When festoons, rosettes, or drapings are desired, bunting of blue, white and red should be used, but never the Flag.

9. When displayed over the middle of the street, the Flag should be suspended vertically with the union to the north



in an east and west street or to the east in a north and south street.

10. When used on a speaker's platform, the Flag, if displayed flat, should be displayed above and behind the speaker; if flown from a staff, it should



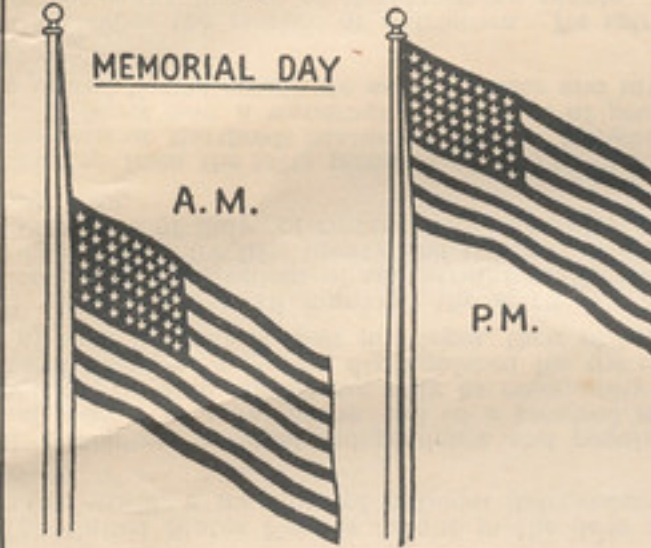
be in the position of honor, at the speaker's right. It should never be used to cover the speaker's desk nor to drape over the front of the platform.

11. When used in connection with the unveiling of a statue or monument, the Flag should form a distinctive feature



during the ceremony, but the Flag itself should never be used as the covering for the statue.

12. When flown at half-staff, the Flag should be hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half-staff position; but before lowering the Flag for the day it should be raised again to the peak. By half-staff is meant hauling down the Flag to one-half the distance



between the top and the bottom of the staff. If local conditions require, divergence from this position is permissible. On Memorial Day, May 30th, the Flag is displayed at half-staff from sunrise until noon and at full staff from noon until sunset; for the Nation lives and the Flag is the symbol of the living Nation.

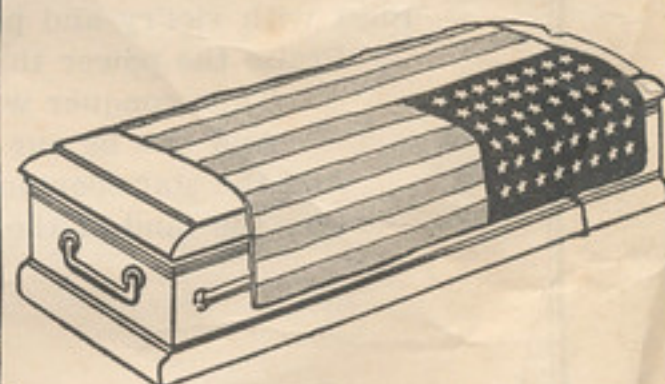
13. Flags flown from fixed staffs are placed at half-staff to indicate mourning.

When the Flag is displayed on a small staff, as when carried in a parade, mourning is indicated by attaching two



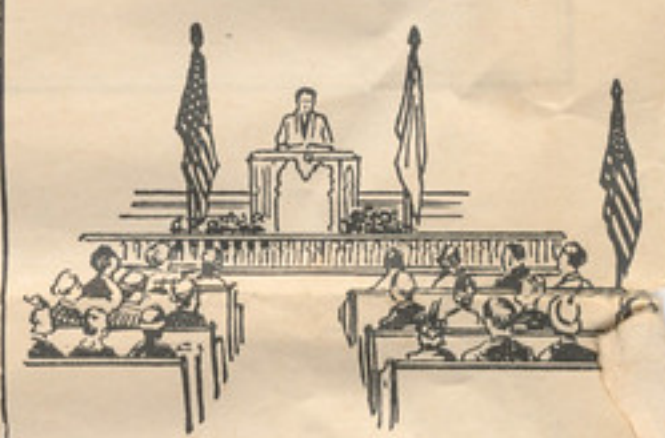
streamers of black crepe to the spear head, allowing the streamers to fall naturally. Crepe is used on the flagstaff only by order of the President.

14. When used to cover a casket, the Flag should be placed so that the union is at the head and over the left shoulder



der. The Flag should not be lowered into the grave nor allowed to touch the ground. The casket should be carried foot first.

15. When the Flag is displayed in the body of the church, it should be from a staff placed in the position of honor at the congregation's right as they face the clergyman. The service flag, the



State flag or other flag should be at the left of the congregation. If in the chancel or on the platform, the Flag of the United States of America should be placed at the clergyman's right as he faces the congregation and the other flags at his left.

16. When the Flag is in such a condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, it should not be cast aside or used in any way that might be viewed as disrespectful to the National colors but should be destroyed as a whole privately, preferably by burning or by some other method in harmony with the reverence and respect we owe to the emblem representing our Country.

### CAUTIONS

1. Do not permit disrespect to be shown to the Flag of the United States of America.
2. Do not dip the Flag of the United States of America to any person or any thing. The regimental color, State flag, organization or institutional flag will render this honor.
3. Do not display the Flag with the union down except as a signal of distress.
4. Do not place any other flag or pennant above or, if on the same level, to the right of the Flag of the United States of America.
5. Do not let the Flag touch the ground or the floor, or trail in the water.
6. Do not place any object or emblem of any kind on or above the Flag of the United States of America.
7. Do not use the Flag as drapery in any form whatsoever. Use bunting of blue, white and red.
8. Do not fasten the Flag in such manner as will permit it to be easily torn.
9. Do not drape the Flag over the hood, top, sides or back of a vehicle, or of a railway train or boat. When the Flag is displayed on a motor car, the staff should be affixed firmly to the chassis, or clamped to the radiator cap.
10. Do not display the Flag on a float in a parade except from a staff.
11. Do not use the Flag as a covering for a ceiling.
12. Do not carry the Flag flat or horizontally, but always aloft and free.
13. Do not use the Flag as a portion of a costume or of an athletic uniform. Do not embroider it upon cushions or handkerchiefs nor print it on paper napkins or boxes.
14. Do not put lettering of any kind upon the Flag.
15. Do not use the Flag in any form of advertising nor fasten an advertising sign to a pole from which the Flag is flown.
16. Do not display, use or store the Flag in such a manner as will permit it to be easily soiled or damaged.

## Cautions and Suggestions: Additional Points to Bear in Mind in Paying Homage to the Flag

### SALUTE TO THE FLAG

During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the Flag or when the Flag is passing in a parade or in a review, all persons present should face the Flag, stand at attention and salute. Those present in uniform should render the right hand



salute. When not in uniform, men should remove the headress with the right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Women should salute by placing the right hand over the heart. The salute to the Flag in the moving column is rendered at the moment the Flag passes.

### SALUTE TO NATIONAL ANTHEM

When the National Anthem is played and the Flag is not displayed, all present should stand and face toward the music. Those in uniform should salute at the first note of the Anthem, retaining this position until the last note. All others should stand at attention, men removing the headress. When the Flag is displayed, the regular "Salute to the Flag" should be given. The "Star-Spangled Banner" is now the National Anthem of the United States of America. It was made such by Act of Congress, March 3, 1931.

### PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

In pledging allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, the approved practice in schools, which is suitable also for civilian adults, is as follows:

Standing with the right hand over the heart, all repeat together the following pledge:

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

However, civilian adults will always show full respect to the Flag, when the pledge is being given, by merely standing at attention, men removing the headress. Persons in uniform should render the right hand salute.

### THE SHIELD

The shield of the United States of America has 13 vertical stripes, 7 white and 6 red, with a blue chief without stars.

### FEDERAL FLAG LAWS

There is but one Federal statute which protects the Flag throughout the country from desecration. This law provides that a trade-mark cannot be registered which consists of or comprises, among other things, "the Flag, coat-of-arms, or other insignia of the United States or any simulation thereof." (33 Stat. L., p. 725, Feb. 20, 1905.)

Congress has also enacted legislation providing certain penalties for the desecration, mutilation or improper use of the Flag within the District of Columbia. (39 Stat. L., p. 900, Feb. 8, 1917.)

### SUGGESTED STATE LEGISLATION

Based upon the opinion of the Supreme Court of the United States of America rendered by Justice John Marshall Harlan, every State should enact adequate laws for the protection of the

Flag. (205 U. S. 34, March 4, 1907.) State Flag laws should provide as follows:

1. That June 14th, Flag Day, be set apart by proclamation of the Governor recommending that Flag Day be observed by people generally by the display of the Flag of the United States of America and in such other ways as will be in harmony with the general character of the day.
2. That the Flag of the United States of America be displayed on the main administration building of every public institution.
3. That the Flag of the United States of America with staff or flagpole be provided for every schoolhouse, and that the Flag be displayed during school days either from a flagstaff or, in inclement weather, within the school building.
4. That the Flag be displayed in every polling place.
5. That printing or lettering of any kind on the Flag be prohibited.
6. That the use of the Flag for advertising purposes in any manner be prohibited.
7. That the use of the Flag as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying or delivering anything be prohibited.
8. That fitting penalty (fine and imprisonment) be provided for public mutilation, abuse or desecration of the Flag.

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all."