

## OUR GRAND OLD FLAG

Although I was very young, the memories relating to World War II are still vivid. Among them were the soldiers who trained for combat in Europe in some woods near the farmhouse where my family lived in Cookeville, Tenn. Watching them from a distance, the uniforms they wore stood for something special. I got that sense from my mother and father. Oftentimes, the American flag was seen waving from their vehicles or in front of their units.

On trips into town with my father, the sight of the Stars and Stripes flying over the courthouse was something that stirred the heart – even as a youngster. As I grew and came to understand more of the significance of the flag, my appreciation for it expanded. Certainly, the freedoms it represents are dear to all Americans.

Friday, June 14, is Flag Day, commemorating the adoption of the flag of the United States, which happened on that day in 1777 by resolution of the Second Continental Congress. It is a time for all citizens of this great nation to celebrate and show respect for this national symbol, its designers and makers. Not only does it signify our independence, which we shall shortly observe on July the Fourth, but it also portrays our unity ... *one nation, under God, indivisible* ... as our Pledge of Allegiance to it proclaims.

The Star Spangled Banner flies in front of most, if not all, Life Care and Century Park centers around the country, and rightly so. To keep it flying was a great sacrifice, willingly given by many residents who occupy our buildings and by others in their families who spilled their blood and gave their lives on its behalf. To respect it, we should take very seriously the rules of etiquette associated with it. Here are the basics on displaying the American flag:

- The flag is normally flown from sunrise to sunset.
- The flag should not be flown at night without a light on it.
- When flown vertically on a pole, the stars and blue field, or “union,” is at the top and at the end of the pole, away from your house or building.
- The American flag is always flown at the top of the pole. A state or corporate flag flies below it.
- In cases of more than one flagpole (and many Life Care and Century Park buildings have three), the American flag should occupy the center pole, if it is a foot-and-a-half taller than the other two. The state flag occupies the pole to the left (as the public faces the entrance to the building) and the Life Care flag is hoisted on the pole to the right. If all three poles are equal in height, the order is (again for an observer facing the building) American flag to the left, state flag in the center and Life Care flag at right.
- The union is always on top. When displayed in print, the stars and blue field are always on the left.
- Never let the flag touch the ground.
- Fold the flag when storing. Do not just stuff it in a drawer or box.
- When the flag is old and has seen better days, retire it. Old flags should be burned or buried. Do not throw it in the trash. There is a very special ceremony for retiring the flag by burning it. Any local Boy Scout troop knows the ceremony and can perform it for you.

So Friday, in particular, take a moment to reflect with pride on our culture, our nation and our flag.