



**FLAG DAY**  
**Sunday, June 14th, 2026**  
**San Juan, Puerto Rico**

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On behalf of our three co-hosts, the Puerto Rico Fiscal Agency and Financial Advisory Authority (AAFAF), the Puerto Rico Convention Center District Authority, and the America 250 Committee, it is our profound honor to welcome you to this Flag Day celebration.

We are especially grateful to AAFAF's staff; and to Veronica Ferraiuoli, Executive Director of the Convention Center District Authority, and her team, for making today possible.

Today we gather beneath one flag, our nation's flag, to mark three milestones, the birth of our nation's stars and stripes, the service and sacrifice of our women veterans defending our country's freedoms, and the 251st birthday of the United States Army.

We are deeply honored by the distinguished guests who join us today. We welcome the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety, Brigadier General Arturo Garffer, the President of the PR Planning Board, Héctor Morales, the Executive Director of PREPA, Mary Zapata, the Executive Director of the Gaming Commission, Juan Santaella, the Commissioner of the 9-1-1 Bureau, José Reyes Cañada, Senator Roxanna Soto Aguilú, and the Executive Director of the America 250 Committee, Tere Riera Carrión.

It is our distinct privilege to recognize our military leadership. We welcome the Adjutant General of Puerto Rico, Brigadier General Carlos Rivera Román. From Fort Buchanan, we are honored to welcome the Garrison Commander, Colonel John D. Samples, the Installation Senior Enlisted Advisor, Command Sergeant Major Kimberly D. Bergman-Gándara, the Deputy to the Garrison Commander, Ulises Marrero, and the Chief Public Affairs Officer, Carlos M. Cuebas. Thank you for your partnership and your service.

To every distinguished guest, service member, veteran, and friend, thank you for being here to celebrate another milestone in our nation's history.

"A more perfect union." Those are the words our founders chose to open the Constitution, not a perfect union, but a more perfect one. From the very beginning, this nation was written as a promise that we would always be reaching toward something more complete than what we are today. More just, freer, with boundless opportunities for every American, and those who would come from other countries and make of ours their new home.

To the brave women who have served, and who serve our country still, you are the patriots who give those words their meaning. Governor Jenniffer González Colón recognizes that you exalt the values our flag represents, and you remind us, in the most personal terms a family can know, that freedom is not free.

Our nation's Army, was America's first national institution, established more than a year before the Declaration of Independence on June 14, 1775. It has not only won our country's independence but has defended, and protected, the foundational tenants of our nation in 11 major officially recognized wars, while also participating in hundreds of conflicts and undeclared wars. It has done so through the sweat, blood, and tears of our brave men and women who have answered the call to serve, with approximately 1.4 million service members making the ultimate sacrifice.

As Americans born on this beautiful island, and alongside all who call Puerto Rico home, we carry a truth in our hearts that we hold close on a day like today, there is a star still missing from our nation's flag.

The banner born in 1777 was called "a new constellation." It began with thirteen stars, which today has grown to fifty, each one added as our union grew, and grew more whole, and more perfect. The People of Puerto Rico believe one star is still waiting to take its place. And only when that star is added, when Puerto Rico stands as a state of the Union, will that constellation be complete, and our more perfect union, at last, be perfected.