

## Our 50-Star American Flag Celebrates Its 50th Anniversary on July 4, 2010

Submitted by [Jim Burnett](#) on July 3, 2010 - 12:02am



The current 50-star version of our American flag is the only design most living Americans have ever known, and it was first raised at an NPS site fifty years ago—on July 4, 1960. Do you know which park had the honor of hosting that event?

The fiftieth star was added to the flag in recognition of Hawaiian statehood, but the first time a flag with that design was officially flown was on the opposite side of the country from Hawaii.



*The huge garrison flag flying over Fort McHenry. NPS photo.*

Given the history of the flag and "The Star Spangled Banner," it seems appropriate that the new 50-star flag was first raised "o'er the ramparts" of [Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine](#), in Baltimore, Maryland. The fort is world-famous as the birthplace of "The Star-Spangled Banner," based on a poem written by [Francis Scott Key](#) in 1814 about the fort's 15-star, 15-stripe flag.

On July 4, 2010, visitors are invited to come celebrate a Hawaiian Fourth of July at Fort McHenry. A ceremony begins at noon with the hoisting of a huge 20-by-38-foot, 50-star flag in a reenactment of the historic 1960 event. [The Aloha Boys](#) will perform traditional Hawaiian music, while the flags of all 50 states line the fort's ramparts.

At 2 p.m., a music program entitled "From Patapsco to Pacific" will highlight both the fifes and drums of 1814 and traditional Hawaiian music. The Hawaiian Fourth of July comes to a close at 4 p.m., when visitors are welcome to help rangers lower the giant flag.

You'll find information about planning a visit to Fort McHenry [on the park's website](#).