Flag heights honor Americans

BY DANA BRUXVOORT
Staff Reporter

America displayed flags at half-staff on Sept. 11 to honor the memory of those who died in the terrorist attacks.

Displaying the flag at half-staff is a sign of mourning, remembrance or respect. In a Sept. 11 press release President Obama encouraged Americans to observe this sign of remembrance.

"I call upon all departments, agencies and instrumentalities of the United States to display the flag of the United States at half-staff … in honor of the individuals who lost their lives as a result of the terrorist attacks against the United States that occurred on September 11, 2001," Obama said.

Obama also declared Sept. 11 Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance.

Eric Shirley, professor of military science, said Truman's ROTC is responsible for maintenance of the flag on campus and lowers the flag to half-staff when instructed by executive order.

"As the military science department, we're an educational entity for Truman, but we're also … active duty military personnel, so we abide by all the customs and courtesies associated with the national colors," Shirley said. "It would never occur to us not to lower the flag when directed by the University or any executive office."

He said respect for the flag and adherence to flag etiquette is important.

"Our nation is represented by the national colors," he said. "And as a physical symbol of the unity of the nation, that's certainly something we hold in the highest regard."

The U.S. Flag Code requires that flags be displayed at half-staff on more than 20 holidays, such as Independence Day and Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The flag also is lowered to half-staff after deaths of designated government leaders, such as a president or former presidents.

"By order of the President, the flag shall be flown at half-staff upon the death of principal figures of the United States Government and the Governor of a State, territory, or possession, as a mark of respect to their memory," according to the Flag Code.

After the death of Sen. Edward Kennedy, flags were flown at half-staff from Aug. 26 to Aug. 30. In situations such as that one, which are not specified in the Flag Code, the president issues an executive order to display flags at half-staff.

The Flag Code specifies the length of time the flag must remain at half-staff after the death of a government official, which varies depending on what position they held.

The significance of lowering the flag to half-staff should not be trivialized and should be done only under the authority of the Flag Code or presidential order, according to the National Flag Foundation.

The Flag Code doesn't specify penalties for misuse of the flag but gives that authority to the states. Each state has its own flag laws.

Scott Holste, spokesman for the Missouri governor's office, said that although there is no federal law requiring flags to be displayed at half-staff on Sept. 11, Missouri state law requires it.

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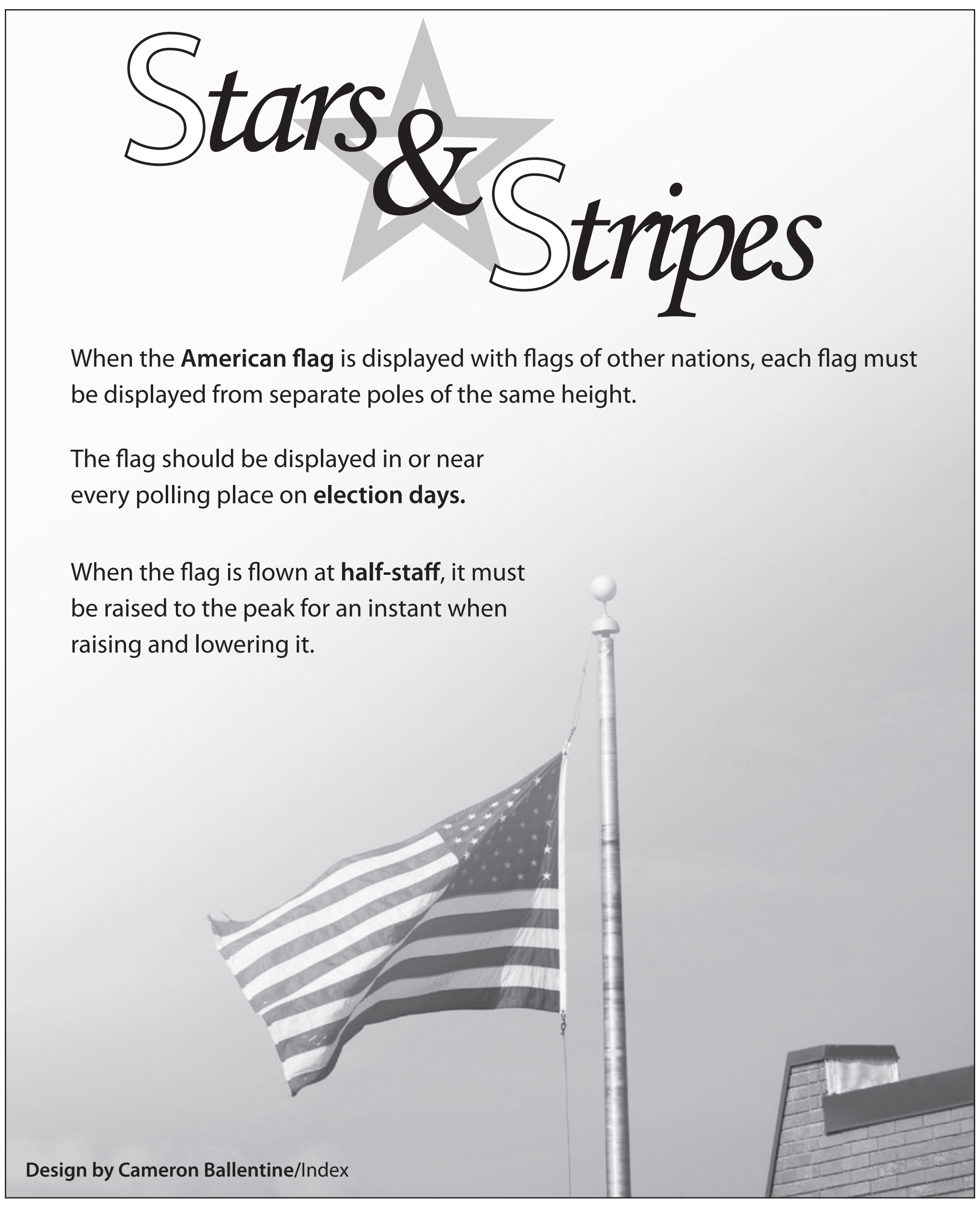
> **Eric Shirley**
> Professor of Military Science

"The United States flag and the Missouri state flag shall be flown at half-staff on all government buildings on each Sept. 11 in honor of the individuals who died as a result of the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001," according to chapter nine of Missouri revised statutes.

Holste said that in other circumstances requiring the flag to be displayed at half-staff, such as the death of a Missouri service member, the governor issues a proclamation.

He said the flag is displayed at half-staff when a Missouri service member dies overseas. On the day of the service member's funeral, the flag is at half-staff from sunrise to sundown. Holste said this has occurred 14 times since Gov. Jay Nixon took office in January.

He said the proclamations usually are obeyed, and typically there are no penalties for not acting in accordance with these executive orders.



Design by Cameron Ballentine/Index

"It's similar to any other directive that would go out from the governor, that something would need to be carried out," Holste said. "It's an order from the governor that goes through the office of administration, and then that order goes out to the various facilities around the state."

In addition to regulations about displaying the flag at half-staff, flag etiquette includes displaying the flag only during daylight unless illuminated, not allowing the flag to touch the ground and disposing of the flag when it's torn or soiled.

Shirley said Americans should respect the national colors and strive to understand flag etiquette.

"Whether you agree or disagree with current policy or individual incidents in our nation's history, we have to recognize that most people here are citizens and have a great many blessings," he said. "And it's just my personal opinion that … as a matter of civic education, everybody should work to understand a little bit more.

"Whether they choose to agree or disagree is certainly their right. But it's always best to understand why there are so many Americans that believe strongly in the proper respect and reverence we hold for the national colors," Shirley said.

Mayank Dhungana/Index
Potential flu cases on campus causes the Health Center to close walk-in hours.

Health center stops walk-in hours

BY JARED YOUNG
Staff Reporter

Students wanting to go to the Student Health Center now must get an appointment.

The health center usually accepts walk-in patients on regular days. But because of the recent health changes on campus, walk-in hours are closed until further notice.

Brenda Higgins, director of the health center, said it normally is not an issue to have multiple people in the waiting room.

"The problem this year is, with the flu going around, we don't want students congregating who are ill in close quarters," Higgins said. "We feel that it's probably better to just have people with appointments."

The health center still is accepting walk-in patients who suffer from mild issues, such as a sore throat. Higgins said closing walk-in hours for more serious health issues is primarily to keep students healthy.

"We're still seeing a number of walk-ins, but we're not having the walk-in clinic where we have large numbers of sick people together," Higgins said. "It's really in the best interests of the students."

Closed walk-in hours are not permanent, however. Higgins said walk-in hours will be reinstated, although she is unsure of when that may occur.

"I can't say for sure when we're going to open up the walk-in clinic because it depends on what the flu does," Higgins said. "If it goes rampant, and we have lots of flu cases, we may want to keep it the way it is right now."

Freshman Taylor Angeli used walk-in hours at the health center earlier this semester. She said using the walk-in time was not as convenient as expected.

"I had to wait a very long time," Angeli said. "It took about an hour and a half."

After experiencing sitting in a waiting room of sick people, Angeli said she understands the reasoning behind closing the health center's walk-in hours.

"There were a lot of people sneezing and coughing," Angeli said. "I was sneezing and coughing [too]. It was kind of gross."