GOD BLESS AMERICA by Irving Berlin

God bless America
Land that I love.
Stand beside her, and guide her
Through the night with a light from above.

From the mountains,
To the prairies,
To the oceans white with foam.
God bless America,
My home, sweet home.

God bless America
My home, sweet home.

The 243rd Anniversary Flag Raising Committee would like to acknowledge the many individuals and businesses whose generous contributions have made this historic event possible. They include: Staff of the Mayor’s Office; DPW, especially Stan Koty, Mike Bowler, Jimmy Roderick, Frank Santangelo, Marty Pantanella & the all-weather Building and Grounds Crew; Joe Constantine & all of the Communications staff; the Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development; Police Chief David Fallon and his staff, Bryan Bishop (Veteran’s Affairs), Charlene at the Somerville Schools Food Service; Public dressed in period attire; Flargraphics of Somerville (large Grand Union flag); the local American Legion and VFW Posts, including the Honor Guard; Union Square Dunkin’ Donuts (coffee & munchkins), Market Basket (cider & cocoa); Fife and Drum Musicians; Bloc Café (heating cider); Adda Santos (cape), Dyan & Richard Blewett, Lois Greenbaum & David Stevens, and Evelyn Battinelli (Refreshments & Sales Tables); Prospect Hill Tower Docents; Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company (www.ahacsitc.org), Rhode Island and Charlestown Militia members; His Majesty’s (HIM) 10th Regiment of Foot (www.redcoat.org/index.html), Dave Loda (George Washington) & his horse Huckleberry Finn McCool of Associated Light Horse in Bolton, CT; David Scott, and very significantly, the Staff and volunteers from Historic Somerville, Inc. and the Somerville Museum.

The Flag Raising Planning Committee: Evelyn Battinelli (Somerville Museum); Eileen Schofield & Lois Greenbaum (Historic Somerville); Jackie Rossetti (Communications); COL. Lawrence A. Willwerth (Coordinator, AHAC) and Brandon Wilson (Somerville Historic Preservation Commission).
On Prospect Hill
January 1, 1776

by Sam Walter Foss

"But who are these plain plowmen here, These wielders of the axe and plow, In awkward regimental gear, Drawn up in loose parade?"
"Why, these are empire builders, man, The greatest since the world began."

"Who are these cohorts from the wood?" "They are the vanguard files of fate, Proud men of red, imperial blood, High, regal souls, and great, The children of a haughty name, The sires of states and sons of fame."

"And here to-day breaks on this height The sun-burst of a nation's morn, That unknown banner greets the fight That sees an empire born, And these wide ranks that round us stand Are fathers of a mighty land."

They flung their banner to the wind, They flung it in the face of foes. And thus they published to mankind That human nature grows, And that a youngling state had grown Too big for insults from a throne.

That flag now floats from many a height, And waves its word from crag to crag, Beyond the day, across the night, - The sunrise and the sunset flag: That flag is flown by every breeze, Across the world and all its seas.

And as it waves from slope to slope From sea to sea, or far or near, Ah, may it never shame the hope Of those strong men who placed it here, But be, on sea or shore unfurled, The banner of the hope of the world.

Yankee Doodle

Chorus
Yankee doodle dandy, Mind the music and the step And with the girls be handy

Father and I went down to camp, Along with Captain Gooding, And there we see the men and boys As thick as hasty pudding.

Chorus
And there we see a thousand men, As rich as Squire David, And what they wanted every day, I wish it had been saved.

Chorus
And there we see a swamping gun, Large as a fog of maple, Upon a ducal little cart, A load for father's cattle.

Chorus
And every time they shoot it off, It takes a horn of powder, And makes a noise like father's gun, Only a nation louder.
Commemoration of the 243rd Anniversary of the Raising of the First Flag of the United Colonies

Tuesday, January 1st, 2019

11 AM
Procession departs City Hall led by Gen. George Washington on horseback followed by local dignitaries and youth, the Honor Guard from the American Legion Post 19, the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company (AHAC), HM's 10th Regiment of Foot, and the Charlestown and Rhode Island Militia.

Fife and Drum Music; members of Glover's Marblehead Regiment and Rhode Island Militia

Welcome & Introduction of Honored Guests
Ben Ewen-Campen, Ward 3, Board of Aldermen

Invocation
Matthew Mees, Chaplain, Gardner's Regiment

Opening Remarks
Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

Historical Context
J. Brandon Wilson, Executive Director, Historic Preservation Commission
Captain Tom Coots, Charlestown Militia
Colonel Ronald Barnes, Rhode Island Militia under General Nathaniel Green
LTC Paul O'Shaughnessy, HM's 10th Regiment of Foot (King George's delegate)
COL (MA) Lawrence A. Willwerth, AHAC Quartermaster & Commander of Troop
Byron DeLear, Vexillologist and PH Flag book author, St. Louis, MI

Musical Selections - All are encouraged to join in!
David Scott, Associate Professor, Voice Department, Berklee School of Music
“Yankee Doodle” verses circa 1775

Musical Selection: “This Land is Your Land” by Woody Guthrie*

Greetings from the Continental Congress

Presentation of the Grand Union Flag by General George Washington to the Flag Escort Party

Raising of the Grand Union Flag
Honors to the Grand Union Flag (bugle call “To the Colors”)

Closing
Pledge of Allegiance led by His Honor Mayor Curtatone
Song led by David Scott – “God Bless America” by Irving Berlin*

Unfurling of Unit Flag – Charlestown Militia
Musical Selection: “Let There Be Peace”

1 PM
Refreshments, Historic Table, Horse Greetings, and Mingling
(regardless of rain, snow, sleet or high winds!)

* Words to be found in the Program

---

**THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND**
Words and music by Woody Guthrie

Chorus:
This land is your land, this land is my land
From California, to the New York Island
From the redwood forest, to the gulf stream waters
This land was made for you and me

As I was walking a ribbon of highway
I saw above me an endless skyway
I saw below me a golden valley
This land was made for you and me

Chorus

I've roamed and rambled and I've followed my footsteps
To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts
And all around me a voice was sounding
This land was made for you and me

Chorus

The sun comes shining as I was strolling
The wheat fields waving and the dust clouds rolling
The fog was lifting a voice came chanting
This land was made for you and me

Siege of Boston

Following the battles of Lexington & Concord, the British Army retreated to Boston. Militia units and men throughout Massachusetts and New England assembled and besieged the town. The posting of the guards and the fortification of Union Square and Roxbury convinced the British a siege was on. General William Burgoyne described Somerville's part this way: "...invested by a rabble in arms, who, flushed with success and insolence had advanced their sentries to pistol shot of our outguards, the ships in the harbor exposed to, and expecting a cannonade or bombardment." On June 17, 1775 the greatest battle during the siege was fought at Bunker Hill. After the battle, the New England troops retreated back to Somerville, then known as "Charlestown beyond the neck." They increased the strength of their fortifications around the central and strongest positions possible, on Winter Hill and on Prospect Hill. These fortifications defined the greatest battle during the siege was fought at Bunker Hill. After the battle, the New England troops retreated back to Somerville, known as "Charlestown beyond the neck." They increased the strength of their fortifications around the central and strongest positions possible, on Winter Hill and on Prospect Hill. These fortifications defined the eight miles of defensive positions from the Mystic River, through Cambridge to Roxbury, including all of Somerville land within. General Washington assigned two of his best commanders to defend these key positions -- Winter Hill under the command of Brigadier General John Sullivan, and Prospect Hill under Brigadier General Nathaniel Greene.

On June 14, 1775, the Second Continental Congress authorized the formation of a Continental Army of 39 militia units, and subsequently appointed General George Washington as its Commander. He transformed armed civilians in the militia coming from throughout New England and beyond into soldiers and an Army. He also directed a 76 foot mast to be erected as a flag pole on top of Prospect Hill, the highest point of the fortification. Throughout the siege in 1775, the increasing number of fortifications in Somerville (Ploughed Hill in September; Cobble Hill in November; and Lechmere Point in December) played a pivotal role in directing and supporting military operations against the British. This was accomplished in spite of strong opposition and harassing fire by the British, as well as famine and smallpox plaguing the region. By December 1775 the soldiers of the Cobble Hill fort were successful in driving away menacing British ships in the harbor. Later that month, Winter Hill troops made a daring attempt to capture English pickets in adjacent Charlestown. Unfortunately, an accidental musket discharge during the crossing alarmed the British and the mission was abandoned.

First Flag Raised on Prospect Hill in Defiance of Great Britain

By December 1775, "The Siege of Boston" had gone on for eight long months without any clear outcome. Winter had arrived. Reconciliation with King George III had been unsuccessful. The soldiers had not been paid. They wanted to go home. Morale was low. The future was in doubt. How would it be possible for a new Continental Army to be established in January 1776 and survive in the middle of a siege of over 11,000 British soldiers, as most enlistment ended on December 31, 1775?

No flag existed at that time to represent all of the Colonies as a young American nation. General Washington requested Congress through Benjamin Franklin to create a new national flag -- to symbolize colonial unity and coincide with the establishment of a Continental Army. The first national flag, the "Great Union" Flag, was authorized by Congress and sent to General Washington in December 1775.

On Monday, January 1, 1776 the British sent copies through the Rebel Lines of King George III's Speech to Parliament, declaring war on the Colonies, to challenge American resolve. In response, General Washington directed the new flag to be immediately flown at the most visible point, on Prospect Hill. Washington's correspondence states "we had hoisted the Union Flag in compliment to the United Colonies...on the day which gave being to the New Army." This flag was clearly visible to all, especially the British garrison in Boston. Its display reminded the British we are very much here to stay. The Colonists, once angry British citizens, had been transformed into independent Americans!

By January 1776, all the doubt and pessimism of a month before had changed. In spite of many obstacles, the Continental Army was successfully created. Many soldiers had reenlisted and asked to stay the course. The "Great Union" Flag, also known as "Continental Colors," waved proudly atop Prospect Hill. Later in the month, cannons previously captured from Fort Ticonderoga, NY and dragged 150 miles on sleds to Boston by Colonel Henry Knox, were emplaced in the American fortifications. This artillery plus the new resolve forced the evacuation of the British army from Boston in March 1776 -- the first American military victory of the Revolution! This victory, combined with the publication of Thomas Paine's "Common Sense," made independence from England a realistic possibility.

The "Great Union," now called the "Grand Union" flag, displayed thirteen stripes of alternating red and white, symbolizing the thirteen colonies. The Union Flag of Great Britain was placed at the upper left, as our independence had yet to be declared. A tablet was erected in 1896 at the corner of Monroe Street and Prospect Hill Drive, to commemorate this flag-raising event.

With us today, 242 years later, are representatives of military organizations and members that served during the "Siege of Boston" and witnessed the first flag raising on January 1, 1776: The Rhode Island, Charlestown and Bedford, Mass. militia; The Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts; and Her Majesty's 10th Regiment of Foot.

Prospect Hill-- and its Early History

From "A History of the Hill" by William Preble Jones

Few spots throughout the length and breadth of this country have as many incidents in their history as Prospect Hill.

In its connection with the American Revolution chiefly lies the fame of Prospect Hill. Close to its foot the British marched on their way to Concord and Lexington on the night of April 18, 1775, and again they skirted its base late in the afternoon of the following day, when they received the hottest fire during their disastrous retreat. A month later Col. Patterson's regiment occupied an unfortified breastwork at the foot of the Hill. On the evening of June 16, 1775, Col. Prescott marched from Cambridge, with one thousand men, along the foot of the hill to fortify Bunker Hill, and during the memorable struggle of the seventeenth the hill was occupied by the American reserves. Retreating from Bunker Hill, the Americans took a defiant stand on Prospect Hill, and immediately began to fortify it, under the orders of Gen. Israel Putnam, who superintended the work in person. From then till the British were driven out of Boston, March 17, 1776, it was the strongest and most important fortification in the American lines and a constant menace to the enemy. Nearly four thousand American troops, under the immediate command of General Nathaniel Greene, were encamped here during the Siege of Boston. At a later period two thousand three hundred British troops from General Burgoyne's surrendered army were quartered in the barracks on the hill for about a year.
George R. Washington declared that copies of the "Ensign Speech" should be distributed to the 60,000 men and women in the Continental Army. This flag, known as the "Grand Union Flag," was adopted by the Continental Congress on November 14, 1775. It contained the flags of the 13 original colonies and symbolized the union of the American colonies. Considered the "first flag of America," the Grand Union flag was first displayed on the Continental Navy's flagship, Alfred, on 3 December 1775 and was in use until late 1777. Courtesy of Duane Stroud; for USFlagDepot.com
General George Washington, Continental Army Commander

Brigadier General Nathaniel Greene, Prospect Hill Commander

Prospect Hill 1775-1776

Prospect Hill and the "Siege of Boston"

In 1898, Charles D. Elliot, formerly city engineer, traced the outline of the fortification at Prospect Hill and vicinity. On the map above, one can easily understand the system of fortifications. Cobble Hill is Asylum Hill; Lechmere Point is East Cambridge; Willis Creek is Miller's River, now filled; Fort Number Three was located near the former Union Square Station on the Fitchburg Railroad. Cambridge Road is the present Washington Street. Also note the road to Menotomy (Arlington), Bow Street and Somerville Avenue; the road to Lee's headquarters, Newton and Prospect Streets, and the road to Ploughed (Nunnery) Hill, Shawmut and Cross Streets. Strong Redoubts encircled the steep brows of Prospect Hill, while the citadel occupied a commanding place at the summit.

For more information see "A History of the Hill" by William Preble Jones, April 11, 1896.