



Introducing the Bunker Hill Flag

Bunker Hill Day marks the anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill, also known as the Battle of Breed's Hill, on June 17 each year. This battle, which occurred in 1775, was part of the Siege of Boston. This siege took place during the American War of Independence.

The Charlestown Peninsula is north of the Charles River and south of the Mystic River and extends about one mile into Boston Harbor. There are two hills on Charlestown Peninsula: Bunker Hill in the north; and Breed's Hill in the south. On June 16, 1775, Colonel William Prescott and approximately 1,500 soldiers moved into the area and started to build a fortification on Breed's Hill. In the early hours of the next morning, they were spotted by a British Navy ship. The British attacked and conquered the peninsula, but about 1500 people died in the battle.

The Flag of Bunker Hill consists of a dark blue rectangle, with a white square on the upper part of the flag, which is hung closest to the flag pole. The white square contains an image of Saint George's cross, which is a symbol of England. A tree is depicted in the upper left quarter of the Saint George's cross.

John Trumbull, known for his historic detail, and who witnessed the battle through a spyglass, used a blue flag with a pine tree in his painting *The Death of General Warren*

at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Another flag which commonly represents the battle has a plain blue flag and a canton quartered with cross of St. George (the symbol of England) and a tree in a quarter of the canton.

Although possibly inspired by the Blue Ensign of the Royal Navy, the blue field is said to have been due to an error in a wood engraving, causing confusion with painters. However, Benson John Lossing writes in *Field Book of the Revolution* that he interviewed the daughter of a Bunker Hill veteran who told her that he hoisted a blue flag on Breed's Hill prior to the battle. Regardless of its authenticity, the blue variation of the New England flag has become a symbol of the Battle of Bunker Hill.

This flag flies over Sons of Liberty Aleworks for the month of June, commemorating the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17th, 1775.

