



# Introducing the Navy Jack Flag

## The Continental Navy:

The Continental Navy was the navy of the United States during the American Revolutionary War, and was formed in 1775. Through the efforts of the Continental Navy's patron, John Adams, and vigorous Congressional support in the face of stiff opposition, the fleet cumulatively became relatively substantial when considering the limitations imposed upon the Patriot supply pool.

The United States Navy recognizes October 13, 1775 as the date of its official establishment, the date of the passage of the resolution of the Continental Congress at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania that created the Continental Navy. On this day, Congress authorized the purchase of two vessels to be armed for a cruise against British merchant ships; these ships became *Andrew Doria* and *Cabot*. The first ship in commission was the *USS Alfred* which was purchased on November 4 and commissioned on December 3 by Captain Dudley Saltonstall. On November 10, 1775, the Continental Congress passed a resolution calling for two battalions of Marines to be raised for service with the fleet. John Adams drafted its first governing regulations, which were adopted by Congress on November 28,

1775 and remained in effect throughout the Revolution. The Rhode Island resolution was reconsidered by the Continental Congress and was passed on December 13, 1775, authorizing the building of thirteen frigates within the next three months, five ships of 32 guns, five with 28 guns and three with 24 guns. On December 22, 1775, Esek Hopkins was appointed the naval commander-in-chief, and officers of the navy were commissioned

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In the fall of 1775, as the first ships of the Continental Navy readied in the Delaware River, Commodore Esek Hopkins (the only Commander in Chief of the Continental Navy during the American Revolutionary War) issued a set of fleet signals. Among these signals was an instruction directing his vessels to fly a striped Jack and Ensign. This first U.S. Navy Jack has traditionally been shown as consisting of 13 horizontal alternating red and white stripes with a superimposed rattlesnake and the motto

"Don't Tread on Me." The rattlesnake had long been a symbol of resistance to British repressive acts in Colonial America; its display on the new jack of the fledgling Continental Navy fit naturally with the fervor of the times.

