

# FLAG TRIBUTES A SELECTION

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*In response to many requests, this selection of tributes to the flag is made available. They will add to any patriotic program with their messages of inspiration.*

## THE MAKING OF THE FLAG

*(Tribute written by M.W Bro. Paul H. Dorsey, Jr., Past Grand Master, Oklahoma.)*

Oh! Gallant Banner, red and white and blue, how bold I see you in your peace and quiet grandeur there-A bit of cloth and splash Or color that conceals The valor and devotion written in each fold.

You draw my gaze and compel me to look upon you with awe and reverence! As in a dream, my thoughts touch on moments from history past and the scenes flash across my consciousness like pictures on a movie screen. I see-

Those dedicated and farsighted men, so well acquainted with our Brotherhood, who laid the foundation-stones of our Democracy; who in Boston Harbor brought the kettle to a boil and brewed a giant cup of tea--then, in the darkness, a winking light high above the river, then muffled oars, then horsemen riding desperately to rouse the countryside against marauding Redcoat-Lexington and Concord, men fighting as no fight was ever fought before--with our great Brother Washington as he and his beleaguered men survived the terrible hardships of the bitter wintering at Valley Forge--and at Yorktown where Independence's victory was gained.

I know, proud Flag, you were not there; but, those men, those deeds are woven in the fabric that you wear.

And still more I see-

A young man, captive on a British ship, after night-long battle, saw you, 'Star-Spangled', still flying proudly above a battered fort; and there your song was born. In masquerade, a single star, you waved above a lonely mission as brave men fought and died for freedom at the Alamo. You were there with dashing 'Teddy' as his Roughriders conquered San Juan Hill--and with our 'Doughboys' in the trenches of French battlefields as they fought and tipped the scale of victory 'Over There'. And then! that day of awful infamy when 'Rising Sun' erupted from the sky in treachery and brave men died without a chance to strike a blow in your defense. It seems beyond the bounds of possibility that you survived that dreadful moment; and yet, you staggered on and slowly, surely gained your strength as battle after frightful battle was fought. And Oh! your day of glory came when Iwo Jima's sands were breached and, high upon the mountain, brave Marines raised your proud colors.

Oh! how I laughed and cheered and wept with pride To see you in your glory there above the smoke And guns and blazing bush and shattered earth And straining men whose efforts changed the battle's tide.

More pictures pass--and many are the deeds from history's pages that stir my memories. They are the bold threads of your tapestry, each one speaking of those 'Makers of the Flag' whose lives are the stuff of story and of legend. But, they are not all the threads, nor even most, because--

The tired, the poor, the weary, come home to us, are 'Makers of the Flag'. You raise the wheat--you mine the coal--you make the steel--you enforce the laws--you teach our children--you bring God's Word to us--you do all the things which must be done to make our country, this one we live in, great. You are truly 'Makers of the Flag'!

And so, I make my tribute to this Gallant Banner, which thrills me when I am in its presence and excites my deepest feelings when I sing its 8888. But, I also dedicate this tribute to each of you for your part in 'The Making of The Flag!'

## FREEDOM'S BANNER

(A presentation given at The Grand Lodge of Oklahoma by Wor. Bro Allan D. Large, Grand Flag Bearer.)

As we meet today under the protective folds of Old Glory and pause to pay tribute to it, let us reflect on its glorious history and contemplate the things for which it stands.

The Stars and Stripes was born two-hundred and ten years ago amid the first flames of America's fight for freedom. She has seen the transition from horses pulling carriages over cobblestone streets to silver jets streaking across wide blue skies. She has traveled from New York to San Francisco, from Chicago to New Orleans, across every sea and across every continent. Her pride has been unfurled on sailing ships, steamers and mighty vessels of armed power to bring peace and freedom to oppressed people throughout the world. She has soared on the tip of a mighty Saturn with blazing engines through the silent seas of space until she stood proudly on the gray surface of the shining moon.

She was in the hands of our first President in the blood and snow at Valley Forge and was there when our Nation was born--small, with a wilderness at her back and seas at her sides, and not one friendly neighbor to whom she could call for help.

She has been the inspiration for untold millions, many of whom have followed her into battle so that we might continue to enjoy the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness which have been granted to every American as the heritage of free men. And when they have given the ultimate sacrifice for her cause, she gently wraps them in her love and drapes her honors over their caskets. She flies proudly over their green graves, where ever they may be, praying that wars might end forever. She never forgets them as her color is dyed a richer hue with their blood. She rises every morning to watch over the graves of our finest men whose years were short but whose service was longer than we can ever measure.

Our flag is a symbol of a nation such as the world has never known because she represents something the world has never seen--a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. History gives no example of any nation, other than America, championing the cause of the oppressed and downtrodden peoples of earth, asking no reward except that all people have a right to live peaceably without fear of aggression or dictatorship. We ask only that people be allowed to be free as God intended. For no country knows greater freedom than our country--freedom for each to choose his life's work; freedom to travel from state to state without having to obtain permission from dictator-like authorities; freedom to try and succeed; freedom to fail and not be cast into prison for honest failure; freedom to speak, write, praise, question or criticize anyone regardless of how high his station or rank; freedom to save and to build; freedom to worship or not to worship, as your own mind and heart dictates.

But freedom has a tremendous cost. Reflect on the words of George Washington at Valley Forge when--cold, wet, and hungry--in the snow and wind he turned to one of his officers and said: "This liberty will seem so cheap to those who will not have to pay its cost." Those freedoms which we possess might seem cheap to people who have not had to pay the full price for them. I wonder what America would be like today without the sacrifice of those who loved their country more than themselves and mercy more than life. These people gave us a great gift, so how do we show our gratitude? By erecting statues? Statues are impressive, but they end up mainly being tourist attractions. Placing a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is a nice gesture--but eventually the wreath withers and is forgotten. Speeches are good, but they vanish almost as the words are spoken. Let us look to the Bible in the First Epistle of John, chapter 3 verse 18 for the answer: "Let us not love in word neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." So how do we love in deed and truth? We can live lives dedicated to the faithful, intelligent use of our freedom symbolized by our flag.

Above all else, in gratitude to God and to all who have given so much, we must have a real concept of "one nation under God", united in defense of truth and the American Dream so that America might have a new birth of freedom. To accomplish this rebirth, we pass the Red, White and Blue to our younger generation with the admonition of our late President John F. Kennedy:

"Let the word go forth from this time and place to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans. "Let every nation know whether it wishes us well or ill that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friends, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty. "Now the trumpet summons us again not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need, not as a call to battle, though embattled we are, but as a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself."

Let us pledge our loyalty to this great flag that expresses the will of a free people. Let us be obedient to every thing it represents; our country's laws, our constitutional authority, a recognition of the right of every human being to the enjoyment of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Let us remember that when we pledge allegiance to our flag, that we are honoring and saying thanks to every man, woman and child who has suffered and died--directly or indirectly--for our

country which has been made great by their sacrifice. Let us preserve and defend this grand old flag at home and abroad and thereby bequeath a priceless heritage to generations yet unborn.