

OLD GLORY

"I am the flag of the United States of America. My name is Old Glory. I fly atop the world's tallest buildings. I stand watch in America's halls of justice. I stand guard majestically over great institutions of learning.

I stand guard with the greatest military power in the world. Look up and see me. I stand for peace, honor, truth and justice. I stand for freedom. I am confident; I am arrogant; I am proud. When I am flown with my fellow banners, my head is a little higher, my colors a little truer. I bow to no one. I am recognized all over the world.

I am worshipped. I am loved and I am feared. I have fought in every battle of every war for more than 200 years: Gettysburg, Shilo, Appomattox, San Juan Hill, the trenches of France, the Argonne Forest, Anzio, Rome, the beaches of Normandy, Guam, Okinawa, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, in the Persian Gulf and a score of places long forgotten, by all but those who were there with me. I was there.

I led my Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines. I followed them and watched over them. They loved me. I was on a small hill in Iwo Jima. I was dirty, battle-worn and tired, but my Marines and Sailors cheered me. And I was proud. I have been soiled, burned, torn and trampled on the streets of countries that I have helped set free. It does not hurt, for I have been soiled, burned, torn and trampled on the streets of my own country. and when it is by those I have served in battle with, it hurts. But I shall overcome, for I am strong. I have slipped the bonds of earth and from my vantagepoint on the moon, I stand watch over the uncharted new frontiers of space.

I have been silent witness to all of America's finest hours. But my finest hour comes when I am torn in strips to be used as bandages for my wounded comrades on the field of battle - when I fly at half mast to honor my Soldiers, my Airman, my Sailors, my Marines, and - when I lie in the trembling arms of a grieving mother, at the graveside of her fallen son or daughter.

I am proud. My name is "Old Glory." Long may I wave, dear God, long may I wave."