



MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE, SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY

As this article is being written the country is agonizing over whether or not to send more troops to Iraq. One Senator said, "This may be the most important decision we've made in the last seventy five years". That sounds like a bit of hyperbole.

Yes, this is an important and complicated matter, but there have always been difficult times. The following is a partial list of things I have witnessed in my lifetime:

The Great Depression, World War 2, the Korean War, the nuclear and Cuban missile crisis, the Cold War, the bloody civil rights period of the 60's, President Kennedy and Martin Luther King's assassinations, the Viet Nam War, Watergate, the hostage crisis, the Iraq invasion of Kuwait, and 9/11. Add to this the dozens of natural disasters including, particularly, hurricanes Andrew, Katrina and Rita.

Believe me, it is not my intention to minimize the seriousness of what is currently happening. Like all of us, I mourn the loss of every serviceman and woman who is killed and pray for the thousands who have been injured. However by reviewing some of the tragedies of the last 75 years we are better able to put the current situation in perspective.

While it is natural to debate the pros and cons of decisions our government makes, I do know this: if our military and political leaders, with all the information that is available to them, are not sure of the right course, there is nothing I can add to the debate. Instead I prefer to dwell on the positives of living in the United States of America.

Yesterday I woke up early and decided to take a ride to a favorite spot to watch the sunrise. It was a beautiful day and I felt so fortunate and thankful God had given me the gift of sight so I could fully appreciate this glorious morning.

I turned on the car radio and was greeted by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. I had left the CD entitled "God Bless America" in the player. Totally mesmerized, I listened to that great choir sing *America the Beautiful, My Country 'Tis of Thee, This Land Is Your Land, You're A Grand Old Flag and The Star Spangled Banner*. As I turned away from the sun, sure enough, there was Old Glory, the most beautiful flag in the world and the symbol of freedom, glimmering in the morning light.

I listened on to *Yankee Doodle Dandy, Anchors Aweigh, The Marine and Air Force Hymns. Then, The Caissons Go Rolling Along*. I joined in, thinking back to a time when my infantry unit sang that song as we proudly marched mile after mile to our new base in Germany.

The lyrics and the music summarized so well why this country is so very special. My eyes would no longer hold the tears that had welled up. I realized once again how incredibly lucky I am to be an American.

In spite of all the good things we have, many people seem to find a lot to complain about. Thankfully, the First Amendment guarantees them the right to do so. A friend of mine, who fought in two wars, has a wonderful response to the complainers. "Have you noticed there are no lines of people waiting to leave the country, only lines of people waiting to come in?"

Yes, "*My Country Tis Of Thee, Sweet Land Of Liberty*". [GTW | 5.15.16](#)