

AggieLife

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THE BATTALION

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For patriots' pride

Centuries old, the American flag still flies as a symbol of freedom and glory

By HEATHER CAMPBELL
THE BATTALION

Crouched down amid the dust and fog of the morning, Francis Scott Key, author of the "Star Spangled Banner," peered through a telescope after the War of 1812. What he saw left him awestruck, as a huge American flag caught the morning breeze. It inspired him to write the song that became the national anthem.

Red, white and blue represent the very essence of freedom and ripple in the wind as the American flag flies high. The flag stands on the moon, sits atop Mount Everest and displays the country's motto of "liberty and justice for all" in many places. Recent events have inspired the nation to reflect on the truth of the flag and what it stands for.

"The American flag is displayed in pride and waves in defiance," said President George W. Bush after the Sept. 11 attacks.

With stars and stripes flying from cars, houses, fences and backpacks, Texas A&M students proudly illustrate their patriotism. Americans have always respected the flag and the meaning behind it, but now more than ever, our country realizes the importance of protecting it.

Jeff Reedy, manager of Scripture Haven, said floods of people bought flags soon after the attacks.

"We completely sold out of flags and reordered hundreds of them," Reedy said. "We expect the next shipment to go just as quickly."

Holly Scurry, a junior speech communications major, recently added to her assortment of flags.

"It's such a joy to see American flags everywhere you turn," Scurry said. "To me, the flag is a symbol of hope that our nation is turning back to God... the very basis of what our country was founded on. The flag goes deeper than pride in our country. It is a reminder of where our country has been and where we are going."

Today's American flag has a long history

behind it as it has changed its appearance and symbolism throughout America's triumphs and defeats.

Betsy Ross, the legendary seamstress of the first American flag, lived a life of triumph

many Americans, a new passion arises as they sing and reflect.

"When I go to baseball games, I now think twice before crossing my hand over my heart and singing the anthem," said Billy Wand, a junior

flag with more than 425 knots in it demonstrates love for America's national symbol. Another flag displays dollar bills that were stitched together, amounting to 157 dollars. More than 2,400 red, white and blue pencils assembled to form a crinkled look with splattered paint and bent tin, also covers the walls.

Important flags from past wars hang from the ceiling. "Remember Pearl Harbor" was inscribed across the red and white stripes to encourage people to buy war bonds to support soldiers overseas. In 1914, the United States became engulfed in Europe's Great War and an American soldier embroidered a blanket with flags on it for his parents that reads "Mother and Father."

The "Star Spangled Banner" has played almost non-stop since the events of Sept. 11 and it can send chills through the spine and stir pride in American hearts every time. During the War of 1812, British bomb ships hurled shells toward Fort Mchenry and continued through the rainy night. They desperately needed a flag at the top of the fort and Maj. George Armistead called for one. As the flag waved in the wind and shots echoed through the night, Key visited the enemy's fleet to rescue a doctor who had been captured by the British. As the light of dawn appeared the next morning, he anxiously awaited the outcome of the battle. Scanning the red, white and blue flying over lifeless Americans who had struggled for our country, Key immediately began writing the verses of what is now our national anthem.

After that moment, Key said that "through the clouds of the war the stars of that banner still shone in my view, and I saw the discomfited host of its assailants driven back in ignominy to their ships. In that hour of deliverance and joyful triumph, my heart spoke: Does not such a country and such defenders deserve such a song?"

Francis Scott Key experienced an indescribable feeling as he truly saw that "our flag was still there."



ZEEL AMBEKAR • THE BATTALION

through adversity. She grew up as the eighth of 17 children, later to be disowned by the Quakers because of an inter-denominational marriage. She lost three husbands, and two of her daughters died at infancy. Every Sunday, she prayed in a pew next to George Washington. Washington noticed her and asked her to show him a drawing of a six-pointed star. Impressed with her skills, he entrusted her to make the first flag. The flag was adopted June 14, 1777, as the Continental Congress sought to promote national pride and unity.

The routine of reciting the pledge of allegiance at school every morning and saluting to the flag at sporting events used to be redundant, but for

sports management major. "Americans don't take our flag or our freedom for granted anymore."

In the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, the current feature exhibit, "Stripes and Stars," displays a flag made of baseballs and bats commemorating the opening day of American baseball season on ESPN.

The "Stripes and Stars" display features unique flags and designs that adorn walls and display cases. Everything from pegboards to car radiator caps and even ice cream molds have the flag imprinted on them. The home-made flags show the overwhelming pride Americans have for their country. A tied silk

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