

“Our Country”

I have often wondered what it would have been like growing up in a large city with a population of thousands of people. I have often wondered what it would have been like growing up in a city in the late 1800's, a time when our country was young and life appeared to be less complicated. Baltimore was such a city during this time period. A city of prosperity that aligned itself with many specialized jobs connected to trade and shipbuilding. But, during this time period Baltimore would face challenges of war. I have never wondered what it would be like to grow up in a time or a city where the threat of war was as close as next door. During this time period our country would declare war on the British. The people of Baltimore would be faced with defending their city. Fort McHenry was built as a line of defense for the city of Baltimore. It is in this environment that one man, Francis Scott Key, would find himself trying to help a friend and in the process he would be detained by the British until the British attack on Fort McHenry had taken place. Francis Scott Key was placed on a British warship and witnessed the attack on Fort McHenry. As nightfall came the American Flag of Fort McHenry was still visible from the British ship that he was on and the attack and bombardment of Fort McHenry continued all night. On the morning of September 14, 1814, Key noticed that the flag was still flying and he scribbles on a piece of paper “O say, can you see, by the dawn's early light...” Today this flag still flies visibly from many locations throughout our country and this world. It continues to fly “O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.”

The land of the free. Revolutionary War total deaths 4,435. War of 1812 total battle deaths 2,260. Civil war total battle deaths 214,938. World War I total battle deaths 53,402. World War II total battle deaths 291,557. Korean War total battle deaths 33,741. Vietnam Conflict total battle deaths 47,424. Desert Shield / Desert Storm total battle deaths 147. Current involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq total battle deaths 4,000 plus. Yes, we do live in the land of the free and Lee Greenwood puts it quite well for me when he wrote:

“Cause the Flag still stands for freedom and they can't take that away. I'm proud to be an American where at least I know I'm free and I won't forget the men who died who gave that right to me.”

And to remember those who died must be a reminder to all of us that this land and its freedoms that we cherish have been paid for. The cost has been and is more than we can ever repay to the *“men who died who gave that right to me.”*

In the 1800's for many of our founding fathers the Bible was the absolute Truth. It would also be the foundation for which this nation would be based, One Nation under God. With over 200 years having passed since Our Country's earliest times and with the simple understanding that we are a blessed nation, it is my hope that we understand that these blessings have not occurred by accident or chance. They are the absolute true blessings from God and for these blessings to continue on our nation we must remain One Nation under God.

Richard Hurt – Retired Teacher