

Our flag Has flown In So Many Places

by Gordon Graham
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Memorial Day has come and gone once again and most of our lives are back to a normal pace after the parades and family cook-outs that took place over that long weekend. Our flag, the stars and stripes, now as prominently displayed on front porches, on cars, bicycles and boats and in the hands of kids watching the parade that afternoon.

Everywhere you looked you saw "Old Glory" flying in the breeze, reminding us of the importance of the day, the day we have chosen to honor our war dead. And that's the way it should be! After all our flag is the symbol of our country, and the men we honor on that day gave their lives for what it represents.

Ever since Betsy Ross first sat down to sew together the 13 stars and 13 stripes that represented the original 13 states, the flag has stood for our desire for freedom and remains so today. Our dear old flag has been to some very interesting places since then, the only change being the addition of a star as states were admitted to the union.

It flew over Fort McHenry during the war of 1812 and remained flying in spite of the merciless bombardment by the British, inspiring Francis Scott Key to write our National Anthem "The Star Spangled Banner." Our flag was there when the wagon trains moved west. And, can you ever remember seeing any old western movie when the leading rider in the cavalry charge didn't have an American flag anchored to his saddle, flapping in the breeze, on his way to rescue the beleaguered settlers.

Our flag was there when Theodore Roosevelt made his way up San Juan hill. It was there when our "doughboys" went over the top during World War One. And it was there, flying from the masts

of the ships as they approached the beaches of Normandy. And who can forget the famous picture of the flag raising on Mt. Suribachi by the marines on Iwo Jima.

Our flag was at Pusan, Taegu, Inchon and the Chosen reservoir in Korea! The red, white and blue was in Vietnam in places

with strange names like Saigon, Pleiku and Nha Trang. It was on the tanks and armored cars as our troops chased Saddam out of Kuwait during Desert Storm, and our flag is visible today in Bosnia as our servicemen attempt to keep the peace.

Yes, our flag has even been to the moon! But one of the more important places you'll find our flag at this time of the year is on the graves of our fallen comrades, placed there annually out of respect, by those of us who served alongside the men and women who paid the ultimate price for the freedoms we enjoy today. So, the next time you visit the family plot to pay

respects to your loved ones, look for one of those small flags take a minute, go over and read the plain bronze marker that identifies the man who served his country. You won't find a fancy stone with glorious inscriptions you'll simply find the man's name, his date of birth and death, his rank and his branch of service. That's the way he'd want it!

Editors Note: This piece was written before the attacks on New York and Washington DC on September 11, 2001. Because of the renewed patriotic feelings about America it is most appropriate to show our beautiful flag once again.

