What Makes America Great?

(by Damon Stone)

What makes America great? Is it the people? The vast and diverse cultures? Is it the ability to believe what you want to believe, and pursue whatever career you wish? I believe that all of those play a part in the grand scheme of things, but aren’t what distinctly makes America great. It is instead the idea of America. The idea of a promise that we are given a great land. A vast land of opportunity and hope, provided to every American man, woman, and child. A place where we can come together as a people, and do whatever we wish to do, as long as it follows the laws so that we all can hold on to that promise.

We are given a great gift, that most other people in the world are not given. We spread that idea of promise around the globe, and have shaped the world into a better place. Of course there are still problems, and of course there are issues that we can’t resolve. There will always be issues in the world, and issues for America, that’s just how humans work. But what matters is that we stay true to who we are. Our Constitution is not perfect, like all governmental documents. But, it has been the longest lasting governmental document used in the world, since 1788 when it was ratified. And if something needs to be changed, instead of a violent revolt, or bloody uprising, we can add amendments to the Constitution, changing it to better suit how we are today.

The American Way of life has become a fundamental aspect in our lives, and has helped shape the world as a whole. Since our very origin in 1776, we have been a nation of small people, but ones that have big ideals, and ambitions. We started as simple people wishing to escape from the clutches of the British Empire in order to govern ourselves, and now, we rival the British Empire at its height in terms of power. Our pursuit for independence caused a wide array of results, some that don’t directly affect us, but one ultimate destination. We have blossomed into a global superpower from humble origins as a colony.

The road to that destination was not easy. Even before the Civil War, we were a nation that has had challenges, with the war itself proving to be the biggest, and bloodiest trial we have ever had to face. The American Revolution itself proved to be a great challenge, and one where the odds were stacked against us. A militia of farmers and shopkeepers fighting against the most powerful nation in the world, and struggling to hold on, but never giving up. That time we lost trying to hold on eventually led to the French and Spanish helping us, and securing our place in the world. From there, we grew, expanded, and along the way, we changed, making friends and making enemies. Slowly, we grew into what we are today.

We grew into what we are due to many factors, those being the people who have fought, and serviced in the military. The brave men and women of the armed forces have helped to pave the road to where we are today. Men like my great-grandfather, who served in the United States Army in World War 2. He joined the Army whenever we declared war, and he was sent to Italy. He didn’t fight any battles, that we know of at least, but we do know that he had gone to places where battles had happened, and he helped to try and rebuild those places. In a way, my great-grandfather was one of the many great men who helped pave the road for America to where we are today.

The road ahead for America will not be easy, but the road to where we are today has been challenging as well. With many issues plaguing our nation, one could feel that the greatness of America is no more. Issues like the national debt, the homeless crisis, and terrorism will continue to be an issue. They have always existed, through different variations of them, and we will continue to face them. However, we have the power to help those issues, and we can fix them if we dedicate the time and resources to them. And that will help continue to prove what makes us great.

What makes America great is what it represents. A nation where we have the power to raise ourselves up in times of crisis. A nation where people aren’t servants to a great king. A nation where we can change our very destinies. A nation where each person has their own identity, and their own beliefs. A nation where we aren’t forced what to think, say, or do. A nation of the people, by the people, and for the people, and as long as that doesn’t change, we will remain to be great, and shall not perish from this Earth.