

THE PATRIOT

The 4th of July Rodeo preps for the action as the announcer and clown exchange banter.

The ropers and barrel racers circle the arena warming up their horses in a slow canter.

The stands begin to be filled with excited fans as the country music gets cranked up loud.

The talk's about the weather being an issue; in the distance, hovering, is a dark rain cloud.

The music fades a little as various names are announced beginning the live performance.

Then a lone rider and flag regally enter proceeding to circle the rodeo arena, just once.

Hats are shed quickly; attention and honor granted by every person lining the fence.

Here we are again – It's the time of the year that we celebrate our nation's independence.

Much blood has been shed; a huge price of life was paid for every American's freedom.

Taking for granite any sacrifice that birthed and sustains our liberty, would be just plain dumb.

I'll never take lightly the sorrow and pain they suffered – the massive cost it did demand.

To honor those that fought for the flag and freedom, I remove my hat and proudly stand.

There have been times of unrest when some burned our flag in a dishonorable rage.

Many of us thought flag burners ought to leave our country on the next, out of town stage.

I'm still standing in honor as a fast rider circles a second time, posting our nation's flag.

My thoughts move to another Patriot who was treated by many, like a throw-away rag.

He was loyal to His Father's wish to make way for restoration and freedom from sin.

It was a battle for man's soul; it was for that hope that He died and rose again.

I've heard His name carelessly defamed as a vile curse out of many a loose tongue.

Yet those same people will treat one dishonoring the US flag like a pile of cow dung.

His Name is referenced in The Book as the greatest Name above every Name.

A hero beyond compare - an eternal Patriot whose sacrifice puts all others to shame.

Jesus Christ, the bravest of all the brave; took on the burden and sin of every human being.

The freedom He provides isn't just for this life but tolls forever, as angels joyfully sing.

I'm grateful to all that have served and made freedom possible for my family and heirs.

When it comes to abundant life into eternity, theirs only one that proved He really cares.

How about let's weigh both in the balance and see what the true measure turns out to be?

237 years of blood for freedom in this life, versus the perfect sacrifice for all eternity.

Yes, I will continue to remove my hat and stand to honor our flag and great country.

But first, I bow my knee and yield my heart to the One that paid to set men truly free.

Doug Hobelman - July 4, 2013