

BOOK REVIEW

“STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER: THE HISTORY, STORIES AND MEMORIES OUR AMERICAN FLAG”

By Richard H. Schneider
HarperCollins Publishers, 2003
pp. 192; Hardback: \$14.95

The Fourth of July is one of my favorite holidays. I love the fireworks, the music, but most of all, the shared pride in our country. At the center of it all is our majestic flag, the symbol of America's identity and freedom. When I saw the book, *Stars and Stripes Forever*, at the Public Library, I knew I wanted to add its reading to this year's celebration. It is a fascinating collection of stories surrounding the evolution of our American flag. There seems to be quite a bit of folk lore added to the historical accounts of the flag's changes through the years, and even some controversies that bring a little mystery into her past. For instance, who made the first official flag? Did you think of Betsy Ross? So did I, but that is not a proven fact. There is even an Anti-Betsy Group that presents convincing evidence of an unknown flag seamstress before B.

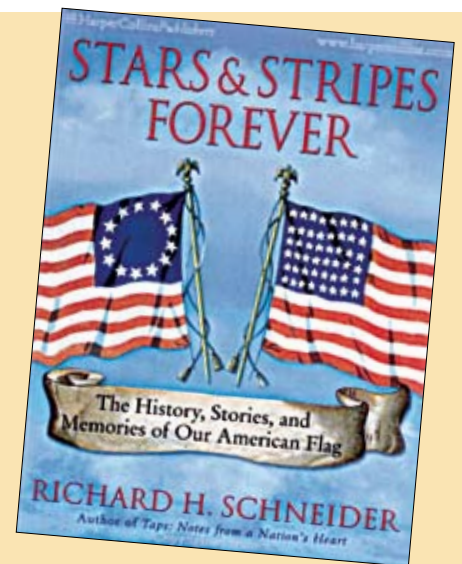


R. But no matter who did the sewing, the billowing fabric of "Old Glory," has inspired courage and bravery of men and women throughout our country's history. Author Richard Schneider has rounded up many of these accounts, and lets us in on inspiring experiences of people like John Paul Jones (the persistent and courageous captain who exclaimed "Sir, I have not yet begun to fight."), like B. J. Cigrand (the Wisconsin school teacher who encouraged the beginning of a national flag day), like Robert G. Heft (the high school student who designed the flag that flies across our country today), and there are many others.

Along with the inspiring stories in this book are many helpful traditions that define the proper etiquette and use of our flag. The why and how of the dramatic flag folding ceremony is described and pictured. The Federal Flag Code spells out displaying customs and handling procedures and is printed at the back of the book.

On page 137 there are even instructions for obtaining a flag that has been flown over the Capitol.

After reading "Stars and Stripes Forever," I will be much more mindful of the rich history she represents. I will be more appreciative of the ideals she points to. On page 128, Oren Hanbaum, a veteran who lives in Paducah, Kentucky, concluded the story of his release from a POW camp with this fitting blessing,



"May God always bless America and long may Old Glory wave over the land of the free and the home of the brave." This tribute to the American flag will be a delight for patriots of all ages and a keepsake to pass down to future generations.

Richard H. Schneider is a senior staff editor at "Guidepost", and a World War II veteran. More info about his books can be found at www.authortracker.com.

MOVIE REVIEW

THOUGH NONE GO WITH ME (PG):

Though None Go With Me is a film based on a book by Jerry B. Jenkins (Left Behind series). In this film, Elizabeth Leroy Bishop (Cheryl Ladd) has the chance to attempt to steer her granddaughter, Lisa (Lindy Newton), away from a troublesome lifestyle. As Elizabeth tells her story to Lisa, it becomes clear that although she has dedicated her life to God and positively affected many lives, she has also faced a multitude of heartbreaks within her own family along the way. The strong message here is that God never places more on his children than they can truly bear. It also reminds us that our actions affect the lives of those around us – sometimes without our realizing just how much. The film is now available on DVD and is a wonderful movie to watch alone or with friends.



17 AGAIN (PG-13):

At 17 Mike O'Donnell (Zac Efron) was on top of the world - star of his high school basketball team, potential college scholarship, and dating his soul mate, Scarlett (Allison Miller). Unfortunately, Scarlett reveals a secret right before the "big game", and Mike walks off the court and into early

adulthood (Matthew Perry) – forever changing the course of his life. He comes to regret his decision and complains himself out of a marriage and a job. He returns to the only place he remembers being happy – his high school. While standing in the hall, Mike meets up with an unusual janitor, and his life soon changes again – quite dramatically.

There are a few scenes in the movie that might be momentarily "strange" for some viewers, but this is a story of personal and emotional recovery in which a man lost in regret is able to see again the things in life that are truly important and worth hanging on to. Still playing in select theaters with a scheduled DVD release date of Aug. 11.



Chuck Zlotnick / Associated Press
Zac Efron and Michelle Trachtenberg eye each other in Warner Bros. "17 Again."