

# Orlando – and the Flag

Our nation mourns with the City of Orlando, Florida, and with the families of the victims of the nightclub shooting early Sunday morning. The death toll has been placed at 50, including the shooter, Omar Mateen, who was killed in a gunfight with law enforcement officers inside the Pulse establishment.

Mateen was described as a devout Muslim who made two mysterious trips to Saudi Arabia in 2011 and 2012. Authorities are piecing together his descent into radical Islamic terrorism.



The worst mass shooting in U.S. history is a vivid reminder of the evil that stalks the world, and how precious is the way of life that we have been accustomed to and, perhaps, taken for granted in the United States. Our liberty and security demand that we have a strong military to combat and defeat terrorism and vigilant and courageous law enforcement here at home.

Today is Flag Day, a fitting symbol at this moment in time of our resolve to be “the land of the free and the home of the brave.”

An article written years ago by Ret. Army Col. Daniel K. Cedusky is appropriate for our thoughts as we grieve with the families of those slain Sunday, pray for the 53 survivors, and consider our course of action against those who inspire acts of terrorism and their stated intent to destroy us.

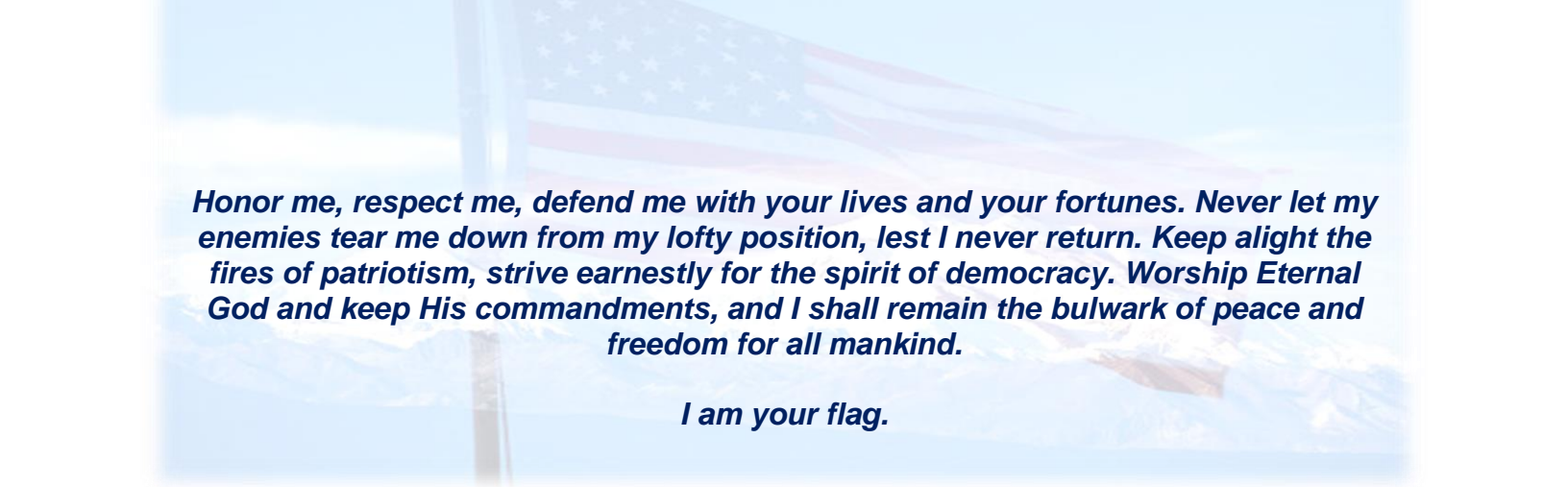
## ***I Am Your Flag***

***I was born on June 14, 1777. I am more than just cloth shaped into a design. I am the refuge of the world's oppressed people. I am the silent sentinel of freedom. I am the emblem of the greatest nation on earth.***

***I am the inspiration for which American patriots gave their lives and fortunes. I have led your sons into battle from Valley Forge to the bloody swamps of Vietnam. I walk in silence with each of your honored dead to their final resting place beneath the silent white crosses, row upon row.***

***I have flown through peace and war, strife and prosperity, and amidst it all I have been respected. My red stripes symbolize the blood spilled in defense of this glorious nation. My white stripes signify the burning tears shed by Americans who lost their sons. My blue field is indicative of God's heaven under which I fly. My stars, clustered together, unify 50 states as one, for God and country. Old Glory is my nickname, and proudly I wave on high.***

(more)



***Honor me, respect me, defend me with your lives and your fortunes. Never let my enemies tear me down from my lofty position, lest I never return. Keep alight the fires of patriotism, strive earnestly for the spirit of democracy. Worship Eternal God and keep His commandments, and I shall remain the bulwark of peace and freedom for all mankind.***

***I am your flag.***

These are words fitly chosen as we honor our Armed Forces – the men and women who have fought and died for our freedoms, as well as those presently serving around the world – and pledge anew our “allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

– Beecher Hunter