

“AMERICAN STRONG” - Why I Chose This Song

Right away I felt "American Strong" was a song that tells the story of the strength of the American People. We have been through many troubled times since America was born. We have fallen down and we have gotten back up and still continued to be strong. We have had our share of black eyes and our share of cuts and bruises. But again, we get back up and we continue on.

September 11th, 2001 stands as an example of how strong we as Americans can be, not just in physical strength but in our courage and our convictions. When we need to, we can stand strong next to each other and hold each other up high. On June 16, 2014 twin tornados hit the small town of Pilger, Nebraska. The town was almost completely leveled. People from all over Nebraska and across the country came to help with search and rescue, bringing water and food to help complete strangers. Making a detour from one show to the next, rock musician Brett Michaels stopped by for a day, toured the destruction and helped out with the clean up. This, to me, is what it means to be American Strong.

American Strong is a state of being. At our best, it is a unity in the hearts and minds of the citizens of this great country we live in, a belief that many of my brothers and sisters of the armed forces share. You see so much news on the political side of war and the negative campaigning of one politician over another one. What we don't see, as much as we should, are the sacrifices of our service members.

I was honored to serve our country for 9 years in the United States Navy alongside some of the greatest family members I have ever known. It didn't matter what town we were from, what music we listened to, or what the color of our skin was. We were a family. Too many I served with gave their lives for our country, and for me. Marines, sailors, and soldiers of all backgrounds unite together to make up what is one of, if not the greatest, military fighting force in the world. It is the unity that they have that makes them strong. It is the ideal of a FREE country that gives them courage to endure all that comes their way. It's the love for one another, their country and its people that impels and moves them to do what they do. They sacrifice it all, not for a thank you, not for cards, or gifts or a medal. They do it because they have the strength to do what they have been called upon to do.

Our military forces have been protecting our country ever since the United States was born. I love this song written by Eric Durrance, entitled "American Strong," because it is a tribute to our military forces and a reminder that WE ARE STRONG as a country when we are united together. WE ARE RESOLUTE when we stand together. WE ARE COURAGEOUS when we have faith in ourselves, in our country, and in God. I chose this song as it is close to my heart and it gives me a chance to show my thanks and tribute to our military. "American Strong" serves to remind us of the sacrifices of 25,000 patriots killed in the American Revolutionary war, 625,000 patriots killed in the Civil war, 116,516 military members killed in World War I, 405,399 members killed in World War II, 36,516 members killed in the Korean War, 58,209 Americans killed in the Vietnam War, 258 Americans killed in the Gulf War, 2,344 of my brothers and sisters killed in Afghanistan, and 4,800 more of my brothers and sisters killed in the Iraq War. According to stats from www.militaryfactory.com, the total is 1,343,812, roughly the entire population of San Diego, California today.

There is no short reason that states why I chose to perform such a beautifully written song. My heart goes out to all military members, their families, and the sacrifices that they make. I am able to get up every morning and go to my work, return home to my family and hold them close every night. All of this is possible because of our military is protecting our rights, our freedoms, and our way of life every day, every hour, every second of our lives. The shortest way that I can possibly explain why I love this song, is that it reminds us of this fact. These two lines say it perfectly, "We've had to sacrifice it all, to get to where we're at. All the names upon that wall, it's proof of that." We wouldn't be here today, if it were not for their sacrifice. I am using the talent God has blessed me with to bring through this song an awareness— a remembrance, however busy our lives may be, to be grateful for what we have, because FREEDOM IS NOT FREE. God Bless our troops, and God Bless the United States of America. United together, WE ARE AMERICAN STRONG!!!

~ Justin Kane