

Picture Option 4:

The picture of the marines raising up the American flag on the grounds of Iwo Jima is one of the most memorable, if not the *most* memorable, symbol of the United States of America's power and unity. This picture is so significant in American history that an exact monument of this picture was built as a memorial to commemorate all United States Marines that have died in defense of their country. The monument currently sits in Arlington, Virginia near the Arlington National Cemetery. The picture symbolizes everlasting power. It allows for any person that looks at this picture to unveil the fact that with the raising of the flag at Iwo Jima America became the ever all-powerful nation it is today. It is the envy of world and the demise of bad regimes. It is the end of poverty and the beginning of wealth.

One key attribute of the picture is the sense of unity it presents. It shows five different marines (of which we find out later that they are of different race and ethnicity) struggling and fighting for the same cause. The unity this picture signifies can only be found between people who have fought together, who have lost together, and who have won together. This is not a learned trait, but rather an acquired character trait. Being a Veteran of the Armed Forces myself, as well as a veteran of the Gulf War, I too understand what these men were feeling. To the average American citizen, raising a flag is normal. It is uneventful. We do this everyday; we do it at schools, at courthouses, even at fire stations. Thus, the routine act of raising the flag loses its substance. These marines have shed blood together and nobody knows who they are or what they went through. The only thing they have to show for it the American flag. They are tired and they are injured. But they will stop at nothing to let the world know that the Americans are here and World War II belongs to the United States.

Another interesting feature of the picture is the vastness of the background. America is declaring victory to the world and there is nobody else in sight; not the British, not the French, not Russia, and definitely not the Japanese. The fact that the flag was posted on top of a mass-destruction covered hill exemplifies this point even more. These marines inflicted pain and caused death, to others and to their own, but showed resolve determination. This has been a consistent attribute of American people in times of war. Sure, we don't believe in the war itself. Nor do we believe in war in general. But all of our leaders, both past and present, understand one thing; Americans believe in unity.

As Americans we are a proud and patriotic group. It's only natural that we use the American flag as we know it today as a symbol of patriotism and pride that *all* Americans believe in, just as those five marines did on February 23, 1945.