
Defense Report

AUSA



Americans Are Proud of Their Country—and They Would Fight for It

You would seldom guess that patriotism is alive and well in the United States. We are so conditioned by reports of failure to register for the draft (even though 94 percent of the eligible young men *did* register), by crowds who break into the playing of the national anthem to shout for their favorite football team and by chanting demonstrators displayed in full, living color on our television screens that we tend to conclude that no one is patriotic but ourselves.

Now, however, we have a new worldwide poll, coordinated by the Gallup organization, that tells us patriotism is indeed alive and well in the United States. It even tells us that patriotism in America is in better shape than it is reported to be in countries with strong nationalistic backgrounds, like Great Britain, West Germany and Japan.

When asked about pride in their countries, 55 percent of British citizens responding, 21 percent of West Germans and 30 percent of Japanese said they were "very proud" of their countries. Americans, on the other hand, demonstrated an 80-percent "very proud" reaction. The only other people approaching that level of national pride were the Irish, with a 66-percent "very proud" reaction.

Given our recollection of young men screaming, "Hell, no! We won't go!" during the Vietnam war and our more recent exposure to draft registration resisters, we might conclude that Americans also lag behind the rest of the world in willingness to fight for their country. Just the opposite is true. Seventy-one percent of the Americans polled said they were willing to fight in case of war.

The next closest level of willingness to fight was in Britain, where 62 percent responded affirmatively. In Japan only 22 percent gave an affirmative answer to the question, while 57 percent of Italian respondents said they would *not* fight if their country went to war.

If these responses from Americans prove nothing else they tell us not to trust the sometimes superficial impressions we gather from our mass media. The real lesson, though, is that Americans know they have a good thing going and want to preserve it.