

# Happy Independence Day

Jul 03, 2014

This weekend, we celebrate the most important beginning in American history. A beginning that for the first time, consisted of freedoms and liberty and righteousness — a beginning inspired by a revolutionary idea thought up by a group of men who believed they should stand up against tyranny. These men unknowingly held an idea that would forever change the lives of everyone in this great nation. On this occasion, we celebrate the birth of America.

Prior to July 4, 1776, governing rule was one based upon fear and oppression. And so with cargos of tea, and the scratch of a pen, a revolution began. Thomas Jefferson wrote: “we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

Death by hanging was the penalty for those who brought forth the radical ideas of freedom. Yet time and time again men stood up to tyranny despite the looming consequence. With this, the first generation of the American patriot was born—one who had a genuine love for the country and a willingness to sacrifice everything for it, without regret.

25,000 would-be Americans lost their lives in the fight for freedom. More than 8,000 were injured. The losses, though tragic, were not lost in vain, but for the future of our country’s people. It is said that where one story ends another begins—these men were the first to unselfishly sacrifice themselves for the creation of something better, a state of mind, a way of life—the American way.

The United States of America learned quickly that freedom does not come free — and so came the blessing of a military controlled by civilians that would ensure that our God-given rights are never taken from us.

So this weekend, we are not only celebrating the beginning of America and our independence, we also celebrate the courage, bravery and boldness that today’s men and women of the armed forces display to protect the core values of America in order to keep us free.

Since our founding back in 1776, many have challenged America and our values — even today, exactly 238 years later, our vision of freedom meets opposition. With freedom comes the responsibility to defend it. Our servicemembers have proved time and time again that they stand ready to defend what is ours.

As we celebrate our independence, the VFW thanks all patriots of the past and present who have defended it and given us hope, not only for our own futures, but for all future generations. I ask that as you celebrate with your families, friends and communities, you

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remember to honor all American patriots, from the countryside of the New England states to the beaches of Normandy, from the jungles of Vietnam to the streets of Kandahar. They are the ones who have preserved freedom, and who have given us reason to defend it for all future generations.

Thank you to all of our men and women of the military; your fight has and will continue to lead others to a better way of life. You have truly given us all reason to celebrate our past, our present, our future—our independence.

Happy Birthday America!