



July 4, 2008: Celebrating Independence and its Guardians

"And for the Support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor."

With this pledge, the Second Continental Congress completed the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Today—232 years after its signing—Americans remember and honor those who fought to ensure that the ideals of freedom and liberty would be the foundation of this new country.

The Soldiers who served in the Continental Army defeated the most powerful military in the world, overcame hardships, shortages of supplies and equipment, meager pay, and dismal living conditions far from their Families for more than eight years – our country's longest war.

As we celebrate their achievement, we honor the role of the volunteer—the person who pledges to serve so that others may live in peace. This month is the 35th Anniversary of the United States Army becoming an All-Volunteer Force. The same selfless service that characterized our Soldiers during the American Revolution lives on in today's Soldiers, Army Civilians, and Army Families—Active, National Guard, and Reserve.

Seldom in our history has our Army faced greater challenges. Yet, our All-Volunteer Force continues to embody the best characteristics of our Nation as it defends our homeland and builds a better future for future generations of Americans.

May God bless you, your Families, and the United States of America on this Independence Day.

Kenneth O. Preston
Sergeant Major of the Army

George W. Casey, Jr.
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Pete Geren
Secretary of the Army