



**Independence Day 2014:
Celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the Star-Spangled Banner and the Soldiers,
Families and Civilians Who Uphold its Honor and Dignity**

*Then, in that hour of deliverance, my heart spoke. Does not such a country, and such
defenders of their country, deserve a song?*

~ Francis Scott Key

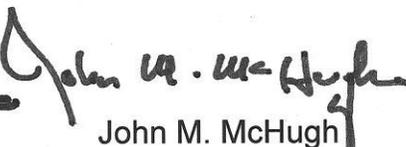
This year, we celebrate both 238 years of independence and the bicentennial of "The Defence of Fort M'Henry," the poem Francis Scott Key wrote in 1814 while witnessing the U.S. Army and its commander, Lieutenant Colonel George Armistead, lead a valiant and triumphant defense of Baltimore's Fort McHenry during the War of 1812. Key's stirring words quickly turned into one of the most popular patriotic songs in the country, the Star Spangled Banner, and eventually became our official national anthem.

Generations of men and women have served and sacrificed to safeguard the freedom and liberties fought for and won during America's War for Independence. Today, our anthem continues to inspire the patriots of this land of the free and home of the brave and serves as an inspiration to those who pledge their service to our All-Volunteer Force.

To the Soldiers, Civilians and Families who stand Army strong as defenders of this great Nation and the ideals, traditions and liberties every citizen enjoys, you are the "broad stripes and bright stars" of this country. Thank you for allowing us to proudly fly our flag and sing our national anthem.


Raymond F. Chandler III
Sergeant Major of the Army


Raymond T. Odierno
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff


John M. McHugh
Secretary of the Army