



**From the Desk of the NCOA Chairman of the Board
July 2020**

July is normally a month when we celebrate our Nation's birthday with parades, fireworks, picnics and an assortment of sporting events. This year will be different. Parades celebrating our history, our birthday and patriotism are banned for fear of spreading COVID-19. Fireworks are also banned because they might draw large crowds and God forbid we do something that could cause further passing on of that pesky COVID-19 virus.

Fellow NCOA members, those who have served as well as family members of those who served or are still serving; our service was for a purpose. Some may have served only to qualify for a very good educational benefit that NCOA helped to obtain many years ago. Others may have served after the attack of terrorists on 9/11 out of a sense of patriotism. Whatever your reason for service, we sacrificed a piece of our life and in some cases a piece of ourselves to defend our freedoms for ourselves, our families, and future generations.

With all of the news coverage focusing on change and in some cases even pushing the elimination of our founding history, something that your Board has been looking into came back to the front of my mind. We were exploring an organization called Step up America and one of their pet projects is called the Franklin Project. Their website <https://stepupamericaprogram.org> lists their mission as follows: "The mission of Step Up America: A Call to Good Citizenship is to educate our youth on the importance of becoming responsible, engaged U.S. Citizens in order to preserve the freedom and security of our great nation." They were scheduled to come to our conference in San Antonio to speak to us about this project and then COVID-19 changed everything.

I suggest that rather than focusing on the current disruption, we focus on a solution that has been overlooked for far too long. Step up America teaches our youth why the Constitution and Declaration of Independence were written and the long agonizing process that our founding fathers went through to create these documents. We can't fix everything at once, but if some/all of you believe that the Bill of Rights is why this country was so exceptional for over 200 years, perhaps you can look into this as a chapter or an individual and help start the healing of our nation. Your nation needs you and I humbly request that you step up one more time.

If you have any ideas or suggestions, contact headquarters or contact me at chairman@ncoausa.org and I can assure you that your leadership will take note.

Strength in Unity & Leadership by Example,

MCPO (SCW) Terry M. Haines, USN (Ret)
Chairman, International Board of Directors