



July 2020

You may be reading this before or after the day arrives, but let's talk about Independence Day. Each of us, will remember this one for the rest of our lives. No matter where we live, whether we are in a locale that is social distancing, open for business or some combination of the two. This day will be markedly different than those that have come before.

July Fourth is the true midpoint of the year, the start of high summer. It is the most American of our holidays, a celebration of our Founding Fathers' bravery and boldness in that steamy Philadelphia summer of 1776, when they unanimously adopted the Declaration of Independence, our nation's birth

certificate.

John Adams, second president of the U.S., wrote to his wife Abigail that July 2 (the day they started working on the final copy) "will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival" and that the celebration should include "Pomp and Parades, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other." And as a nation we have been doing just that since 1777. This year, sadly canceled are parades, concerts, festivals, and some states are even cancelling fireworks shows. We are having to keep our distance from family, friends and loved ones, even those who were dying.

The Fourth of July—also known as Independence Day or July 4th—has been a federal holiday in the United States since 1941.

This July Fourth we are urged to strike a balance between personal freedom and the health of our fellow Americans. It won't be easy to fight our instinct to fire up the barbecue and invite the entire neighborhood and family. But we will make the impossible, possible, that's the resiliency of our nation. In 1942, when fireworks were forbidden, gas and rubber were rationed and factories stayed open on the holiday, Americans leaned into a trend the New York Times called "stay-at-home" celebrations.

There will be fireworks and concerts on our television screens and computers. Families can participate in Fourth of July celebrations by decorating home, door or yard, draw and color a chalk creation on driveway/sidewalk, or decorate your bicycles in Fourth of July themes. We can celebrate our new heroes: doctors, nurses, firefighters and the police, but also this year we need to recognize the patriots who have been keeping the country going with little fanfare – military (regular, reserve and guard), the postal workers, truckers, grocers, farmers, and the army of volunteers who attend to those in need. Due to their efforts, our lives are slowly returning to normal. Jobs, too, will return, though life may never be exactly the same again. The bravery that's been part of the American spirit since that first Independence Day will help us create a new way of living.

Our Conference for this year has been canceled but that does not mean the Noncommissioned Officers Association has quit. We've continued the business of our Association thru Zoom meetings, Facebook meetings and teleconferences. Thru Zoom meetings we have met our new President and National Commander – Paul A Kingsbury, Fleet Master Chief, US Navy (Ret), and our Vanguard Recipients. Please go to WWW.NCOAUSA.ORG to see their pictures and read the write-up for each one. Chapters and members are still being active in their communities.

Even though we are "socially distanced" we can still be doing things that help our military members and neighbors. Such as: The Fort Sam Houston Chapter in San Antonio, TX made and donated reusable face masks for use by the military population on the base. I've seen knights on Facebook still serving meals at homeless shelters. Get out there and "DO YOUR THING!" but do it safe.

Veterans, with a service-connected disability rating, are entering Federal recreation lands and national parks for free with an America the Beautiful-the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands lifetime Access Pass. How do you do this you ask? Go to <http://www.usgs.gov> store and follow the prompts.

From the Grand Knight and her Executive Board have a great and safe Fourth and share the pictures.

Strength in Unity!

The Voice of the Enlisted

Lady Sunny Wirth, Grand Knight