

Vets Views 1 Jul 08

Happy Birthday United States of America!

"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. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation..."

A declaration of independence--unbelievable words by unbelievable men from an unbelievable time.

Merchants, lawyers, teachers, metal smiths, printers, farmers, physicians—a team of men who stood for something and who did not back down, who believed so strongly in their ideas and themselves that they knowingly and willingly laid all they had—families, wealth, lives—on the line for it. In some ways, we of these days can never measure up, but in other ways, I think we do. I hope we never forget what it took to make and build this nation. I hope we haven't forgotten that teamwork is a key to our nation's success.

If you're a career guard or reservist, keep reading! Congress is looking at the TRICARE Continuity of Coverage for National Guard and Reserve Families Act of 2008 (H.R. 6185), a bill which would enable retired members of National Guard and reserve units with 20 or more years of faithful and honorable service to *purchase* health care that was available to them during their time in active service or after they reach 60 years of age. Currently, members who have retired but are not yet 60 years of age are not eligible for TRICARE, and are referred to as being in the "gray area." Stay tuned to this channel.

More late-breaking news! There's a new GI Bill in the works, and this is good news for many of you. Please pass this info on to your buddies and friends. Many post-9/11 veterans and service members will soon be eligible for a new comprehensive education benefits package. Many veterans who served after Sept. 11, 2001, will get full tuition and fees, a new monthly housing stipend, and a \$1,000 a year stipend for books and supplies. The new bill also gives Reserve and Guard members, who have been activated for more than 90 days since 9/11, access to the same GI Bill benefits. The new GI Bill will soon be on its way to the President for signature, he is expected to sign it by July 4. Again, tune in and I'll let you know when I find out. If you find out first, then you let ME know, ok?

No one from the Roosevelt area called in (actually no one from anywhere called in!) with an answer to the question in my last episode of what else do we observe on 14 June besides Flag Day. The answer is: It was the 233rd birthday of the U.S. Army. I'ma wantin' to know where was the party? My invite did not arrive, I guess...

Have a safe holiday and thank a veteran as you walk around enjoying the birthday activities.

Over and Out!