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July 2021

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So the ADDC Registration Packets have been sent out. Book your flights, or plan your road trip, pack your bags and get ready to “GO”! Yippee! We are only 82 days away from being able to get together and celebrate our organization as we take care of business, learn new skills, attend interesting field trips, and most of all, meet in person to hug our old friends and make new ones.

Last month, in keeping with the theme “Make a Difference, Be the Difference” I wrote about the difference Inez Awty made as a founder for our organization. This month, I would like to look back on the brave men and women who made it possible to celebrate the 4th of July. Every year, Americans rejoice and celebrate Independence Day with great fanfare amidst colorful parades, flag hoisting ceremonies, barbecue parties, baseball games, swimming pools, and of course fireworks! (By the way, there would be no fireworks without the oil and gas industry).

Americans are supposed to remember the suffering their forefathers endured to win them precious freedom. On July 4, 1776 when Thomas Jefferson, along with other members of the [Continental Congress](https://www.thoughtco.com/top-founding-fathers-104878), drafted the Declaration of Independence. It was the moment of truth all Americans had waited for. If the effort of severing ties from the British succeeded, the leaders of the movement would be hailed as true American heroes. However, if the effort failed, the leaders would be guilty of treason and face death. As I look around at current events, I truly wonder if we do stop and reflect on what this holiday really means. In his article, What Price Freedom, Paul Harvey wrote the details of what actually happened to some of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

*“Five signers were captured by the British as traitors, and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons in the Revolutionary Army. One of the signers had two sons captured. Nine of the fifty-six fought and died of wounds or the hardships of the Revolutionary War.*

*They signed and they pledged their lives, their fortunes…and their sacred honor. Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships swept from the seas by the British Navy. He sold his home and his properties to pay his debts and died in rags. Thomas McKean was so hounded by the enemy that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay, and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him and poverty was his reward. Vandals or soldiers or both looted the properties of Ellery Clymer, Hall, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge and Middleton. At the Battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson Jr. noted that the British General Cornwallis had taken over the Nelson home for his headquarters. The owner quietly urged General George Washington to open fire, which was done. The home was destroyed, and Nelson died bankrupt. His grave is unmarked and unknown. Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife, and she died within a few months. John Hart was driven from his wife’s bedside as she was dying. Their thirteen children fled for their lives. His fields and his grist mill were laid waste. For more than a year he lived in the forests and caves, returning home after the war to find his wife dead and his children vanished. A few weeks later he died from exhaustion and a broken heart. Morris and Livingston suffered similar fates. Such were the stories and sacrifices of the American Revolution. These were not wild-eyed, rabble-rousing ruffians. These were soft-spoken men of means, wealth and education. They had security, but they valued liberty more. Standing tall, straight and unwavering, they pledged: ‘For the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of the Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.’*

The sacrifices made by our founding fathers were tremendous. It hurts me to see so many have a disrespect for our country. As freedom seems to slip through our fingers, let’s pause and reflect on the men and women who gave fought and died for our precious freedom. They made a difference. We can too. Be a proud American! Be proud of our industry! Be proud of our ADDC Organization! Celebrate the past and participate in making the future.

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