

Happy Birthday, America, on this your 242nd anniversary as a nation. Two hundred forty two sounds, at first, like a lot of years, but in the grand scheme of things, it really isn't that long. Egypt has been in existence for about 5,000 years. That is a long time, but who among us would trade places with an Egyptian? Who would trade places with any foreign national, from any other country? The answer comes up "Nobody" because of one simple word - **FREEDOM.**

Our founding fathers phrased it precisely correctly - "Certain inalienable rights that include life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." That may not be an exact quote but it gets the message across. No other nation in the world, neither before nor since our founding, has enjoyed those rights as we do. It is why there are so many people clamoring to get into our country and no one clamoring to get out. I do admit to becoming more than a little exorcised over those people who come to our nation looking for a better way of life and then want to change our way of life to match the one they just left behind. My simple philosophy is that if the old way is so great, then they should simply go back from whence they came. They would not be missed.

Our forefathers extricated themselves from the clutches of a repressive regime, not by words on a paper but by swords and guns on battlefields. Until the war of independence was won, we were merely one more colony in the British Empire. Even before the words were set down, backyard blacksmith shops were forging firearms, mostly with no thought in mind to use them against the British, but the backyard shops came in handy when a great need arose. We still have backyard shops, a little less primitive nowadays, manufacturing firearms for the sporting world. Hitler and Tojo learned first-hand just how quickly the intended use of the production lines can be converted from products for sports and leisure into products to turn back regimes bent on our destruction. Automobile assembly lines were replaced by assembly lines for tanks and half-tracks, mostly with the same workers. Winchester Repeating Arms ceased production of its sporting rifles and put its name on M1 Garand rifles; Remington Arms produced the venerable '03-A3 rifles, as did the typewriter company, Smith Corona. Nothing embodied the American spirit more than the call to arms when this peaceable, peace loving nation was set upon by warring factions. It could happen again if we forget the words of former president Ronald Reagan, "No nation was ever attacked because it was too strong."

I make no apology for my belief in peace through strength, a belief that we need to maintain our military at a level sufficient to guarantee that we never have to use it. Today as we celebrate our many freedoms, our independence, we must be grateful to those countless millions who have served and who now serve to keep our nation strong and safe. Thank you, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen, wherever you are, for your service.

Our debt to you is one that can never be fully paid.

Freedom Is Not Free

Frenchy Sends with Warm Regards

CAPT R. Claude Corbeille, USN RET

<mailto:wxmustang@outlook.com>