

JULY VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT PROMOTION

Jacqueline Rauch, Department Chairman

Wow, what a Year it has been so far! We've seen a lot happen in just these 6 short months and now it's time to get back to work with a new team of Department Officers and District Presidents. As I was thinking about my Promotion for July, I realized that this is truly a Historic moment in time, and about the purpose behind the Declaration of Independence signed at this time those 250 years ago.

I asked myself, what were our founding fathers seeking? I recalled a collection of books that I had purchased during my trip to the Ronald Reagan Library in beautiful Simi Valley, CA. Among the collection is a book titled "The Declaration of Independence with Short Biographies of its Signers." Within the first 2 paragraphs, I found the answer to my question: Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. We've all heard these words a thousand times, but have you ever stopped to think about them individually?

Life... We're all born of a Mother and Father who bring us life. Easy to understand that one. But to hold on to life and actually live out our lives is a struggle. We need others to care for us, nurture and teach us, help us grow and maintain our lives. And we, in turn, repeat the cycle with our own children and it perpetuates for as long as time has been recorded. We do everything in our power to ensure that our life goes on until the day our bodies can no longer sustain that life. We would not normally put ourselves into harm's way knowing that our life could be ended prematurely. A Veteran is no different than any other child born of a mother, yet they have chosen to stand up and take on the burden of securing Liberty for the rest of us.

Liberty... what is it, exactly? I actually decided to look up the definition for this one. Merriam-Webster defines Liberty as: "The state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one's way of life, behavior or political views ". So, our founding fathers were looking to unburden us from oppression and restrictions moving forward. And how did they do this? By joining forces against a King and his oppressive arm that had reached across the pond. Our Veteran fathers joined this movement freely with the understanding that they may not survive the fight, but did so to ensure the pursuit of happiness of their children and children's children.

Happiness... hmmm, back to Merriam and Webster I went. "A state of well-being and contentment; a pleasurable or satisfying experience." Okay, that's kind of broad in scope, I thought. What makes a person Happy? Is it money, love, a home, family? I'm not sure about everyone but I think that most would agree that these are the 4 major components of happiness: take away even one of them and you risk never finding it.

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And this is where You come in... I believe the VFW Auxiliary Veterans and Family Support Program was established for the purpose of offering Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness to our Veteran population and their families. How can we achieve this, you ask? By being a good steward and volunteer whenever and wherever possible. By joining forces with your fellow volunteers to bring the resources and programs to Veterans where they are needed. Our contributions by way of dollars, miles, or hours are directly affecting Veterans and their families. Our efforts are reported to Congress on an annual basis which influences the continued funding of Government Programs available to our Veterans. So, get those reports in as quickly as possible to be sure your efforts are counted. Here are some examples of qualifying report entries: Participation in Disaster Relief; Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness for Veterans or Service members and their families; Direct aid to Veteran/Service members or their families such as meals, transportation, cards, packages or donations. In your reports, be sure to include any Money or Value of Donated Goods, services provided for Veterans or Service members or their families, and include the number of Veterans or Service Members and Family members assisted.

As a Member of the VFW Auxiliary, you bring Life, Liberty and Happiness with you every single day. Be proud of your efforts, we are!!!

Jacqueline Rauch

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