

Forging the Foundation of Freedom

“Perseverance and Spirit have done wonders in all ages”

General George Washington

Today, as American citizens we celebrate the birth of our nation. A day of celebration complete with backyard barbecues, family gatherings and firework displays. It is also a day where we pause and reflect on the sacrifice of our Founding Fathers and those who stood alongside them fighting for the freedom of the United States of America.

As we reflect on that sacrifice, we can see that the foundation of our great nation was built by the incredible leaders who risked their own lives and the lives of their families in defense of a cause greater than themselves. Leaders like General George Washington, the commander in chief of the Continental Army and a man of great stature physically, intellectually and morally. Leaders like John Hancock, the President of the Continental Congress and a man known for his boldness and audacity as evidenced by his famous signature on the Declaration of Independence that dwarves the other signatures. Leaders like Nathaneal Greene, who at the age of 39 was the youngest general officer in the American Army. Although Greene had only been in the Army for six months, he rose to the rank of general through his diligent study of the military art and his uncommon resolve to become not just a leader, but also to walk in the footsteps of a Soldier. Although Greene suffered from a pronounced limp due to an accident he had suffered as a child, he demonstrated remarkable perseverance in attaining his rank and position as commander of the Rhode Island militia and later as a major general in the Continental Army.



In the novel "1776", author David McCullough recounts Nathaneal Greene's unwavering commitment and resolve to become a leader after he was disqualified from serving as an officer due to his physical ailment, a marked limp. Faced with this rejection, Greene "marched as a private in company drills for eight months, until it became obvious that for a man of such knowledge and ability, it would be best to forget about the limp." Greene's subsequent rise in rank and position was also matched by the love his troops had for him and the confidence Washington and the other civilian leaders held for him as he continued to serve during the Revolutionary War.

Today, in Afghanistan we see similar resolve in the young Afghan leaders of the Afghan National Security Force. Leaders, who in a similar manner to those inspiring leaders of

the fledgling American Army, are helping to form the foundation of an independent and secure Afghanistan; a foundation forged in war and built on the bedrock of leadership. A foundation that will endure during times of trial and testing in the days, the months and the years to come. A foundation that is formed in the character, commitment and resolve of Afghanistan's next generation of great leaders. Leaders that members of our team teach, advise and partner with on a daily basis in their individual responsibilities and duties in NTM-A.



It is these Afghan leaders who will be an integral part of transforming their nation into a nation of freedom from oppression and freedom for all its citizens.

So on this day of celebration for our American partners, let us all resolve to see our mission through enabling the next generation of Afghan leaders to take their place in Afghan history much as leaders like George Washington, John Hancock, and Nathaneal Greene did for America over two centuries ago.

***Happy Independence Day
America!***

