



# Hagel Issues Independence Day Message

By *NCO Journal*

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**I**n his Independence Day message issued July 3, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel thanked U.S. troops and their families for their service to the nation.

Here is the text of the secretary's message:

*On this Independence Day, I want to express my appreciation to the men and women and their families who serve our country across the nation and around the world. Thank you for everything you do to help keep our nation safe.*

*It's been 237 years since a small band of patriots signed the Declaration of Independence, in which they pledged their lives and their sacred honor to defend our unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Since then, generations of Americans have made that same pledge, boldly standing up in the face of tyranny, oppression, and persecution.*

*That legacy lives on today. This week marked the 40th anniversary of the all-volunteer force, a symbol of how our brave men and women in uniform continue to protect the freedoms declared by our founding fathers more than two centuries ago. Their devotion to duty is just as strong, as is their willingness to risk their lives for each other and our*

*country. And their dedication is a reminder that the preservation of America's liberties does not come without cost.*

*Those who serve in our armed forces, and their families, have given much in the name of defending the ideals and free institutions we often take for granted. Today, as we celebrate our nation's birth, let us honor their dutiful service and strive to be worthy of their tremendous sacrifices.*

*God bless you, our great nation, and all who serve to protect it. Happy Fourth of July!*



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