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Jason Smith's Capitol Report July 4, 2014

JULY 03RD 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

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*Article Submitted to
news@showmetimes.com*

Remembering Those Who Declared Independence

8th Congressional District, Missouri - Independence Day is marked with fireworks, BBQ and family gatherings. More often than not we forget about the significance of the day and the brave Americans who put their lives on the line to establish our nation.

Fifty six men signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. The most famous, and largest signature belongs to John Hancock who served as President of the Continental Congress. The youngest signer was Edward Rutledge at the age of just 26. Benjamin Franklin, the oldest signer, was 70 years old. Future Presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson also signed the Declaration.

Before our independence was declared in 1776, the American colonists were treated as British subjects. They paid taxes and had fines levied against them. Although the colonists paid taxes, they did not have representatives in the British Parliament in London. Soon, the battle cry across the thirteen colonies became “no taxation without representation.”

Declaring independence from the most powerful nation on the planet was no small task for early Americans. The 56 men who signed the Declaration put themselves and their families in great danger. It is important to remember that the colonists were considered

British subjects and went to war with their own government. For signing the Declaration, some men were captured by the British and tortured. Some had their homes and businesses burned and still others died fighting in the Revolutionary War. Too often we take for granted the sacrifices made by the colonial revolutionists who established the United States of America.

Since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, many more patriots have come forward to defend our democracy. We should always recognize and honor the sacrifice our men and women in uniform make each day. Additionally, other Americans have served our nation at home as teachers, police and fire fighters, church and community volunteers. Our nation’s greatest strength has always been the character of its citizens.

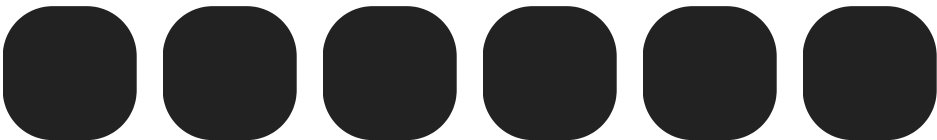
This Independence Day, let us remember the sacrifices made by the signers of the Declaration of Independence. As Americans, we live in the greatest nation on the planet as a result of their determination. It remains the challenge of each new generation of Americans to renew our commitment to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Happy Fourth of July!

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