

## **Message from the desk of President Kenneth Gorton, April 2010**

### **A SYMBOLIC DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**

We are familiar with "Patriots Day," celebrated the third Monday in April, as a reflection of the battles on Lexington Green and the march to Concord that became known as the start of the American Revolution.

While traveling in the South this past month, I was impressed with the abundance of historical events that were a part of the American Revolution. On June 28, 1776, just days before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Battle of Fort Moultrie [then known as Fort Sullivan] resulted in a significant American victory over the British.

From April 19, 1775 on, colonists up and down the coast met the British head on, and for better or worse, the time for fighting was upon them. Charleston, South Carolina was a thriving center of trade, and merchants hated a system that jammed British products down their throats along with numerous taxes and duties. By February 1776, John Rutledge returned from the Continental Congress, established a strong local government, appointed General William Moultrie to handle military preparations, and built a defense to strengthen the Charleston harbor against invasion.

During May the British began to formulate a fleet under the command of Sir Peter Parker, and on June 1st entered the harbor. At the same time General Washington had dispatched 2,000 soldiers from North Carolina to aid Moultrie. While each side built its defenses over the succeeding weeks, events pointed toward the 28th as the fateful day. For twelve hours the battle raged, the British using 32,000 pounds of powder and the Americans less than 5,000. The American victory ensured the safety of the Port of Charleston and helped win uncommitted Americans to the struggle for independence. It became evident that the South could wage a successful campaign. June 28th stood as a "symbolic" Declaration of Independence for the patriots, and is now celebrated as "Carolina Day" to commemorate the bravery of the defenders of the fort, the 2nd South Carolina Regiment.

We can learn a lot from this battle – achieving a common purpose is a result of a shared vision, committed leadership, confidence in your team, recognizing the obstacles are not as insurmountable as perceived, and that others will join and strengthen the cause, which can have a lasting impression. The George Washington Chapter is collaborating with other organizations that share our purpose, vision, and the preservation of our freedoms. These are challenging days and through this unity, we can celebrate our heritage and inspire those around us.