

It seems that with each month that passes, compatriots have an opportunity to reflect on milestones in our history. In 2009 we have experienced the birthday of George Washington, Patriot's Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, and battles of the Revolutionary War.

While traveling last month, I toured Fort Ticonderoga in New York. The fort was built by the French in 1755 as Fort Carillon at the narrow choke-point between Lake George and Lake Champlain and played a significant role in the Seven Years' War. In 1758, the French defended the fort, and then suffered a humiliating defeat at the hand of the British the following year, under General Amherst, who renamed the site Fort Ticonderoga.

At the outset of the American Revolution, with the British occupying the fort, Ethan Allen, Benedict Arnold and the Green Mountain Boys crossed Lake Champlain on May 10, 1775 and overwhelmed the British, making Fort Ticonderoga America's first offensive victory of the Revolutionary War. A plaque on the wall placed by the "Sons of the Revolution" in 1900 commemorates the gallant effort of these patriots. From then until 1777, the fort served as an important staging area for the American army while fortifying Mount Independence in Vermont and building extensive defensive works in the region. As war goes, in 1776 the British in turn defeated Benedict Arnold who was leading the first navy fleet on Lake Champlain, and then General Burgoyne re-captured Fort Ticonderoga for the British in July 1777.

Battlefields and holidays are remembrances of those who paved the way for us to enjoy the freedoms we often take for granted. As the Gorge Washington Chapter has honored its own [Gary Timmons with the Patriots Medal and Service to Veterans, and Ron Eisert with the Meritorious Service Medal for preservation of Revolutionary soldier's graves], this is not only a sense of pride that we can share in, but a means to inspire each one of us to seek ways to actively preserve and advance our heritage.

One such way is to live out "The American's Creed". It reads: "***I believe*** in the United States of America as a government of the people, by the people, for the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed, a democracy in a republic, a sovereign Nation of many sovereign States; a perfect union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which *American patriots sacrificed* their lives and fortunes. ***I therefore believe*** it is my duty to my country to love it, to support its Constitution, to obey its laws, to respect its flag, and to defend it against all enemies." Compatriots – may this be our objective.