

Sons of the American Revolution

250th Anniversary

Event Planning Guide



Independence Day 2026

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The goal of this planning guide is to provide states and chapters with the tools and resources to support SAR 250 parallel events

**National Society Sons of the American Revolution
Strategic Plan 2035 (FINAL – Approved 3/1/25)**

Strategic Objective 2A

Each state and chapter will support SAR 250 signature events with a parallel event they sponsor in partnership with local historical, veteran, and/or civic organizations

**Planning Guidelines for a
250th Anniversary Ceremony**

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PURPOSE: Provide suggested guidance for a SAR 250th Anniversary Ceremony by Sons of the American Revolution Chapters and States. Images for contained in this guide suitable for printing are available at <https://www.sar.org/committees/250th-anniversary-of-the-american-revolutionary-war-committee/>.

Preparations:

1. The first step to take is to correctly identify an event.
2. Locate a property for the commemoration and contact the individual responsible for the property to ensure a ceremony is allowed. Visit the property to determine if the event can be conducted.
3. Identify date and time of proposed ceremony.
4. Contact State Society to include the State President, State Color Guard Commander, Chapter leadership, Color Guard and Chaplain.
5. Determine what actions will commemorate the event.
6. After date/time are approved, prepare a draft agenda. Determine who will conduct the ceremony as emcee, lead the various pledges, conduct the commemoration and other needed presentations/participants. Below is a suggested format for the agenda.
7. Let people know we are Sons of the American Revolution! Specify the uniform of the day. To the extent possible and where appropriate encourage Color Guard or Colonial / period attire. To encourage maximum participation permit "Class B" (business attire). When wearing business attire, wear your SAR name tag.
8. Provide emergency operations by contacting local Fire & Emergency and Law Enforcement. Need to determine safe egress in case of detrimental actions. Need contacts in case of health emergencies. Let law enforcement know of musket firings.
9. Send invitations to local officials, media, the public, SAR, DAR, and C.A.R. Chapter/Societies. Determine who desires to participate in the ceremony. Identify the presenters, color guard, musket squad and VIPs.
10. Finalize the Agenda.

11. Send directions to the site with parking instructions and provide the agenda to participants.
12. Arrange podium, seating, and photography.

Conduct (agenda) of a Ceremony:

1. Welcome and Greetings (emcee)
2. Presentation of the Colors (Color Guard)
3. Invocation (Chaplain)
4. Pledge of Allegiance (designated compatriot)
5. SAR Pledge by SAR Compatriots (designated compatriot)
6. Introduction of guests, dignitaries and descendants of the patriot (emcee)
7. Introduction of the assembly to the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (designee).
8. Commemoration of the Event.
9. Presentation of wreaths (order as prescribed by National Policies) (representatives).
10. Presentation of suitable song (director) or music.
11. Musket Salute (fire 3 times) (musket squad).
12. SAR Recessional (designated compatriot)
13. Retire the Colors (color guard)
14. Make presentations as desired. (emcee)
15. Benediction (Chaplain)
16. Closing remarks (emcee)

After the Ceremony:

1. Clean up the area.
2. Provide appropriate appreciation to the responsible
1. individual/organization for the cemetery and participants.
2. Send thanks to municipal organizations that participated
3. Provide Information to all chapters/compatriots attending the ceremony.
4. Send update report to the State Society, Americanism Chairs, provide the State Color Guard Commander with list of compatriots in colonial attire.
5. Send local media notifications. Send articles to the SAR National Magazine, National Color Guard Magazine, local media and State Society newsletters/bulletins.

Event Ideas

Have FUN! SAR events should be fun for you and should be fun, engaging and enjoyable for your target audience – the PUBLIC!

Cosponsor the event with your local DAR, C.A.R., veteran, civic or historical groups. This will amplify your event and allow you to share the planning process.

Promote your 250 event to the local council, chamber of commerce, community and 250 commission

Key Events:

- Reading of the Declaration of Independence. Suggested locations including local town hall or town meeting, library, and schools. Consider reading it on June 28th to coincide with 250th anniversary of draft of the Declaration of Independence was presented to the Continental Congress. Also, consider reading the history of the Declaration of Independence in the following section. Consider reading at the other significant dates as an alternative.
- Ring a Liberty Bell. While not historically accurate what better way to ring (announce) the 250th anniversary of our country's birth.

Other Event Ideas:

- Luncheons / receptions in a restaurant / tavern
- Crafts / hands-on activities station or tent for youth and the public, to include demonstrations or giveaways
- Color Guard Interpretive engagement at station tent / table
- Youth activities – scavenger hunt, recruiting day, interpretative station
- Reading at the courthouse or town square
- Library based events – book reading for youth. Consider a library scavenger hunt.
- Plant and present “Liberty Trees” to the public
- Place and present SAR 250th Benches
- Present Flag Certificates. These can be presented by anyone at anytime but what a powerful memento of our 250th that will be cherished!

Event Ideas

- Present certificates of appreciation to city and town officials, schools, libraries and service members
- Present a poster size copy of the declaration of Independence to local and state officials. Encourage them all to sign it. Present it to them (perhaps framed). Ask that it be displayed as a reminder of the semiquincentennial when the 275th and 300th come around.
- Present a copy of the Declaration of Independence at all booth events for signature or at Wreaths Across America. The latter will require permission of the sponsoring cemetery.
- Participate in your community's parades in Color Guard or Colonial attire. Encourage all chapter members to join in. Those without uniforms or colonial attire can be in "Class B's." Remember the U.S., State, and Chapter flags and banners. Ask DAR, CAR, spouses and children to join your group. Large numbers of people provide a powerful optic to the public!

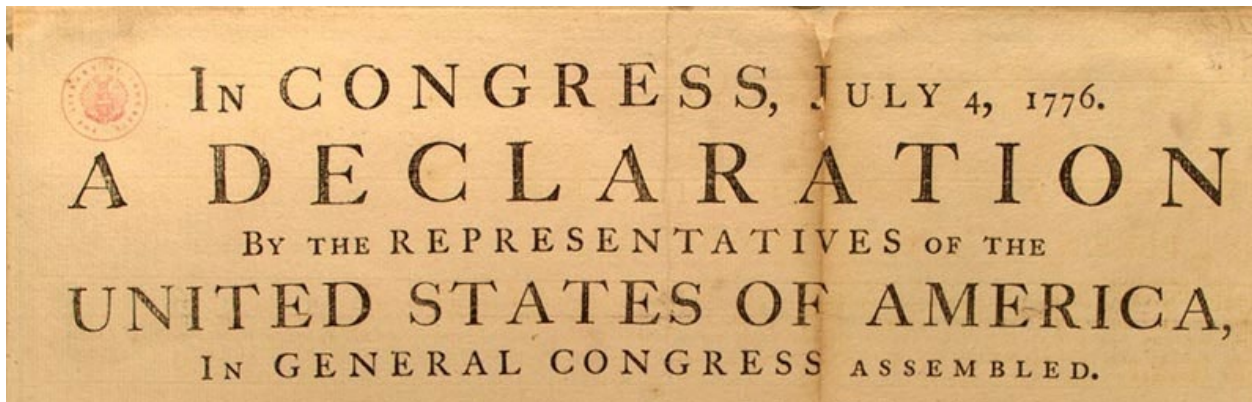
Promotion Flyer (adapt to your event)



**The Sons of the American Revolution
Invite you to Participate in the
250th Anniversary Commemoration**



Signing of the Declaration of Independence “the birth of a nation”



Sunday, June 28, 2025, 1:00-3:00 PM, Town Common

On July 4, 2026, America will celebrate 250 years of independence. With a single sheet of parchment and 56 signatures, America began the greatest political journey in human history.

Join us as we commemorate the 250th birthday of our nation's founding with a reading of the Declaration of Independence set in historic context.

Event Highlights

- 250th Ceremony: Welcoming Remarks by the Mayor, Keynote Speaker, Patriotic Music, SAR Continental Color Guard, raising of the United States Flag and ringing of the Liberty Bell
- Historical Reenactments: Watch and listen when the draft Declaration of Independence is read for the first time at the 2nd Continental Congress
- Interactive Exhibits & Artifacts: Explore period artifacts and engaging displays that transform the revolutionary era into a tangible experience.
- Family & Community Activities: Enjoy colonial crafts, storytelling sessions, and interactive games designed to educate and inspire visitors of all ages.

For more information, contact Chapter President at <email address>

History of the Declaration of Independence

2nd Continental Congress (May 10, 1775 - Mar 1, 1781)



By the time that the Declaration of Independence was adopted in July 1776, the Thirteen Colonies and Great Britain had been at war for more than a year.

During the first year of the war some colonists believed reconciliation with Britain was still possible, but events early in 1776 swung public opinion towards favoring independence. In February 1776, Parliament passed a law which established a blockade of American ports and proclaimed American ships to be enemy vessels. Growing support for independence ensued when it was confirmed that King George would be sending German mercenaries to subdue his American subjects.

The first official act towards declaring our independence occurred on June 7th 1776.

7 June 1776. During the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Richard Henry Lee from Virginia submitted a resolution calling for independence from Great Britain. At the time Lee declared, "Let this happy day give birth to an American Republic." However, since it was believed not enough delegates yet favored independence, voting on the resolution was delayed to allow time for growing support for independence.

11 June 1776. The Second Continental Congress appointed a committee of five delegates to write a declaration of independence. The committee consisted of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, Robert

History of the Declaration of Independence

Livingston, and Thomas Jefferson who was appointed as chairman of the committee.

28 June 1776. The draft of the Declaration of Independence was presented to the Continental Congress. Between this date and 4 July, 86 changes would be made to the draft. The actual title of the Declaration of Independence was "A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled".

1 July 1776. After a long day of speeches, a committee vote was taken on the Declaration of Independence. Each colony cast a single vote. Pennsylvania and South Carolina voted against declaring independence. The New York delegation lacked permission to vote for independence and therefore abstained. Delaware did not vote because its delegation was split. The remaining nine delegations voted in favor of independence. The next step was for the resolution to be voted upon by the full Congress.

2 July 1776. The South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Delaware delegations reversed their stance on independence and voted in favor of the Declaration of Independence. The New York delegation again abstained. The resolution for independence had been adopted with twelve yes votes and one abstention. With the passage of the declaration, the political ties between the colonies and Great Britain were officially dissolved. In a now famous letter written to his wife on the following day, John Adams predicted that July 2 would become a great American holiday believing that the vote for independence was what would be commemorated.

"I am apt to believe that [Independence Day] will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with shows, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more."

4 July 1776. The Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence and sent it to the printers. It is believed by many historians that Congress President John Hancock was the only one to sign the document on this day.

8 July 1776. The Declaration of Independence was read publicly for the first time after the citizens of Philadelphia were summoned to the State House

History of the Declaration of Independence

Yard by the bells of the city. The bells of the city rang long into the night in celebration.

19 July 1776. The Declaration of Independence was officially adopted when the colony of New York, the 13th colony, finally gave its approval.

8 August 1776. Delegates from each colony began to sign The Declaration of Independence. Eventually the document would contain the signatures from 56 delegates. The signature of John Hancock stands out for its large lettering. At the time the British had a reward of 500 pounds (\$50,000) on the head of Hancock. After signing, Hancock stated the British monarch, George III, "could now read his name without glasses and could now double the fine." Stephen Hopkins from Rhode Island stated while signing with his palsied hand, "My hand trembles, but my heart does not." Benjamin Franklin declared, "Indeed we must all hang together, otherwise we shall most assuredly hang separately."

18 January 1777. Congress ordered broadsides of the Declaration of Independence, containing the names of all 56 signers, to be printed and sent to all thirteen colonies. This was the first time that all the names of the signers were made public.

The Declaration of Independence is the birth certificate of our country and was the first public document to use the name "The United States of America".

It is the first successful declaration of independence in history and has helped inspire countless movements for independence, self-determination, and revolutions from 1776 to this day.

As one European observer noted in 1849, "the Declaration of Independence was nothing less than the noblest, happiest page in man-kinds history".

Sample Proclamation

WHEREAS, the Sons of the American Revolution are celebrating the 250th anniversary of the founding of America, and have proclaimed 2023 to 2033 as the “Decade of the American Revolution” by marking signature events each year that will be the focus of the NSSAR main celebration.

WHEREAS, in celebration of the Declaration of Independence announced on July 4, 1776, that proclaimed freedom and separation from the British rulers of the colonies in North America, we honor the brave and dedicated patriots, male and female of different creed, age, and ethnicity, who labored and fought to cause this result.

WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence, the first successful declaration of independence in history, is the birth certificate of our country and was the first public document to use the name “The United States of America.”

WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence has helped inspire countless movements for independence, self-determination, and revolutions from 1776 to this day. As one European observer noted in 1849, “the Declaration of Independence was nothing less than the noblest, happiest page in man-kinds history”.

NOW, THEREFORE, We/I, *Insert Name*, Insert Title of the *Insert City, County, State* encourage all Citizens to join with the Sons of the American Revolution and other patriotic, community, and veterans organizations, on *Day, Month, Year* to commemorate this important event in the history of our great country.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I / We hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the Insert City, County, State this Day, (Month) , Year,

Name
Title

Sample Address to School Board

Mr President, Mr Superintendent, School Board Members.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening.

I am Name and am a proud member of the Sons of the American Revolution.

My organization was organized in 1889, federally chartered in 1906 and we seek to honor our Revolutionary War patriot ancestors by promoting patriotism, serving our communities and educating and inspiring future generations about the founding principles of our Country.

Supporting our mission, I am here this evening to express appreciation to each of you for your public service for the benefit of our students and the community in which we live.

We also say thank you for teaching the founding of our country, the American Revolution, and our foundational documents including the Declaration of Independence and our Constitution. We also applaud you for the recognition of veterans each year.

Your test scores on the history portion of the state tests are laudable.

We are also appreciative of your permitting us as a Recognized and Named National Presenter to help recognize outstanding JROTC cadets. You may be aware that we also offer scholarship or honorarium opportunities to students and social study teachers at the elementary, middle school and high school levels. We also have programs to help history come alive in the classroom. I leave brochures for your consideration.

In recognition of your service, I have been authorized to present to each of you our Certificate of Outstanding Public Service notated this 250th year of our Declaration of Independence.

I request that you designate a tree, existing or planted, to be designated as a Liberty Tree and on an appropriate anniversary date in June, July or August a student and community shared reading of the Declaration of Independence.

Thank you for permitting me to speak and I have present to you your certificates.

Promotional Postcard

Upload and order this postcard design (front and back) on Vistaprint



Celebrate the signing of the Declaration of Independence

On July 4, 2026, America will celebrate
250 years of independence.
With a single sheet of parchment
and 56 signatures,
America began the greatest political journey
in human history.



Connect with us
online www.sar.org

7 June 1776. During the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Richard Henry Lee from Virginia submitted a resolution calling for independence from Great Britain.

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Declaration of Independence for Signing

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

[illegible]

This Document is provided by The Sons of the American Revolution
— <https://www.sar.org/>



Declaration of Independence for Signing



SAR Yard Sign

Declaration of Independence for Signing

Door Hanger proof available for print through Vistaprint.com. <Refer to file "Instructions - VistaPrint Door Hanger.pdf" for instructions on how to order>.



Front



Back

Door Hanger

Independence Day 2026 Event Report

250 Event Report State/Chapter Click or tap here to enter text.

When - Date: Click or tap here to enter text.

What - Event Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

What - SAR Significant Event Celebration: Click or tap here to enter text.

What - Brief Description:

Where: Click or tap here to enter text.

Who - Participating Organizations:

Who - Total Number of Participants: Click or tap here to enter text.

Who - # of Public Participants: Click or tap here to enter text.

Value Added - Media Coverage:

Value Added - Proclamations: ☐Y ☐N

Value Added - SAR Postcards at Event ☐Y ☐N Brochures ☐Y ☐N Business Cards ☐Y ☐N

Other Value Added:

Send this report and photos to the America 250 Committee at SAR250Events@gmail.com

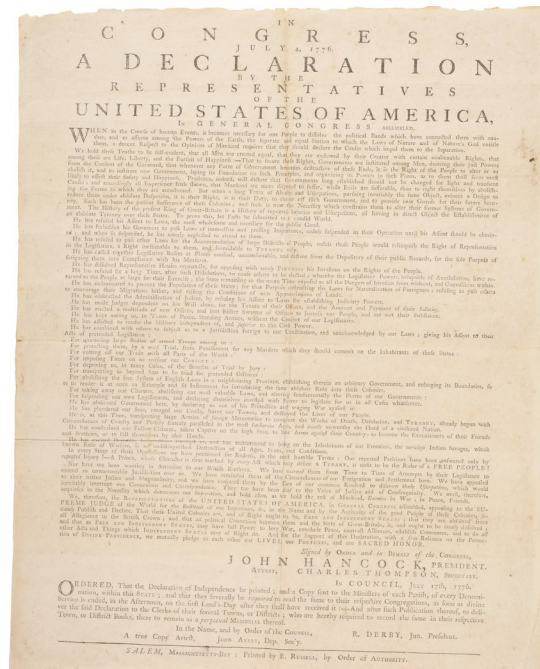
Additionally, submit photos and a brief description of the event to The Colorguardsman e-magazine by logging in to the National website at <https://www.sar.org/committees/color-guard-committee/> for submission criteria and contact information.

Public Domain Images



Declaration of Independence, 1774

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/downloads>

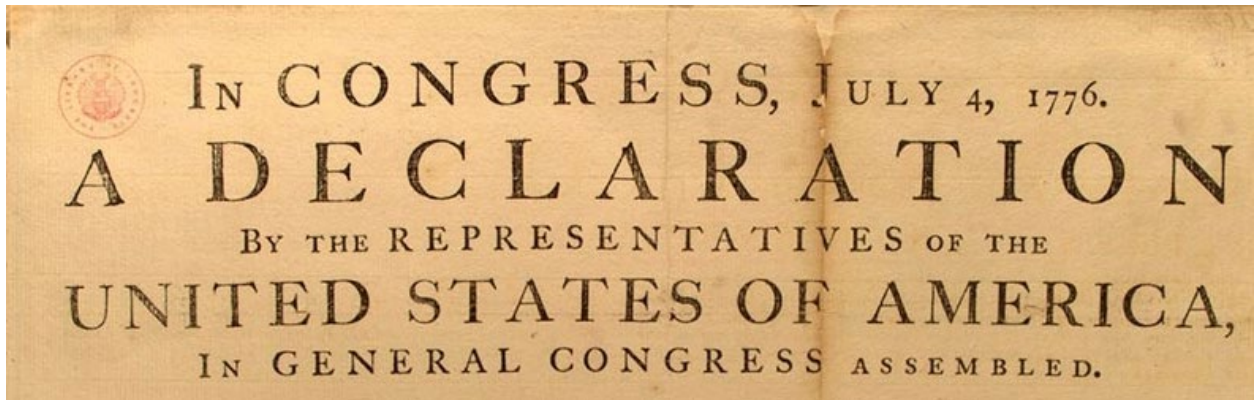


Declaration of Independence Broadside

by E. Russell ca July 9, 1776

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/67/Declaration_of_independence_broad_side_printed_by_e_russell.jpg

Public Domain Images



Declaration of Independence Broadside (cropped)
by E. Russell ca July 9, 1776

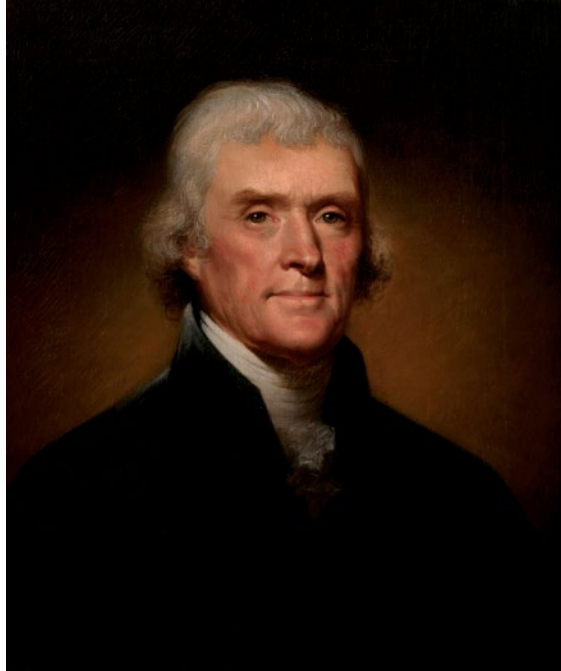
<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0e/Declaration-of-independence-broadside-cropped.jpg>



Declaration of Independence (1819), by John Trumbull

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Declaration_of_Independence_%281819%29,_by_John_Trumbull.jpg

Public Domain Images



Thomas Jefferson, primary author of the [Declaration of Independence](#)
By Rembrandt Peale, c 1800

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson#/media/File:Official_Presidential_portrait_of_Thomas_Jefferson_\(by_Rembrandt_Peale,_1800\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson#/media/File:Official_Presidential_portrait_of_Thomas_Jefferson_(by_Rembrandt_Peale,_1800).jpg)



John Hancock, President of the Second Continental Congress
By John Singleton Copley c 1770~1772

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/50/John_Hancock_1770.jpg?download

Public Domain Images



Independence Hall

By Captain Albert E. Theberge, NOAA Corps (ret.) –

NOAA Photo Library: amer0024, Public Domain,

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17995457>



Liberty Bell

Unknown author

http://bensguide.gpo.gov/images/symbols/libertybell_alone.jpg

Public Domain Images



Signing of the Declaration of Independence

By Charles Édouard Armand-Dumaresq

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=14541832>

Use these images on programs or other event promotional materials

