



Happy Independence Day

from the staff of the North Georgia News and West Printing Company

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50¢

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England laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery

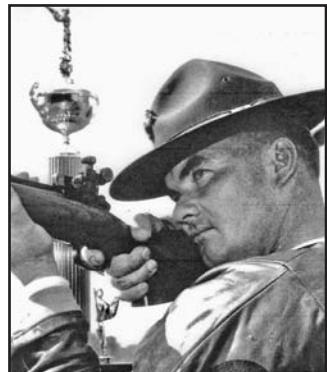
By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Editor

On July 4, 1776, 56 men signed the Declaration of Independence, officially kickstarting the ultimate experiment in democracy known as the United States of America.

Fast forward to today, on the 242nd anniversary of this great nation's birth, the experiment continues unabated thanks to the service and sacrifice of men like U.S. Marine Corps Master Sgt. Eric R. England, who passed away on April 7 at the age of 84.

Family, friends and fellow veterans attended an April 11 service for England at Choestoe Baptist Church, complete with military honors by a component of Marines from Dobbins Air Reserve Base out of Marietta.

The service featured eulogies by England's sister, Edie Rich, and his friend, retired USMC Col. Mike Nunnally. His interment occurred



USMC Master Sgt. Eric R. England

on June 4 at Arlington National Cemetery, when a team of Marines known as Body Bearers delivered the master sergeant to his final resting place that sunny day in Virginia.

There, he received full military honors in recognition of his service to the country, including words from a military chaplain, a firing party and a bugler playing taps.

When the time came, the six Marine Body Bearers folded

the flag draping England's casket and presented it to his kid sister, Edie, who accepted it with great pride.

England was 11 years older than Edie, and she said he always felt more like a father than a brother to her, as their dad had left when she was just a baby.

"Eric went in the Marine Corps when I was 7 years old," said Rich. "When he came home from Parris Island in his uniform, I knew he would be my hero forever."

England's military and shooting exploits are well known throughout the nation.

He was the infamous Phantom of Phu Bai, one of the deadliest American snipers in Vietnam with 98 confirmed kills before he had to be medically evacuated some seven months into his tour of duty.

All told, England did two tours in Vietnam as a sniper, and he was on his way back for a third time when the government turned back the troops.



England being carried by the USMC Body Bearers to his final resting place in Arlington National Cemetery on June 4, 2018.

His proficiency with a rifle earned him a job as a scout sniper and tactical weaponry instructor during the Vietnam War, and he trained his fellow patriots how to be better

riflemen, including the famous sniper Carlos Hathcock.

England enjoyed a 24-year career on the USMC Rifle Team, winning an untold number of medals and trophies in national

and international competitions.

He also competed as a civilian all over the world and holds several world marksmanship records, and he

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Scattered Thunder-storms persist across North Georgia

By Shawn Jarrard
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Editor

For nearly two weeks now, daily thunderstorms have swept through the region, producing gusty winds, heavy rain and frequent lightning.

Overnight and afternoon storms have become seemingly commonplace here in the North Georgia Mountains, and first responders remained busy all last week responding to a number of weather-related emergency calls.

Sudden winds produced during thunderstorms have wreaked havoc throughout the area, toppling trees, snapping power poles and scattering debris countywide.

Driving conditions have worsened from all the rain, and numerous trees have fallen across roadways and onto several structures since the summer storms began.

Fortunately, no one has been seriously injured resulting from the storms as of press time



Downed powerlines on Kiutuestia Creek Road being repaired by Blue Ridge Mountain EMC linemen following an afternoon storm on Wednesday, June 27. Photo by Frank Uhle

Friday (early deadline for the July Fourth holiday), though lightning is thought to have been the cause of at least one major structure fire on Lake Nottely last Wednesday.

Many folks have gone without power at various times over the last two weeks, as wind and falling trees have taken out powerlines or caused other

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Stan Gunter now chief judge of Enotah Judicial Circuit

By Shawn Jarrard
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Enotah Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge N. Stanley Gunter is the new chief judge of the circuit, following the resignation of Judge Murphy C. Miller on July 1.

"It's an important role, and I feel like I can do a good job representing the judicial branch for our circuit," said Gunter. "I know a lot of people at the state level and locally, and wherever I can use those connections and the skills and education that I've got, I'll be glad to do it."

Miller began his tenure as chief judge in 2012, the same year that Gunter swore in as a judge of the circuit.

"Judge Miller has always been a good friend," said Gunter. "He and I used to litigate against each other when we were young attorneys in the circuit. He always beat me. He was an excellent attorney, always very gracious.



Chief Judge N. Stanley Gunter
Photo by Shawn Jarrard

"And since becoming a judge, he's been very easy to work with. We've always supported each other, closed cases for each other whenever we could. It's been a good working relationship between us."

The circuit consists of three superior court judgeships. Two of those positions are held

by Judge Gunter and Judge Raymond George, and the third awaits filling by whomever Gov. Nathan Deal appoints to replace Miller.

Judge George also came aboard the circuit in 2012, but since Gunter swore in prior to George, Gunter has seniority and will serve in the chief judge position.

"As a superior court judge in a multi-county circuit, if I'm not having a trial week in one particular county, I'm traveling to all the counties during the week, holding hearings for all kinds of cases," said Gunter. "Criminal cases, divorce cases, other civil type cases. That's generally what I'm doing. And I'm signing a bunch of orders, reviewing paperwork, that kind of thing."

"There's really no difference in what I will be doing as chief judge versus regular judge other than some additional duties to attend certain meetings and make

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Hands-Free Law now in effect statewide

By Shawn Jarrard
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Georgia's new Hands-Free Law went into effect on July 1.

Proponents of the new law are hoping to change the way many people interact with their phones while driving, and lawmakers, peace officers, and safety advocacy groups and others believe the law will save lives.

Motorists can visit www.HeadsUpGeorgia.com to find lots of valuable information concerning the new law, including a Q&A on the various intricacies of HB 673.

Heads UP Georgia is an online campaign by the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, or GOHS.

The overarching goal of the law is to "prohibit actions which distract a driver while

operating a motor vehicle."

So, what are the basic do's and don'ts of the Hands-Free Law?

For starters, a driver cannot have a phone in their hand or use any part of their body to support their phone. This is where hands-free technology comes into play.

Drivers are allowed to use their phone's speakerphone, Bluetooth technology, an earpiece, a headphone or other device to communicate on a hands-free basis.

Headsets and earpieces can only be worn for communication purposes and not for listening to music or other entertainment, and people may only use one earbud while driving - using both is illegal.

Even with hands-free technology, drivers cannot write, read or send text messages, emails, social media

content and other internet data while on the road, though voice texting is allowed.

Furthermore, drivers cannot watch videos when they are on the road, with the exception of navigational videos.

GPS navigation devices are allowed.

Drivers also cannot use their phones or electronic devices to record video when they are on the road, but continuously running dash cams are still allowed.

A driver may listen to streaming music that does not include videos on the screen of their phone or device while driving, but they may not touch their phone while on the road to activate or program any music streaming app.

Streaming music that is controlled by and listened to

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Hands-Free Law Front: As of July 1, drivers must use hands-free technology to talk on their cellphones. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

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The North Georgia News will be closed Tuesday and Wednesday July 3rd and 4th

Let's Get Growing July 6th

Congratulations to Teela Mease, the WINNER of our ticket giveaway for the Justin Moore Concert
For breaking news and contests, follow us on Facebook