GENERAL ORDERS
No. 15

HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Washington, DC, *14 June 1975*

THE UNITED STATES ARMY BICENTENNIAL

Today, the United States Army marks the 200th anniversary of its founding by the Continental Congress on 14 June 1775.

In two centuries of service, the Army has never failed our Nation. Our military heritage is a proud record of service in both war and peace, perpetuating the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and sustaining the sanctity of the Constitution.

History speaks of a legacy bequeathed to us by those first American soldiers in 1775—a legacy of determination and grit. Those early patriots fresh from fields and shops, often with little more than a semblance of training, faced a powerful foe on the battlefield while struggling against hunger, cold, despair, and disease. Short of everything except courage and will, they persevered to win. Since that time, American soldiers traditionally have been defenders of freedom and guardians of peace.

The surviving spirit of those who have gone before demands that we also look ahead to the continued necessity for a creditable force comprised of dedicated soldiers. It is both our debt and duty to provide the Nation the kind of Army it must have. We will always be prepared to fight when our civilian leaders and the American people call upon us to do so. Further, we must continue to carry out the noncombat missions for which the Army is so uniquely qualified and through which the Army has contributed inestimably to the development of the Nation and its resources, to relief of suffering, and to the overall betterment of life for all Americans.

Thus, on this hallowed day, we look back with pride and forward with dedication and determination. We, who are the United States Army, rededicate ourselves to the responsibility and privilege of serving as the Nation's VANGUARD OF FREEDOM.

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