

INDEPENDENCE DAY SPECIAL

Civics 101: The 2nd Amendment

By Bill Kelberlau

What is it really? Many individuals and small groups have their own agendas and want to make it many different things. Often discussions focus on the issue of hunting and self defense. The arguments become endless from there.

Let's look at The Second Amendment: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

This one sentence is indicative of the rest of the Constitution. It is concise, to the point and requires very little, if any, interpretation. However, it does require intelligent thought and education. Our forefathers were brilliant educators and historians.

What is the militia? The militia is NOT the Army or the National Guard or the Navy. Article 1 Section 8 of The Constitution addresses this distinction. *Armies* are funded as necessary for the defense of the nation according to the needs and threats that exist at any given time. The *Armies* are funded every two years based on need. In a separate statement the Navy is ALWAYS maintained; i.e., funded to ensure the continuous protection of our nation. The *militia*, then and now, are everyday LOCAL citizens who can be mobilized at a moment's notice to defend the country against enemies both foreign and domestic. An example of this is the Sheriff's

Posse (militia) organized to address a specific need and when done they go back to their normal lives.

What is regulated? Again Article 1 Section 8 goes on to discuss the Militia. Congress is "To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States..." Congress makes the basic laws, not the President, and the states regulate. When you dig into the Texas Constitution and statutes, the Sheriff, "The Conservator of the peace," may call the Militia when needed and may also request further assistance from neighboring counties or the Governor.

Now that we have gotten past the first four words, why is this amendment necessary? The Second Amendment is necessary because it is necessary to the security of a free State. We are a free and sovereign people governing ourselves, our families and our country. The last part of this one sentence contains two critical issues. The first is the people's right to bear arms. This means citizens having in their immediate possession arms to respond to any emergency instantly. One cannot respond in a timely manner if he/she has to drive miles to an armory and hope someone has unlocked it and is going to do the right thing. Also, arms is not about hunting rifles, knives, bows, etc. Arms is anything necessary

to respond to any possible and immediate threat.

The second issue is the rights "shall not be infringed." Shall is not open to interpretation. It does not mean maybe, or if you feel like it, or have any other living definition. The last part "not be infringed" is also an absolute. It does not allow for any rules or actions to dilute or interfere.

So how does this apply today? It applies directly. Our environment is as dangerous as it ever was in the past. The threats manifest themselves differently but they persist. And you cannot depend on a corrupt bureaucracy more than a thousand miles away to respond to an emergency in your backyard.

How do we get and stay prepared? We no longer live off the land on a daily basis so what do we do? Fortunately there are a vast number of answers to this question. The materials are readily available in many stores and shops in your immediate community. Gun shops, fishing stores, outdoor and camping stores, home improvement stores with emergency equipment, preparation and survival shops, grocery stores with long shelf life food products and an array of others all close at hand. Many of these have training seminars, gun ranges, and other training programs. There are many local clubs for camping, fishing, hiking, where skills can be learned and precision acquired.

These concepts can be

made into a great activity for a family. Many groups have competitions that are fun while perfecting the needed skills of survival. Youth firearms safety and hunting education moves participants directly into wildlife conservation issues. The education and safety for our country and its citizens is our ongoing responsibility.

In addition, do not forget your elected officials.

County commissioners fund and provide emergency services. Your Sheriff, you elect him, he works for you, and is the Conservator of the Peace. Get involved in your ESD. Make sure your church is ready too.

The only thing that is a "living document" about our Constitution is that it lives; intact and unchanged defending our Nation, freedoms and liberty only as long as we defend its integrity.

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"I was fortunate to have mentors that showed me how to prepare authentic Italian cuisine from scratch, which is still how we cook in my restaurant here [in Texas]."

-Johnny Braga, Owner & Chef