



TIDEWATER WINDS  
CONCERT BAND

Presents

America 250:

“A Declaration for Independence”

Week 1: July 12, 13, 14



The 2026  
Free Summer Concert Series

[www.tidewaterwinds.org](http://www.tidewaterwinds.org)

757-480-0953



## Maestro John Brewington

Welcome to America's 250th Birthday Celebration, presented by Tidewater Winds!

This season, we gather in celebration of a remarkable milestone — the 250th birthday of the United States of America. Through music, storytelling, and artistic expression, we honor the spirit, courage, and creativity that have shaped our nation from its founding to the present day.

Tidewater Winds has an inspiring musical journey through America's history and culture, including:

- A Fourth to Remember
- America 250: A Declaration for Independence
- 1776: An American Revolution
- Live! At The Wells!
- The Great American Song Book Series with the Winds' Jazz Combo, Little Big Band, and Big Band
- Tidewater Winds Brass Quartet

You will enjoy selections from *Racing the Night*; *The Girl Who Saved the American Revolution*, the acclaimed musical by Gary Spell, with cast members Ava Saunders, Dominic Caravello, Rainey Treviño, Declan Leonidoff, and Willow Smith. Our concert band performances will include music from the American Revolution and throughout our country's great musical history.

We are honored to welcome outstanding guest soloists Frank Cubillo, Danielle Roby, and Annamarie Smith-Butz to our Jazz series. This will feature timeless music made famous by Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Tony Bennett, George Gershwin, Lerner and Loewe, Count Basie, Cole Porter, Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer, and Rodgers and Hart. The talented cast of *Holidivas* from Zeiders American Dream Theater will also be featured, including soloists Kobie Smith, Robin Ridick, Melissa Cartwright, and Charity Robinson. Their performances celebrate the enduring themes of love, hope, romance, freedom, and the American spirit through beloved selections from the Great American Songbook.

As we reflect on 250 years of American history, our summer music series reminds us that our programs continue to celebrate the ideals that unite and inspire us — liberty, resilience, creativity, community.... the pursuit of happiness. Through every performance, we honor the rich cultural traditions that have shaped America's musical heritage and continue to bring people together across generations.

Thank you for joining Tidewater Winds for this unforgettable celebration of America's past, present, and future. As always, your presence makes all the difference!

Musically Yours,  
John Brewington

# America 250:

## “A Declaration for Independence”

Week 1: July 12, 13, 14  
PROGRAM

Star Spangled Banner	Traditional
Liberty Fanfare	John Williams, trans. Bocook
Riders For the Flag	John Phillip Sousa
Let Freedom Ring	arr. Kenny Bierschenk
American Salute	Morton Gould, trans. Lang
America The Beautiful	Carmen Dragon
Americans We	Henry Fillmore, ed. Fennell
America the Brave	Melillo

### INTERMISSION

Sing We Liberty	James Hosay
I am the American Flag	Jim Beckel

Narrators: Gray Livingston, Jason Redman, Steve Wilkins

A Colonial Collage	James Hosey
Hamilton Suite	Lin-Manuel Miranda, arr. Brubaker
Sweet Land of Liberty	James Sochinski
Armed Forces on Parade	arr. Richard Hayman
Stars and Stripes Forever	John Philip Sousa

# 2026 America 250 Narrators

## “I Am the American Flag”

### Gray Livingston, US Navy Ret., Pale Horse Coffee



Mr. Gray Livingston Gray James Livingston was born and raised in Michigan, the youngest of four children born to George and Bonnie Livingston. His father grew up on a Missouri farm, enlisted in the U.S. Navy at 17, and moved to Michigan for work after serving in WWII. Gray graduated with honors from Swartz Creek High School in 1981, earning varsity letters in three sports. At 19, Gray enlisted in the USAF. He served as an electronics technician working on Titan II ICBM systems at Davis-Monthan AFB and Minuteman II systems at Whiteman AFB. After cross-training, he served at Offutt AFB as an Electronic Intelligence programmer. Gray earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska and was commissioned in 1992, serving the rest of his career as a Computer-Communications Officer. Following his military service, Gray worked as a program manager for a government contractor. Using the Post-9/11 GI Bill, he earned a master's degree from Old Dominion University in 2013 and taught high school math in Virginia Beach. In 2019, Gray and three partners opened Pale Horse Coffee in Chesapeake, Virginia. Three years later, Gray became the sole owner and operator. **Gray narrates I Am The American Flag on July 12<sup>th</sup> in Norfolk.**  
<https://www.palehorsecoffee.com/>

### Jason Redman,

Jason Redman served 21 years as a Navy SEAL, with 11 years enlisted and 10 years as an officer, leading combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. On September 13, 2007, outside Fallujah, Iraq, his assault team was ambushed. Jason was shot eight times, including once in the face, but fought alongside his team to ensure everyone returned home alive. While recovering at Bethesda Naval Medical Center, he authored the now-famous "Sign on the Door," a statement of resilience that became a symbol for wounded warriors and overcomers everywhere. Since retiring in 2013, Jason founded SOF Spoken and has delivered over 700 transformational keynote speeches to Fortune 500 companies, professional sports teams, and organizations worldwide. He's a New York Times bestselling author and uses his 30-year career to teach leaders how to overcome adversity and achieve elite performance. Jason's incredible story of failure, redemption, resilience, and triumph is nothing short of inspiring. From nearly being kicked out of the SEAL Teams to leading high-stakes combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, to surviving eight gunshot wounds (including a round to the face), Jason has lived the Overcome Mindset he now teaches to audiences worldwide. **Jason is pleased to be reciting "I Am the American Flag" on July 13<sup>th</sup>.**

### Steven Wilkins, US Navy Ret., VFW392



FC1(SW) Steven Wilkins served a distinguished 20-year career in the United States Navy from 1997 to 2017. As a Fire Controlman First Class (Surface Warfare), he specialized in the operation, maintenance, and readiness of complex shipboard combat systems. Throughout his two decades of service, Petty Officer Wilkins served aboard the USS Wasp (LHD 1), the USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6), and the USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71). His assignments included the Recruit Training Command and Naval Station Great Lakes, the Center for Surface Combat Systems (CSCS), and Fleet Combat Training Center Atlantic at Dam Neck, and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center (MARMC). A highly decorated veteran, his military awards include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Navy "E" Ribbon, the Good Conduct Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal, alongside various other campaign and unit citations. Following his retirement from active duty, Commander Wilkins continued his dedication to his fellow service members. He is a proud 14-year member of the **Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 392**, where he currently serves with honor as the Post Commander. **Steven recites "I am the American Flag" on July 14<sup>th</sup> at 24<sup>th</sup> Street Stage in VA Beach.**

### The Legacy of General MacArthur Memorial VFW Post 392

Chartered in April 1917, VFW Post 392 spans over a century of historic service to the Tidewater military community. Originally based in Norfolk, the post relocated to Virginia Beach and was proudly renamed the General MacArthur Memorial Post No. 392 to honor the legendary five-star general. Today, it thrives as a cornerstone for local veterans alongside an active VFW Auxiliary. Post 392, which operates on an unwavering fraternal, patriotic, and educational mission. <https://www.vfw392.org/>



## “I Am the American Flag”

I am the American Flag. I am what you make me, nothing more, nothing less. I am the banner of hope and freedom for generation after generation. I am life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I am the best of times and the worst of times. I was still there at Fort McHenry after bombs burst in air. Born amid the first flames of America's fight for freedom, I am a symbol of a country that has grown from thirteen colonies to a nation of fifty sovereign states. I am government of the people, by the people, for the people. I am old glory; I am the flag of the United States of America.

I was there when brother fought against brother, North against South, for the freedom of all men. My fluttering folds flew over the rubble of the World Trade Center after 9/11. I have been here through good times and bad. I was there when times were good during the Roaring 20's. I was there when no brother could spare a dime, and a new President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, addressed a nation in despair.-----

"This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly...This great nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. Practices of the unscrupulous moneychangers stand indicted in the court of public opinion, rejected by the hearts and minds of men. The moneychangers have fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization. We may now restore that temple to the ancient truths. Happiness lies not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort. Our constitutional system has proved itself the most superbly enduring political mechanism the world has ever produced. It has met every stress of foreign wars and bitter internal strife. We do not distrust the future of essential democracy. Democracy is not a static thing. It is an everlasting march.

I was there in 1936 when the clouds of war were gathering before World War II, and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt prepared a nation for war when he said the following words: "I am profoundly convinced that people everywhere in the civilized world wish to live in peace one with another. And still leaders and governments resort to war. Truly, if the genius of mankind that have invented the weapons of death cannot discover the means of preserving peace, civilization as we know it lives in an evil day."

My colors flew high over the deck of the USS Arizona on the morning Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and FDR addressed a nation in despair:.... "Yesterday, December 7th, 1941 - a day which will live in infamy - the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.---No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people, in their righteous might, will win through to absolute victory.-- The long known and long expected has thus taken place. The forces endeavoring to enslave the entire world are now moving toward this hemisphere. With confidence in our armed forces - with the unbound determination of our people - we will gain the inevitable triumph - so help us God."

I was planted in the Sea of Tranquility on the surface of the moon when Neil Armstrong took one giant leap for mankind. My colors flew at half-mast in the dark moments of the 1960's when President John F. Kennedy and his brother Robert fell at the hands of brutal assassins. Martin Luther King, as well, did not get to see his promised land, but his dream lives on as I watched this country elect its first African-American President. I am the American Flag. I am what you make me, nothing less, nothing more. I am your belief in yourself, your dream of what a people can become. I am all that you hope to be. I am song and fear, struggle and panic, and enabling hope. I am the day's work of the weakest man and the largest dream of the most daring. I am more than you believe me to be and I am all that you believe I can be. I swing before your eyes as a bright gleam of color, a symbol of yourself. My stars and stripes are your dreams and your labors.

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They are bright with cheer, brilliant with courage, firm with faith, because you have made them so; for you are the makers of the flag, and it is well that you glory in the making. I am the American Flag!