

# Lifelines

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

## AMERICA



July 4, 2026

Dear Friends:

In 1918, during World War I, an immigrant named Irving Berlin, who had arrived in New York as a child, wrote a song about his love for his adopted country. He set the song aside, anticipating there might come a more appropriate time to release it publicly.

Twenty years later, as World War II loomed in Europe, Mr. Berlin revised the lyrics and gave them to singer Kate Smith to debut on Armistice Day; we now know it as Veterans Day.

That song – “God Bless America” -- was an instant and massive hit, one that has become, over the past three-quarters of a century, synonymous with American patriotism. Of course, we are all familiar with the lyrics, particularly those of the first stanza:

*God bless America, land that I love,  
Stand beside her and guide her  
Through the night with the light from above.  
From the mountains to the prairies,  
To the oceans, white with foam,  
God bless America, my home sweet home.*



This year, on July 4, Independence Day, Irving Berlin’s “Home Sweet Home” commemorates its “Semiquincentennial,” America’s 250th birthday. I’m sure that, like me, you and many millions of others will celebrate this milestone with pomp and circumstance: parades, flag-waving, BBQs with family and friends, and listening to patriotic music while fireworks fill the skies with red, white, and blue. And I’m equally sure that one of the songs we will hear is that very tune that Mr. Berlin penned 108 years ago: “God Bless America.”

As we listen and sing along to those magnificent words, I hope you will join me in remembering that song was born during a time of world conflict, when nearly five million young American men and women (yes, women fought in WWI) -- Doughboys and the Leathernecks, as they were coined – were sent into combat to preserve a stable, democratic world order.

Let us also remember that some 115,000 of these courageous individuals died on the battlefields, while another 225,000 came home with permanent physical and/or mental disabilities from what was termed “the war to end all wars.”

Of course, it wasn't. So, let us also remember that "God Bless America" and the lyrics we know today were born of war. More than 16 million Americans either enlisted or were drafted into one of the military branches -- the majority in the immediate aftermath of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, when our country officially joined World War II. They, too, fought to eradicate fascism and defend democracy, to preserve the "land that we love," our "home sweet home." Sadly, more than 416,000 of our troops died in combat, while some 674,000 were injured, many with permanent disabilities, both physical and mental.

Alas, more wars have followed -- Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Iraq, and Afghanistan, among others -- and alas, far too many thousands of men and women have lost their lives or have come home disabled. And for far too many of them, the fighting continues as they struggle to readjust to civilian life, their family dynamic, their communities, their professional endeavors. Far too often, the sacrifices they have made to defend democracy and preserve America as our "home sweet home" are marginalized or, worse, forgotten.

When I conceived and set out to build the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial in Washington, DC, my mission was to change this narrative. My goal for the 2.3-acre memorial was two-fold: to create a permanent public tribute to what are now 4.2 million living disabled American veterans and those who have died, and to educate our legislative leaders in the nation's Capitol—and, in fact, all Americans—about the true and enormous human cost of war, a cost that continues to accumulate long after our troops leave the battlefield.

It is the same mission that underpinned my effort to create a National Day of Honor for disabled veterans, commemorated every year on October 5, the anniversary of the memorial dedication in 2014.

In his Second Inaugural Address in 1865, President Abraham Lincoln famously pledged to "care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan."

I can't think of a more fitting pledge to honor and fulfill as we gather to celebrate America 250, and as we sing along to Mr. Berlin's iconic words:

*God bless America, land that I love,  
Stand beside her and guide her  
Through the night with the light from above.  
From the mountains to the prairies,  
To the oceans, white with foam,  
God bless America, my home sweet home.*

And may God bless our heroic disabled American veterans—and all those who serve—throughout our vast "home sweet home."



Love Always,

*Lois*

# A BIRTHDAY TO REMEMBER, A LIFE TO CELEBRATE!











LOIS POPE AND THE BOARD OF LIFE  
INVITE YOU TO A



# MASQUERADE

AT LIFE'S 33<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL

## LADY IN RED GALA

SUNDAY,  
MARCH 14, 2027  
6PM



THE BREAKERS PALM BEACH

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ENJOY AN EVENING OF COMEDY

STARRING  
COMEDY ICON

**JAY LENO**

AND

COMEDIENNE EXTRAORDINAIRE

**RITA RUDNER**

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*Guests will also enjoy the Palm Beach  
Symphony performing Broadway hits  
during cocktails, a gourmet dinner,  
and dancing to music of the  
Danny Beck Band!*

*Reserve your tables and sponsorships  
early for one of the most anticipated  
philanthropic and social events  
of the Palm Beach season!*



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