

THE GRAND LODGE

of Ancient, Free and
Accepted Masons
of North Carolina



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GRAND MASTER 2021

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Statement from the Grand Master of Masons of North Carolina Regarding the Recent Military Withdrawal From Afghanistan

September 2, 2021

Brethren:

The recent events in Afghanistan have caused much distress to our country, to the men and women who have served in the United States military, and to our Craft. I have received calls, emails, and text messages regarding what has happened, and I have heard the distress and despair in those who have reached out to me.

I do not believe the speed with which Kabul fell is a result of the failure of our service men and women. I asked our Senior Grand Deacon, Col. Robert Rideout for his thoughts and counsel. Col. Rideout served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Speaking with Col. Rideout, it is clear that the United States military is unparalleled in its ability to execute its primary mission of fighting our nation's enemies and defending our liberties. However, it is not the mission of the military to build nations. Use of our military to try and create a new nation will ultimately fail when the local population does not share our values and principles, our desire for democracy, or our belief in a free-market economy. Our policies failed, not our military. We saw this 50 years ago in Vietnam; we see it in Afghanistan today.

Those who were deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan had no voice in the administration that first sent them into harm's way. Nor did they have a voice in the subsequent administrations that kept them deployed or the one that decided to bring them home. Nevertheless, they bravely and gallantly served our nation with honor and distinction, willfully sacrificing when their country called upon them. The recent events have caused great emotional suffering to many of our brothers who have served and are continuing to serve. Today, they need and deserve our help and our support.

As Freemasons, we are taught to soothe the unhappy, sympathize with their misfortunes, compassionate their miseries and to restore peace to their troubled minds. We must aid and assist our brothers in this time of trouble. Do not wait for them to ask. Extend to them the hand of brotherly love and friendship. Stop by or call to see how they are doing. Take them to a lodge meeting, to lunch, or to dinner. Sometimes, all they need is someone to talk to. If they need the help of a professional, work with them to get it. There are VA medical centers in Asheville, Salisbury, Durham and Fayetteville, as well as VA clinics across the state that you can turn to for assistance.

For your support and kindness to all who have served our nation, thank you my brothers.

Sincerely and Fraternally,

R. David Wicker, Jr.
Grand Master