



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mount Rushmore
National Memorial

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Mount Rushmore National Memorial News Release

Independence Day Celebration a Success at Mount Rushmore

MOUNT RUSHMORE N.M., S.D. – Mount Rushmore National Memorial marked Independence Day 2008 with patriotic entertainment and a dramatic display of fireworks. At 9:00 p.m., fire and weather experts monitoring environmental conditions made the decision to launch the fireworks. By the end of the night, more than 10,000 shells and pyrotechnics lit up the sky over the sculpture.

The 28-minute long fireworks display was kicked off by a dramatic flyover by a B-1 Bomber from Ellsworth Air Force Base. A deep rumble shook the crowd as the jet's afterburners kicked in followed by the pops of one of the country's highest rated fireworks shows. An estimated 30,000 people viewed the fireworks from the Memorial grounds. Many others viewed it from the surrounding area or via a live broadcast on KEVN. The fireworks were preceded by the unveiling of Mount Rushmore's new D.A.R.E. vehicle, patriotic music, and special tributes to veterans.

"Our county's rich history of diversity was evident today as Mount Rushmore celebrated our nation's birthday with song, dance, and patriotic presentations," said Superintendent Gerard Baker. "This event was a success because of the hundreds of hours volunteers, memorial partners, and National Park Service employees from Mount Rushmore and other national parks spent making it possible. I would like to thank everyone who played a role in making this a safe and memorable celebration."

The crowd stood silently for the solemn flag folding ceremony involving Mr. Frank Buckles, the last surviving veteran of World War I. The day-long celebration, dedicated to the country's veterans, included musical acts, children's programs, and military flyovers.

The patriotic celebration continues on July 4 with music and cultural entertainment in the amphitheater beginning at 5:30 p.m. leading up to the regularly scheduled Evening Program and sculpture illumination beginning at 9 p.m. Please see www.nps.gov/moru for the full program schedule.



Photo Caption: An estimated 30,000 people viewed the annual Mount Rushmore fireworks show from Memorial grounds.



Photo Caption: More than 10,000 shells lit up the sky over the sculpture.

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