

Presidential Documents

Title 3—**Proclamation 7058 of December 5, 1997****The President****National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, 1997****By the President of the United States of America****A Proclamation**

December 7, 1941, marked a turning point in the history of our Nation, a defining moment that would alter the lives of millions of Americans and change forever America's destiny. On that quiet Sunday morning, the forces of Imperial Japan attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, killing or injuring more than 3,000 Americans, crippling our Pacific Fleet, and critically damaging our airpower. In that moment of supreme crisis, the essential greatness at the core of the American spirit was revealed. Our response was not despair, but determination. Inspired by the leadership of President Franklin Roosevelt and buoyed by his faith that we ultimately would prevail, America went to war.

Looking back across the years, we rightly are still awed by what the American people accomplished during World War II. United in spirit and purpose after the attack on Pearl Harbor, millions of men and women joined the Armed Forces; by war's end, some 15 million had served. They fought fiercely and with uncommon courage in battlefields across the globe. In the Pacific, step by bloody and painstaking step, they took back the islands captured by Imperial Japanese forces in the days after Pearl Harbor. The names of those battles still resonate through the years: Coral Sea, Midway, Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima. On the western front, facing the daunting power of the Nazi war machine, Americans and our Allies struggled and died to liberate Europe, fighting in the stormy North Atlantic, in the searing heat of North Africa, and in the flak-filled skies over France and Germany.

Americans on the home front responded with equal gallantry and strength. Stepping forward to close the gap left by departing servicemen, the very young, the elderly, minority workers, and women filled America's factories and shipyards. Working around the clock, they built the ships, planes, tanks, and guns that armed the forces of freedom and made our Nation the "Arsenal of Democracy." In fields, on farms, and in neighborhood Victory Gardens, they produced the food to sustain our Nation, our troops, and our Allies. Millions left their homes to do their part, and few American families were untouched by the hardships and sacrifices demanded by this unprecedented effort.

While more than half a century separates us from the attack on Pearl Harbor, we still can learn much from the example, achievements, and heroic deeds of those Americans who preserved the flame of liberty and passed it around the world. They taught us that America is the world's best hope for freedom and democracy and that we must never shrink from the responsibilities of that leadership. They taught us the need for constant vigilance, a powerful military, and strength of character. They showed us that, when Americans are united in heart and mind, there is nothing we cannot accomplish together.


As we remember Pearl Harbor, let us also remember and give thanks for that great and gallant leader, Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose memorial we dedicated earlier this year in our Nation's Capital. In December of 1941, in one of our Nation's darkest hours, he proclaimed his faith in the ultimate victory of freedom over tyranny that, sadly, he did not live to see:

With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph. So help us God.

The Congress, by Public Law 103-308, has designated December 7, 1997, as "National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 7, 1997, as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. I urge all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities in honor of the Americans who served at Pearl Harbor. I also ask all Federal departments and agencies, organizations, and individuals to fly the flag of the United States at half-staff on this day in honor of those Americans who died as a result of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William J. Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "W" and "C".

[FR Doc. 97-32428

Filed 12-8-97; 12:10 pm]

Billing code 3195-01-P