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National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, 1986

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In the annals of American history, only a few events are so well-known and so deeply rooted in national remembrance that the mere mention of their date suffices to describe them. Of these occurrences, none could have had more significance for our Nation than December 7, 1941.

On that Sunday morning, 45 years ago, the Imperial Japanese Navy launched an unprovoked, surprise attack upon units of the Armed Forces of the United States stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. This attack claimed the lives of 2,403 Americans, wounded 1,178 more, and damaged our naval capabilities in the Pacific. Such destruction seared the memory of a generation and galvanized the will of the American people in a fight to maintain our right to freedom without fear.

Every honor is appropriate for the courageous Americans who made the supreme sacrifice for our Nation at Pearl Harbor and in the many battles that followed in World War II. Their sacrifice was for a cause, not for conquest; for a world that would be safe for future generations. Their devotion must never be forgotten.

We honor our dead by solemn ceremony. We do so as well by protecting the Nation and the freedom they protected and by forging the resolve, the strength, and the military preparedness necessary to deter attack and to preserve and build the peace. As President Franklin Roosevelt told our Nation the day after Pearl Harbor was attacked, "It is our obligation to our dead—it is our sacred obligation to their children and our children—that we must never forget what we have learned."

We have not forgotten, nor will we. We live in a world made more free, more just, and more peaceful by those who will answer roll call no more, those who will report for muster never again. We do remember Pearl Harbor.

The Congress, by Public Law 99-534, has designated December 7, 1986, as "National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 7, 1986, as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, and I call upon the people of the United States to observe this solemn occasion with appropriate ceremonies and activities and to pledge eternal vigilance and strong resolve to defend this Nation and its allies from all future aggression.

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

Ronald Reagan