
Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 6963 of December 5, 1996

The President

National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Fifty-five years ago, on a calm Hawaiian morning, Imperial Japan launched a surprise attack against the U.S. Armed Forces stationed at Pearl Harbor, shattering the peace of our land and drawing America into World War II. The assault of December 7, 1941, lasted only two hours, but it killed or injured almost 3,600 Americans, destroyed a major portion of our Nation's Pacific Fleet, and damaged more than 325 aircraft, severely weakening our air power.

The attack jolted our Nation and forced us into a war unlike any previous conflict, waged across the globe in places most Americans had never heard of, in dense jungles and on an ocean we once thought too large for an enemy to cross. It was a war that would require unparalleled courage and determination from soldier and civilian alike, and all Americans rose to the monumental challenge.

During this time, our Nation stood united in purpose and in spirit as never before. Millions of brave and patriotic men and women served the Armed Forces in the struggle for freedom; millions of others sacrificed on the home front. On farms and in factories, mines, and shipyards, Americans labored around the clock to supply the food, weapons, and equipment needed to win the war. In our homes, schools, and places of worship, Americans from every walk of life prayed and worked together for victory. And—as a powerful testament to America's resilience—battleships damaged at Pearl Harbor returned to service and helped break the back of the Japanese fleet.

The generation that fought World War II came home to build new careers and communities and made America the richest, freest nation in history. Some men and women remained in uniform, safeguarding our liberties and ensuring that tyranny would never again threaten our shores. In peace, this generation vowed never again to be unprepared and gave our Nation the security and progress that we have known and cherished for over 50 years.

This is the precious legacy bestowed on us by the men and women of the World War II generation. We can best honor their deeds of courage and determination by maintaining their vigil in defense of freedom and striving, as they did, to make the world a better place for all its peoples.

As we mark the 55th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, let us remember in prayer all those who died on that day and throughout World War II. Let us also honor all World War II veterans and their families, those who lost loved ones, and those who worked on the home front. Finally, let us give thanks once again for the peace and freedom secured by their service and their sacrifice.

The Congress, by Public Law 103-308, has designated December 7, 1996, as "National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 7, 1996, 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 halfstaff 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-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William J. Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "W".

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