
Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 6856 of December 6, 1995

The President

National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, 1995

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America's involvement in World War II began 54 years ago as dawn was shattered by a surprise attack on our forces stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. In the words of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy" began at 7:55 a.m. when Japan launched an offensive to destroy the United States Pacific Fleet. The losses suffered that day shocked our Nation with the realization that American soil was not immune to the ravages of war—at the end of the attack, more than 3,000 Americans were dead, missing, or wounded. We resolved to boldly defend our shores against further devastation. Just 4 years later, the same fleet that the Japanese had attempted to destroy at Pearl Harbor sailed triumphantly into Tokyo Bay.

The attack of Pearl Harbor marked the beginning of America's total mobilization against a common enemy, and the United States soon became the world's "Arsenal of Democracy." Citizens worked together toward a common goal as the "We Can Do It" attitude spread across the country. The landscape of American business was forever changed as over 19 million women and many minority workers took high-skill jobs to contribute to the war effort.

The courageous veterans who fought selflessly to bring an end to the war in the Pacific deserve our highest respect and our most profound gratitude. Today we honor the sacrifices that led to the ultimate victory—the triumph of freedom over tyranny. We also pay tribute to the families who contributed so much with their support, sacrifices, and prayers from the home front. A grateful Nation will long remember those who came home and those who did not.

In the post-Cold War era, it is vital that we pass along the lessons learned from Pearl Harbor to a new generation of Americans. We must never allow our country to be unprepared, and we must never again isolate ourselves from the problems of the world. This is the legacy we leave to our young people, and it is our responsibility to continue to teach them those lessons. By doing so, we reaffirm the values of democracy, freedom, and leadership that have made America great.

The Congress, by Public Law 103–308, has designated December 7, 1995, as "National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 7, 1995, 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.