



## Armed Forces Day

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

During the past 40 years, we Americans have set aside a special day each year to recognize our debt to the men and women who defend this Nation's peace and security as members of the Armed Forces. On Armed Forces Day, we honor the men and women who serve in our Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

A nation's military strength is not found in its defensive systems and weapons alone, or even in the number of its military personnel. It is the personal character of the men and women in uniform—their faith, readiness, will, and devotion—that makes a nation's armed forces proud and strong. As Patrick Henry observed when urging his fellow Americans to fight for our country's independence: "The battle . . . is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave."

Patrick Henry's observation accents the theme for this 40th anniversary observance of Armed Forces Day: "Keeping America Strong." Our Nation is strong today because the members of our Armed Forces are vigilant, active, and brave. America's service men and women are mindful of the precious nature of freedom and peace and of our responsibility to preserve them for generations yet unborn; they are prepared to defend innocent people from the aggression of terrorists and totalitarian governments; and they are both courageous in danger and confident in "the holy cause of liberty."

The members of America's Armed Forces are part of the noble legions that have never failed to defend our Nation or her interests anywhere in the world. As our recent experience in Grenada and the Persian Gulf so forcefully reminded us, securing peace and advancing the cause of liberty require such constant strength and determination.

Today, I join with all Americans in thanking the members of the United States Armed Forces for so faithfully defending our freedom and national security. From the newest enlisted personnel to the most seasoned Generals and Admirals—Navy crewmen in the boiler room and on the bridge, Coast Guard crews at sea and stateside, Air Force personnel on the lonely tarmac or in the busy control tower, Marines and Army soldiers from boot camp to command post—you are America's heroes as surely as the brave and selfless veterans who have gone before you.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, continuing the precedent of my eight immediate predecessors in this Office, do hereby proclaim the third Saturday of each May as Armed Forces Day.

I direct the Secretary of Defense on behalf of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Marine Corps, and the Secretary of Transportation on behalf of the Coast Guard to plan for appropriate observances each year. The Secretary of Defense shall also be responsible for soliciting the participation and cooperation of civil authorities and private citizens.

I invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to provide for the observance of Armed Forces Day within their jurisdiction each year in an appropriate manner designed to increase public understanding and appreciation of the Armed Forces of the United States. I also invite national and local veterans, civic, and community service organizations to join in the annual observance of Armed Forces Day.

Finally, I call upon all Americans not only to display the flag of the United States at their homes on Armed Forces Day, but also to learn about national defense—and the men and women who sustain it—by participating in the local observances of the day.

Proclamation 4934 of April 16, 1982, is hereby superseded.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirteenth.

*George Bush*