



National Former Prisoners of War Recognition Day, 1990

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Our freedom and security have been won for us at a very high price—a price borne bravely in times of conflict and peril by members of the United States Armed Forces. Those Americans who have suffered as prisoners of war know all too well the costs of battle. Few of us could have a more profound understanding of the value of liberty than these who once experienced the terrible reality of life without it.

Every member of the United States Armed Forces is prepared to uphold and defend our Nation's Constitution and the principles it enshrines. Every member of the United States Armed Forces knows and accepts his or her duties and the high standards expected of our military personnel. No training course or series of instructions, however, could ever prepare prisoners of war for the privation and suffering to which they were often exposed. In violation of fundamental standards of morality and international codes and customs regarding the treatment of captured military personnel, many American prisoners of war were subjected to starvation, disease, and physical and psychological torture. Thousands died in captivity. Thousands were permanently disabled by illness or by injuries inflicted upon them. All of them endured the immeasurable pain of separation from loved ones.

Nevertheless, our prisoners of war held firm in their belief in the promise of America and the freedom and justice to which this Nation is dedicated. They struggled to stay alive and to return home, and, by the grace of God, many of them did.

Today, we honor our former prisoners of war and give thanks for the peace and liberty they so valiantly defended. Each of them has shown us that faith and courage are freedom's invincible shield and sword. We must never forget the sacrifices they made for us, nor must we allow our children to forget the lasting debt we owe to each of them. Therefore, we should also renew our commitment to securing the release of any U.S. serviceman who may still be held against his will.

As a measure of our admiration and gratitude for all former prisoners of war, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 190, has designated April 9, 1990, as "National Former Prisoners of War Recognition Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this occasion.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim April 9, 1990, as National Former Prisoners of War Recognition Day. I call upon government officials, private organizations, and individual Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities to honor former prisoners of war and to renew our Nation's appreciation for the rights and freedom they defended.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fourteenth.

George Bush