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Memorial Day, May 25, 1981

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Over one hundred years ago, Memorial Day was established to commemorate those who died in the defense of our national ideals. Our ideals of freedom, justice, and equal rights for all have been challenged many times since then, and thousands of Americans have given their lives in many parts of the world to secure those same ideals and insure for their children a lasting peace. Their sacrifice demands that we, the living, continue to promote the cause of peace and the ideals for which they so valiantly gave of themselves.

Today, the United States stands as a beacon of liberty and democratic strength before the community of nations. We are resolved to stand firm against those who would destroy the freedoms we cherish. We are determined to achieve an enduring peace—a peace with liberty and with honor. This determination, this resolve, is the highest tribute we can pay to the many who have fallen in the service of our Nation.

In recognition of those Americans whom we honor today, the Congress, by joint resolution of May 11, 1950 (64 Stat. 158), has requested the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe each Memorial Day as a day of prayer for permanent peace and a period during such day when the people of the United States might unite in prayer.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate Memorial Day, Monday, May 25, 1981, as a day of prayer for permanent peace, and I designate the hour beginning in each locality at 11 o'clock in the morning of that day as a time to unite in prayer.

I urge the press, radio, television, and all other information media to cooperate in this observance.

I also request the Governors of the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the appropriate officials of all local units of Government to direct that the flag be flown at half-staff during this Memorial Day on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States and in all areas under its jurisdiction and control, and I request the people of the United States to display the flag at half-staff from their homes for the customary forenoon period.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifth.

Ronald Reagan