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National Maritime Day, 1981

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The maritime industry has been a key contributor to our economic strength and security since our Nation was founded. Its continued growth and prosperity is necessary for the economic renewal we all seek.

As the leader in world trade and the principal military power of the free world, the United States conveys goodwill through its Merchant Marine, serving the cause of international peace. The Merchant Marine also stands ready to provide logistical support in military emergencies.

In recognition of the importance of the American Merchant Marine and the men and women serving aboard our merchant ships, Americans have observed National Maritime Day on May 22 for the last 49 years. This observance commemorates the same date in 1819, when the SS *Savannah* began the first steamship, transatlantic voyage from the port of Savannah, Georgia.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby urge the people of the United States to honor our American Merchant Marine on May 22, 1981, by displaying the flag of the United States at their homes and other suitable places, and I request that all ships under the American flag dress ship on that day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second 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