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National P.O.W.-M.I.A. Recognition Day, 1981

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Throughout American history our prisoners of war have been called upon to make uncommon sacrifices. In fulfilling their duty as citizens of the United States they have defended American ideals while suffering unimaginable indignities under the absolute control of the enemy. They remained steadfast even while their treatment contravened international understandings and violated elementary considerations of compassion and morality.

All Americans ought to recognize the special debt we owe to our fellow citizens who, in the act of serving our Nation, relinquished their freedom that we might enjoy the blessings of peace and liberty. Likewise, we must remember the unresolved casualties of war—our servicemen who are still missing. The pain and bitterness of war endure for their families, relatives and friends—and for all of us. Our Nation will continue to seek answers to the many questions that remain about their fate.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Friday, July 17, 1981, as National P.O.W.-M.I.A. Recognition Day, a day dedicated to all former American prisoners of war, to those still missing, and to their families. I urge all Americans to join in honoring those who made the uncommon sacrifice of being held captive in war, and to honor as well their loved ones who have also suffered valiantly and patiently. I also call on appropriate officials of the Federal, State and local governments, as well as private organizations, to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of June, 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