

Proclamation 6256 of March 4, 1991

Vermont Bicentennial Day, 1991

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On March 4, 1791, the Republic of Vermont became the 14th State in our Union—the first to join the original thirteen. The Vermont State motto, "Freedom and Unity," is a fitting tribute to the history of the State and to the character of its people. Long before Vermont entered the Union, its inhabitants demonstrated great devotion to those ideals, ideals on which the United States is founded.

In our Nation's War for Independence, as in every great struggle for freedom since, Vermonters made distinguished contributions. Today, Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys, tenacious fighters who played decisive roles at the Battles of Bennington and Ticonderoga, are remembered among America's great Revolutionary War heroes. Their fierce love for the land and their fervent devotion to the cause of freedom and independence were shared by hundreds of other settlers from the region that became our 14th State.

Vermont's dedication to freedom was also evident in its first constitution—written in 1777, it forbade slavery and adopted universal male suffrage. Indeed, by the beginning of the Civil War, in which it played a major role, Vermont had a long-standing reputation as one of the most firmly abolitionist States. The 16 Vermont regiments dispatched to the Union Army during the Civil War represented the highest number of troops per capita of any State. Vermonters not only fought bravely for the preservation of the Union and for an end to slavery, they also made vital contributions at the pivotal Battle of Cedar Creek.

Over the years, countless other Vermonters have made outstanding contributions to our country. Distinguished natives of the Green Mountain State include the eloquent Stephen Douglas, remembered by many for his forceful arguments during the historic Lincoln-Douglas debates; the inventor, Thomas Davenport; Presidents Calvin Coolidge and Chester Arthur; and Warren R. Austin, the first United States Representative to the United Nations.

Today, Vermonters take just pride in their heritage as a State committed to the ideals of freedom and unity. That heritage goes hand in hand with a rich legacy of growth and development. Beloved by millions of visitors for its breathtaking mountains and unspoiled beauty, Vermont is also home to a number of vital industries, ranging from electronics to agricultural production.

In recognition of Vermont's contributions to the United States and in commemoration of its Bicentennial, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 58, has designated March 4, 1991, as "Vermont Bicentennial Day," and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 4, 1991, as Vermont Bicentennial Day.

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

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6257 of March 7, 1991

For National Days of Thanksgiving, April 5–7, 1991

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As the Psalmist wrote, "O give thanks to the Lord for He is gracious, for His mercy endures for ever." Almighty God has answered the prayers of millions of people with the liberation of Kuwait and the end of offensive operations in the Persian Gulf region. As we prepare to welcome home our courageous service men and women and join in the joyful celebrations of the Kuwaiti people, it is fitting that we give thanks to our Heavenly Father, our help and shield, for His mercy and protection.

Asking Him to judge not our worthiness but our need and protection, and knowing that the Lord gives victory "not by might, nor by power," we prayed for a swift and decisive victory and for the safety of our troops. Clearly, the United States and our coalition partners have been blessed with both. We thank the Lord for His favor, and we are profoundly grateful for the relatively low number of allied casualties, a fact described by the commanding general as "miraculous." Nevertheless, because each and every human life is precious, because the massive scale of Operation Desert Storm must never diminish the loss of even one service member, we also remember and pray for all those who made the ultimate sacrifice in this conflict. May the Lord welcome all who have fallen into the glory of Heaven, and may He strengthen and console their families in their hour of need. May it also please our Heavenly Father to grant a full recovery to those military personnel wounded in action.

We also give thanks for the remarkable unity of our people throughout this conflict—a unity marked by heartfelt and generous support for our troops in the field and, in the American tradition, respect for the rights of those who dissent. May our Nation emerge from this conflict stronger and more united, to face as one united people the challenges and opportunities before us.

As we unite in thanksgiving to Almighty God, let us pray in a special way for the innocent men, women, and children—wherever they may be—who have suffered as a result of the conflict in the Gulf. Recalling the words of President Wilson shortly after World War I, let us seek forgiveness for any "errors of act or purpose" and pray for God's help and guidance on the way that lies ahead. May the resolution of remaining questions and concerns, especially the return of all prisoners of war and the freeing of those who are detained, be as timely and as certain as this victory in battle.