

economic ties, the democracies of our hemisphere can serve as a beacon of peace and prosperity for citizens around the world.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Wednesday, April 14, 1999, as Pan American Day and April 11 through April 17, 1999, as Pan American Week. I urge the Governors of the 50 States, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the officials of other areas under the flag of the United States to honor these observances with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

**Proclamation 7182 of April 9, 1999**

**National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, 1999**

*By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation*

“We are honored to have had the opportunity to serve our country . . . .” With these simple words, Navy Commander Jeremiah Denton, released in 1973 from North Vietnam with his companions after the longest wartime captivity of any group of Americans in our history, summed up the courage, selflessness, and indomitable spirit of generations of American prisoners of war.

For more than two centuries, Americans have risked and lost their own freedom to defend democracy, preserve America’s liberty and values, and protect our national interests around the world. In Andersonville or along the Yalu River, confined in Nazi stalags or enduring torture in the Hanoi Hilton, our prisoners of war have set an extraordinary example of valor, patriotism, and devotion to duty in the face of enormous hardship and adversity. The somber black and white POW/MIA flag serves as a reminder of their sacrifice and symbolizes our Nation’s deep concern for and steadfast commitment to these brave Americans and their families.

But, however dark and trying the ordeal for our prisoners of war, their sacrifices did indeed serve a grand purpose. Inspired by their bravery in captivity, our Nation has been resolute in its defense of liberty. And, because of their sacrifice, the United States today is strong, free, and prosperous, looking forward to a future of limitless possibility.

Today we pay special tribute to our Nation’s former prisoners of war and their families and express our heartfelt gratitude for their many sacrifices. They have embodied the ideals of a strong people and a free Nation. They have represented America at its best, and they have served a grateful Nation with honor, dignity, and distinction. As we honor them, let us also keep foremost in our thoughts and prayers Staff Sergeant Andrew Ramirez,

**Proclamations**

**Proc. 7183**

Staff Sergeant Christopher Stone, and Specialist Steven Gonzales of the United States Army as they endure unjust captivity in Yugoslavia and as we work for their safety and swift release.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 9, 1999, as National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. I call upon all Americans to join me in remembering former American prisoners of war who suffered the hardships of enemy captivity. I also call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

**Proclamation 7183 of April 14, 1999**

**Jewish Heritage Week, 1999**

*By the President of the United States of America*

*A Proclamation*

Nearly 350 years have passed since the first Jewish settlers arrived in America. The sons and daughters of a proud and ancient heritage, they brought to this new land gifts that have enriched our national life tremendously: a deep faith in God, a strong sense of morality, a devotion to family and community, a thirst for freedom, a reverence for justice, and a long tradition of philanthropy.

Millions of Jews have shared the American immigrant experience. Many came here fleeing poverty and persecution, yearning for religious or political freedom, seeking a better life for themselves and their families. Investing their dreams, ambitions, labor, and love in our country, Jewish immigrants overcame great obstacles to rise as far as their talents and effort could take them. Today their descendants continue to make extraordinary contributions to the cultural, economic, religious, and intellectual life of our Nation. In education, the arts, politics, the law, science, entertainment, technology, philanthropy, industry, and every other field of endeavor, Jewish men and women have excelled in their pursuits and strengthened America with their character and accomplishments.

As we look forward to a new century and a new millennium, let us give thanks for all that the Jewish community in America has done to keep our Nation free, strong, and prosperous. Let us celebrate the freedom of religion guaranteed by our founders in the Bill of Rights, which has done so much to attract men and women of conscience to this land. Let us recognize that our country's great diversity of races, religions, ethnicities, and cultures will prove to be among our greatest strengths in the global community of tomorrow. And let us reaffirm our sacred obligation to build a future based upon a spirit of tolerance, respect, and understanding.