

and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6294 of May 17, 1991

National Maritime Day, 1991

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

Members of the American merchant marine carry on a long and distinguished tradition of service to our country. In addition to promoting the economic development of the United States through trade and commerce, our merchant seafarers have also provided vital support to our Armed Forces during times of conflict.

America's merchant sailors first proved their courage and mettle—and their value in military operations—during the Revolutionary War, when commercial vessels supplemented the 34 ships of the Continental Navy. These merchant vessels virtually immobilized enemy shipping and, in so doing, hastened the end of the war and the beginning of American Independence. During World War II, more than 6,000 of this Nation's civilian seafarers lost their lives as they helped to transport troops and to maintain supply lines to U.S. and Allied forces around the world. Today we are proud to salute the brave merchant mariners who served this Nation during that epic conflict.

Recent events have fostered renewed pride in America's merchant seafarers: providing essential support for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, these individuals played a key role in the liberation of Kuwait. More than 90 percent of the materiel needed by our troops was transported by sea, and merchant vessels carried a significant portion of these goods. In addition to the merchant mariners who served on commercial ships during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, more than 3,000 civilian sailors manned the Ready Reserve Force vessels that are maintained by the Department of Transportation for such contingencies.

The recent coalition victory in the Persian Gulf has demonstrated, once again, the importance of the American merchant marine to maintaining an adequate and reliable sea lift capacity for the United States. It has also underscored the patriotism and the devotion to duty shared by generations of U.S. merchant mariners. On this occasion, we gladly salute our Nation's civilian seafarers, our port terminal operators, and all those who serve in our vital maritime industries.

In recognition of the importance of the U.S. merchant marine, the Congress, by joint resolution approved May 20, 1933, has designated May 22 of each year as "National Maritime Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation calling for its appropriate observance. This date was chosen to commemorate the day in 1819 when the SS SAVANNAH left Savannah, Georgia, on the first transatlantic steamship voyage.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 22, 1991, as National Maritime Day. I encourage all Americans to observe this day by displaying the flag of the United States at their homes and other suitable places, and I request that all ships sailing under the American flag dress ship on that day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 17 day of May, 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 6295 of May 17, 1991

National Huntington's Disease Awareness Month, 1991

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Appearing without warning, Huntington's disease is a hereditary, progressive, neurodegenerative disorder that gradually robs its victims of their intellect, their emotional well-being, and their control of movement. The Department of Health and Human Services reports that approximately 25,000 people in the United States have this disease, and that another 125,000 are considered at risk of developing it. Each child of an affected parent has a chance of inheriting the Huntington's gene and developing the disease.

The onset of Huntington's disease varies, usually striking after the age of 30, although signs of the disease can appear in children. However, the effects are always tragic: as the disease progresses, its victims suffer increasingly from such symptoms as slurred speech, dementia, and writhing movements known as chorea. Because victims in the later stages of Huntington's disease invariably require total personal care, affected families often bear heavy financial costs in addition to the heartache of watching a mother, father, sibling, or child slowly deteriorate.

Fortunately, however, years of research have helped to increase our understanding of Huntington's disease. Thanks to advances in molecular genetics, individuals at risk can now undergo testing to determine whether they carry a genetic marker or "signpost" for the Huntington's disease gene. Today researchers across the country, supported primarily by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, are continuing their efforts to identify the exact location of this gene. Once the gene is located, they will be able to devise new medical treatments for Huntington's disease and, we hope, ultimately find a cure.

To enhance public awareness of Huntington's disease and to underscore our concern for its victims, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 127, has designated May 1991 as "National Huntington's Disease Awareness Month" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this month.