



STATE of MINNESOTA

Proclamation

- WHEREAS: February 3, 2002 is the 59th anniversary of the sinking of the United States Army transport DORCHESTER off the coast of Greenland, an event that resulted in the loss of nearly 700 lives in 1943 and for which witnesses have recounted in the Congressional Record the heroism of 4 chaplains of different faiths, Lt. George L. Fox, Methodist; Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Jewish; Lt. John P. Washington, Catholic; and Lt. Clark V. Poling, Dutch Reformed; and
- WHEREAS: Witnesses have verified that during the approximate 18 minutes the ship was sinking after being torpedoed, the 4 chaplains went from soldier to soldier calming fears and handing out lifejackets while guiding men to safety and when there were no more to give, they removed their own and gave them to others to save their lives and were last seen arm-in-arm in prayer on the ship's hull; and
- WHEREAS: Many of the 230 men who survived owed their lives to these 4 chaplains, and witnesses recounted their unique ecumenical spirit and love for their fellow man, causing the United States Postal Service to memorialize them in a popular 1948 postage stamp with the titles: "These Immortal Chaplains" – "Interfaith in Action"; and
- WHEREAS: Congress in 1957 passed a Concurrent Resolution to honor these Immortal Chaplains and the men who died with them, and Presidents Truman and Eisenhower issued similar proclamations calling for national recognition and participation in Memorial Services throughout the land, observed annually by the American Legion and others, on the first Sunday in February; and
- WHEREAS: Congress undertook to create a special Medal of Valor in the memory of the 4 chaplains in 1960, never to be repeated; and the United States did pass a unanimous resolution on the first day of the 2nd Session of the 105th Congress January 27, 1998, calling for February 3rd to be designated as "Four Chaplains Day", which was co-authored by U.S. Senator for Minnesota, Rod Grams; and a similar bill passed unanimously in the Minnesota State Legislature at that same time.

NOW THEREFORE, I, JESSE VENTURA, Governor of Minnesota, do proclaim that, Sunday, February 3, 2002 shall be observed as:

Immortal Four Chaplains Day

in the State of Minnesota as an example of compassion for those of different race or faith, and that flags on State office buildings shall be flown at half-staff in honor of this day.



Mary Kiffmeyer
SECRETARY OF STATE

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Minnesota to be affixed at the State Capitol this 3rd day of February in the year two thousand and two, and of the State the one hundred forty-third.

Jesse Ventura
GOVERNOR



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