



STATE of MINNESOTA

Proclamation

- WHEREAS: February 3, 2015, is the 72nd Anniversary of the tragic torpedoing of the United States Army Transport ship, USAT Dorchester, 150 miles off the coast of Greenland, an event that resulted in the loss of 672 lives in 1943. Witnesses of the event recount in the Congressional Record, the heroism and self-sacrifice of four 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: Afterward, the witnesses recalled that while the ship sank, the four chaplains went from soldier to soldier calming fears, handing out lifejackets, and guiding men to safety. When there were no more lifejackets to give, they removed their own and gave them to others. The chaplains were last seen arm-in-arm in prayer on the ship's deck; and
- WHEREAS: Many of the 230 men who survived owed their lives to these four chaplains. Their unique, interfaith spirit and love for their fellow man was memorialized by the United States Postal Service on a popular 1948 postage stamp entitled: "*These Immortal Chaplains – Interfaith in Action*;" and
- WHEREAS: In 1957, Congress passed a Concurrent Resolution honoring these four chaplains and the men who died with them. Presidents Truman and Eisenhower issued similar proclamations, calling for national recognition and participation in memorial services throughout the land, to be observed annually by the American Legion and others on the first Sunday in February; and
- WHEREAS: In 1960, Congress created a special Medal for Heroism in memory of the four chaplains, an action which has never been repeated. On January 27, 1998, the United States Congress passed a unanimous resolution, designating February 3 as "Four Chaplains Day," which was co-authored by U.S. Senator Rod Grams of Minnesota. At the same time, a similar bill passed unanimously in the Minnesota State Legislature; and
- WHEREAS: The first Sunday in February is recognized nationally by many congregations and by the American Legion as "Four Chaplains Sunday." The Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation will host a "Four Chaplains Remembrance Service," as it has done for decades, on Sunday, February 1, at the historic Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel, where there is a permanent stained glass window depicting the compassion of the four chaplains.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MARK DAYTON, Governor of Minnesota, do hereby proclaim Tuesday, February 3, 2015, as:

IMMORTAL FOUR CHAPLAINS DAY

in the State of Minnesota, as an example of compassion for those of different faiths, and order flags to be flown at half-staff from sunrise until sunset on February 3, 2015, in honor of Immortal Four Chaplains Day.



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 26th day of January.


GOVERNOR


SECRETARY OF STATE