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## National Maritime Day, 1985

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

The restructuring of the Nation's maritime policy and regulations to create an environment in which our shipping industry can prosper is of great importance to the United States.

Since its birth as a Nation, the United States has relied on the oceans for commerce and as avenues for the protection of national interests. The United States is truly a maritime power by necessity.

Maritime power has two principal components. One component, the Navy and the Coast Guard, guards America's free use of the seas while the other component, the Merchant Marine, supports trade with nations and, in an emergency, becomes a part of our military establishment—integral with our military forces.

This role of our civilian mariners is not new. In World War II, virtually every serviceman who saw action against the enemy was transported overseas by ship. In Vietnam, more than 90 percent of the war material utilized in that conflict went by sea.

Our brave merchant seamen took their place alongside the fighting men of our armed services in combat against a determined enemy. In World War II, from December 1941 to August 1945, the United States lost 5,638 merchant seamen aboard 733 ships sunk by submarines. Through the first part of 1943, the casualty rate among U.S. merchant seamen was greater than in all the armed services.

To maintain America's maritime power this Administration has advocated that a number of steps be taken by government, industry, and labor:

- Maintenance of a superior Navy, Marine Corps, and a highly capable Coast Guard. A superior Navy is required to protect merchant ships in time of emergency, in recognition of the critical nature of their military and economic cargoes.
- An economically independent United States flag merchant marine of not less than its current capabilities.
- An adequate shipyard mobilization base. The construction of the 600-ship Navy is helping to maintain the shipyard mobilization base.
- Continued emphasis on merchant vessel security agreements between the United States and its allies, such as the NATO ship-sharing agreement.

The enactment of the Shipping Act of 1984 was a major step toward regaining a prominent position on the world's trade routes for our country. It diminished or streamlined outdated regulations that governed the ocean liner industry, and it has helped rekindle the spirit of American maritime enterprise. American-flag liner companies are now in the forefront of developments that are providing shippers with more efficient, extensive, and innovative intermodal services.

Our Merchant Marine is being bolstered by the replacement of obsolete ships with new, efficient, and highly competitive vessels. With the cooperation of seafaring labor, these new fleet additions are being operated with small crews that increase their productivity and competitiveness.

These healthy trends should be encouraged. We must work to continue to develop the strong American merchant marine to serve our Nation's peacetime trade and support our Armed Forces.

In recognition of the importance of the American merchant marine, the Congress, by joint resolution approved May 20, 1933, designated May 22 of each year as "National Maritime Day" and 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 departed Savannah, Georgia, on the first transatlantic steamship voyage.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 22, 1985, as National Maritime Day, and I urge the people of the United States 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 twenty-first day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

*Ronald Reagan*