

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:33 a.m. at Arlington National Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to World War II veteran Elizabeth P. McIntosh, and Katy Daley, master of ceremonies.

Proclamation 6697—D-Day National Remembrance Day and Time for the National Observance of the Fiftieth Anniversary of World War II, 1994

May 30, 1994

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Fifty years ago on June 6, 1944, the largest armada of land, sea, and air forces ever assembled embarked on a great crusade across the English Channel to free the European continent of a tyranny that had taken hold and threatened to strangle the very freedoms we cherish most. Over 5,000 ships and 10,000 aircraft carried more than 130,000 soldiers, sailors, and airmen from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Poland, France, Norway, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, New Zealand, Australia, Luxembourg, and Belgium to the shores of Normandy. More than 9,000 Americans never returned.

D-Day was considered crucial not only by the Allies, but also by the Axis powers. Field Marshal Irwin Rommel, commander of the enemy forces in the area, dubbed the first 24 hours as “The Longest Day,” referring to the fact that if the Allies were successful in establishing a beachhead, many more units would follow, overwhelming the enemy in the West. However, for the Allied forces, June 6, 1944, was truly “The Longest Day” for a different reason. For the men who landed on the beaches that fateful day, each minute of combat was like an eternity as they were continuously bombarded by the unyielding Nazi forces.

But the enemy was unsuccessful, as the Allied forces had more than just their will to win urging them on. As defenders of justice, they were driven by the desire to restore the peace and freedom that the Nazi occupation had denied to millions of people. Anne Frank wrote of the impending invasion in her diary:

“It’s no exaggeration to say that all Amsterdam, all Holland, yes the whole west coast of Europe, right down to Spain, talks about the invasion day and night, debates about it, and makes bets on it and—hopes . . . The best part of the invasion is that I have the feeling that friends are approaching. We have been oppressed by those terrible Nazis for so long, they have their knives at our throats, that the thought of friends and delivery fills me with confidence.”

For Anne Frank, that deliverance never came, for she died in a concentration camp just months before the end of the war. But millions of others were delivered from oppression and fear. Those who landed on the beaches of Normandy, not only on D-Day but also throughout the rest of the war, were responsible for the liberation of many of the concentration camps as well as cities, towns, and villages throughout Europe that had suffered for so many years.

Thus, 1944 was a year of triumphs and sorrows. The Allies made great advances in bringing liberty to millions, while families and friends on the home front, faced with the knowledge that many of their loved ones would not return, continued to build the “Arsenal of Democracy.”

It is to those millions of American men and women, veterans and civilians, those who came home from the war and those who made the ultimate sacrifice that we say “a grateful Nation remembers.” We must never forget the high price paid by the valiant to ensure the freedoms of the many.

The Congress, by House Joint Resolution 303, has designated June 6, 1994, as “D-Day National Remembrance Day.”

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 June 6, 1994, as D-Day National Remembrance Day, and May 30, 1994, through June 6, 1994, as a Time for the National Observance of the Fiftieth Anniversary of World War II. I call upon all Americans to observe this period with appropriate programs and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of May, in the year

of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighteenth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 2:52 p.m., May 31, 1994]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on June 2.

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

May 31, 1994

Thank you very much, Secretary Shalala and Mr. Vice President, Florence Griffith Joyner and Tom McMillen. Glad to see others here in the audience, our Surgeon General, Dr. Elders; Assistant Secretary of HHS Phil Lee; and so many others who are here.

Let me say that I was once asked if I wanted Al Gore to be Vice President because he could run faster than me, and then I would get my times down. [*Laughter*] That was not the primary reason that I asked him to join the ticket in 1992, but I did think it was important, and I do believe it is important that all of us exemplify by what we do a commitment to the work we are about to celebrate when we swear in the President's Council today.

Let me explain why I think this is important. This morning before I came out here, I had about 10 minutes, and I sat down and I made these little notes here, to try to see if I could get across to you and, perhaps through you, to the American people why this day is really a big deal to me.

Before I ran for President, I devoted a lot of time, very private time, to reflecting on the nature of public service, the nature of government, what the role of government in our life is, and what things government cannot do. And I thought a lot about what the American people have to do for themselves in order for this country to work right.

So consider the following: Our Government and our administration has worked hard here at home to get the economy up and going and the deficit down, to pass the

most sweeping education and training legislation for workers and young people trying to compete in a global economy in 30 years, to expand trade more in 15 months than in the previous generation. Abroad, in the last couple of days, we have celebrated something that's good for our health: for the first time since the dawn of the atomic age, the United States and Russia no longer have nuclear missiles pointed at each other.

An enormous amount of what we do involves the health of our people. In the area of the environment, we're working hard on a new clean air act and a safe drinking water act. In the area of crime, we passed an assault weapons ban and the Brady bill and more police officers and more prevention, more opportunities for our young people to stay out of trouble, in the area of strengthening the family, something that directly relates to the health of American families, the Family and Medical Leave Act, which permits families to take time off when their children or their parents are ill. Our FDA is taking on a pretty tough fight with the tobacco industry and now looking into the whole issue of the narcotic or addictive effects and whether they can be varied based on certain production techniques. In the area of health care, the First Lady and the Department of Health and Human Services and others have worked on immunization, on more primary and preventive care in our health care proposal, on trying to provide prescription medicines to elderly people.

Now, in the course of doing this, we've made quite a few enemies. We've made the NRA mad, the cigarette industry mad, certain business interests that don't agree with either the economic program or the environmental initiatives or other things, many of but not all of the health insurance companies, and some particularly extremist groups who disapprove even of what we've done to expand the frontiers of medical research. It has all been worth it. It is part of what we are supposed to do.

Now, having said all that, when I picked up the briefing for this event and I realized that 43 percent of the adults in this country don't exercise, that 5 years ago the Council sponsored a poll that said 42 percent of the American people who were adults were ac-