



STATE of MINNESOTA

Proclamation

- WHEREAS: February 3, 2012, is the 69th anniversary of the tragic 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. Witnesses of the event have recounted 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: Witnesses have verified that during the approximate 18 minutes the ship was sinking after being torpedoed, the four chaplains went from soldier to soldier calming fears and handing out lifejackets while guiding men to safety. When there were no more life jackets to give, they removed their own and gave them to others to save their lives. The chaplains 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 four chaplains. Their unique interfaith spirit and love for their fellow men was memorialized by the United States Postal Service on a popular 1948 postage stamp with the title: "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 to be observed annually by the American Legion and others on the first Sunday in February; and
- WHEREAS: Congress created a special Medal of Valor in memory of the four chaplains in 1960, never to be repeated. The United States passed a unanimous resolution on the first day of the 2nd Session of the 150th Congress, January 27, 1998, designating February 3 as "Four Chaplains Day," which was co-authored by U.S. Senator Rod Grams of Minnesota. A similar bill passed unanimously in the Minnesota State Legislature at that same time; and
- WHEREAS: The first Sunday in February is recognized nationally by many congregations and by the American Legion as "Four Chaplains Sunday." As they have done for decades, the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel Foundation will host a "Four Chaplains Remembrance Service" on Sunday, January 29 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 February 3, 2012 as:

Immortal Four Chaplains Day

in the State of Minnesota as an example of compassion for those of different races or faiths, and order flags to be flown at half-staff from sunrise until sunset on February 3, 2012 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.

Handwritten signature of Mark Dayton in black ink.

GOVERNOR

Handwritten signature of Mark Ritchie in blue ink.

SECRETARY OF STATE