



FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL'S STATEMENT ON THE PASSING OF PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH

The Friends of the National World War II Memorial (Friends) is deeply saddened by the passing of former President George H.W. Bush, a member of the Friends' World War II Memorial 75th Anniversary Honorary Committee.

Friends' chairman Josiah Bunting III said of President Bush, he was “a stalwart of the Second World War and a man who has given a lifetime of service to our beloved country.”

A World War II veteran, George H.W. Bush was commissioned as an ensign in the U.S. Naval Reserve at Corpus Christi, Texas on June 9, 1943, just three days before his nineteenth birthday, making him the youngest naval aviator to that date.

On V-J Day September 2, 2014, the 70th anniversary of President Bush's 46th combat mission when he was shot down over the Pacific during WWII, his grandson George Prescott Bush spoke at the World War II Memorial to mark the occasion. Mr. Bush, in speaking directly to his grandfather and all WWII veterans said, “Your example, your selflessness, your undying love of country that led you to the valley of war and destruction, will remain an inspiration.”

President Bush truly embodied the values the “Greatest Generation” – as termed by Tom Brokaw – throughout this military service and his life of public service and philanthropy.

Yet, President Bush shied away from that particular accolade. During a service of celebration and thanksgiving marking the dedication of the National World War II Memorial on May 29, 2004, President Bush stated: “The men and women who make up our all-volunteer forces fighting today in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and serving with honor and integrity in countless other locations around the world are every bit as great as any generation that preceded them. The comforts of modern society have not lessened the burdens that they have freely borne, just as their families have not been spared the constant pain of separation. To each of them, no less a debt of gratitude is owed.”

He concluded his remarks on that day with: “And so while it is proper that we pause to look back, and reflect on the past heroism of one generation of Americans – and while we celebrate the long-overdue dedication of a National World War II Memorial – let us also not be afraid to look forward with renewed faith, hope, and courage that America's best days are yet to be.”

The Friends of the National World War II Memorial has been honored by its longstanding association with President George H.W. Bush. We send our heartfelt condolences to the Bush family for the loss of their great patriarch.

Rest in Peace, Sir.