



State of New York

Executive Chamber

Proclamation

Whereas, the citizens of the Empire State acknowledge events that give us cause to reflect on important chapters in our nation's history and that remain examples of the best of humankind, and February 3, 2008 marks the 65th of such an occasion – the attack on the troopship *U.S.A.T. Dorchester*, and the most remarkable demonstration of heroism and solidarity of faith by four men aboard that ship who served as U.S. Army Chaplains during World War II; and

Whereas, representing the Roman Catholic, Jewish, Protestant and Methodist religions, the Four Chaplains were killed in action when the *U.S.A.T. Dorchester* was hit and sunk by a torpedo on February 3, 1943, and these men made the ultimate sacrifice by helping other soldiers board lifeboats, giving up their life jackets – and their own lives – when the supply ran out; and

Whereas, the voyage would prove to be tragically fatal as the *U.S.A.T. Dorchester* carried to their death 702 men along with the Four Chaplains who stood brave and united as the ship went down, and yet, as a result of the noble deeds of these men of great faith, 230 lives were miraculously spared; and

Whereas, indeed the heroism of Chaplains Lt. George L. Fox, Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Lt. Johnny P. Washington, and Lt. Clark V. Poling was illustrated by their combined act of devotion and sacrifice for the precious cause of human liberty and freedom, and today they remain inspiring examples of brotherhood for all people of the world; and

Whereas, the greatness of America is found in its military and those in uniform who place themselves in harm's way to defend this nation and, throughout our history, the men and women of our armed forces have stepped forth with selfless devotion to protect the people of the United States and those of other countries, and so we take this opportunity to remember all who are currently serving, many of them half a world away working to secure peace for people of other countries; and

Whereas the fateful events of February 3, 1943 bring people together in remembrance and reflection of the lives of the Four Chaplains who remain a symbol of America's strength as a country built not upon peoples' differences, but their similarities, as their story gives added meaning to the term "humanitarian spirit" and calls for our renewed commitment to the values upon which America is built and we all therefore pause to gratefully remember their sacrifices to the common cause of human freedom;

Now, Therefore, I, Eliot Spitzer, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim Sunday, February 3, 2008 as

FOUR CHAPLAINS DAY

in the Empire State.



G i v e n under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State
at the Capitol in the City of Albany this twenty-fourth
day of January in the year two thousand eight.

Governor

Secretary to the Governor