the Italian peninsula and were gaining ground in France and the Low Countries. In mid-December, in a desperate attempt to halt this steady advance, Adolf Hitler launched a furious and massive counteroffensive. On December 16, 29 German divisions flooded the Allied line in the Ardennes Forest region of Belgium and Luxembourg. The Battle of the Bulge had begun.

Facing superior enemy numbers, rugged terrain, and bitter weather, the American troops at first fell back. But their determination to defeat the Nazis never wavered. For 6 weeks, U.S. soldiers responded to fierce German offensives with equally determined counterattacks, refusing to succumb to the Nazi onslaught. The siege of Bastogne in Belgium remains an enduring symbol of their indomitable spirit. At that strategic crossroads, a small detachment of the 101st Airborne Division and other attached troops were encircled. When called upon to surrender by the much larger German force, Brigadier General Anthony McAuliffe dismissed the demand with his legendary one-word reply: "Nuts." Against all odds, he and his men held firm during the siege until reinforcements arrived and helped halt the German offensive at a critical point in the Battle.

Inevitably, the spirit, toughness, valor, and resolve of the U.S. forces led to victory. By late January of 1945, the American and Allied counterattack had succeeded in pushing back the Nazi forces, eliminating the threat of further German offensives and ultimately sealing the fate of the Nazi regime. But this victory was costly. At the end of the Battle of the Bulge, some 19,000 Americans lay dead, and thousands more were wounded, captured, or missing in action.

Now, more than half a century later, we still stand in awe of the courage and sacrifice of the more than 600,000 U.S. soldiers and airmen who fought that epic battle. These seemingly ordinary Americans achieved extraordinary things. Leaving their homes, their families, and their civilian lives behind them, they stepped forward to wage a crusade for freedom. They laid the foundations of the peace and security we enjoy today and planted the seeds of democracy that now are bearing fruit throughout Europe. Many of these heroes and patriots have gone to their final rest; but their service, their sacrifice, and their achievements will live forever in the memories and hearts of their fellow Americans.

The Congress by House Joint Resolution 65, has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation honoring the veterans of the Battle of the Bulge.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the period of December 16, 1999, to January 25, 2000, as a time to commemorate the 55th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. I call upon the people of the United States to express our profound gratitude to the veterans of the Battle of the Bulge and to honor them with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:59 a.m., December 20, 1999]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 21.

Proclamation 7262—Wright Brothers Day, 1999

December 16, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

We stand at a rare moment in human history: the end of a century and the birth of

a new millennium. The arrival of the 21st century presents all Americans with an opportunity to reflect on where we have been as a Nation and to dream about where we will go in the future. At the dawn of this century, Orville and Wilbur Wright found themselves poised at such a moment. Behind them lay years of painstaking effort and experimentation, trial and failure, in their pursuit of the dream of powered human flight. Ahead of them stretched the sands of Kitty Hawk in North Carolina and yet another attempt to fly in the aircraft they had built by hand. On December 17, 1903, for 12 seconds and 120 feet, they achieved their dream and forever changed the destiny of humankind.

That first brief flight showed that the sky was no longer a limit but a new horizon; it ignited new dreams in our people. Each succeeding generation of Americans, building on the Wright brothers' achievement and fired by the same vision, energy, and determination, has refined the science of flight, increased the range, efficiency, and safety of aircraft, and created a modern air transportation system and aviation industry that have energized our economy and helped transform the world into a truly global community.

And, while they could never have foreseen it, the Wright brothers also brought us to the threshold of space. A scant six decades after that first flight, Americans left the Earth's atmosphere and orbited our planet. By 1969, Neil Armstrong had left the first human footprint on the dusty surface of the Moon. Today's astronauts fly space shuttle missions that are helping us meet the challenge of global climate change, bringing the International Space Station closer to completion, and expanding our knowledge of Earth and the universe. Yet even now the Wright brothers' achievement continues to fire our dreams and beckons us to make new discoveries.

The Congress, by a joint resolution approved December 17, 1963 (77 Stat. 402; 36 U.S.C. 169), has designated December 17 of each year as "Wright Brothers Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation inviting the people of the United States to observe that day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 17, 1999, as Wright Brothers Day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:59 a.m., December 20, 1999]

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Remarks on Signing the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999

December 17, 1999

Thank you. Senator Kennedy, Senator Jeffords, we thank you for your leadership and your remarks today. And Senator Roth, we thank you very much. We know this couldn't have happened without you. And Senator Moynihan, Representative Lazio, thank you, sir. And Representative Waxman and Representative Brown who are here, and Representative Dingell who isn't here—I want to thank all of you for your leadership in the House. Give them all a hand. [*Applause*]

I also want to thank the members of the administration who were particularly active in supporting this bill: Secretary Herman, the cochair of my task force on the employment of adults with disabilities; Secretary Shalala; Secretary Summers; Social Security Commissioner Apfel. I'd like to thank, in the White House, my Chief of Staff John Podesta, Chris Jennings, and Jeanne Lambrew, who had a lot to do with this bill, as all of you know.

I want to thank Senator Dole, especially, and through him all the citizens who came forward and made it possible for this to be a genuinely American bill. I want to welcome the members of the Roosevelt family who are here today, particularly Jim and Ann Roosevelt, my longtime friends. And now Jim is a member of this administration, something I'm very proud of.

I want to thank you, Justin Dart, and the members of the disability community who are here, for this and every other issue that