

George H.W. Bush dies at 94; made greatest mark in Gulf War

By MICHAEL GRACZYK
Associated Press

HOUSTON — He was the man who sought a “kinder, and gentler nation,” and the one who sternly invited Americans to read his lips — he would not raise taxes. He was the popular leader of a mighty coalition that dislodged Iraq from Kuwait, and was turned out of the presidency after a single term. Blue-blooded and genteel, he was elected in one of the nastiest campaigns in recent history.

George Herbert Walker Bush was many things, including only the second American to see his son follow him into the nation’s highest office. But more than anything else, he was a believer in government service. Few men or women have served America in more capacities than the man known as “Poppy.”

“There is no higher honor than to serve free men and women, no greater privilege than to labor in government beneath the Great Seal of the United States and the American flag,” he told senior staffers in 1989, days after he took office.

Bush, who died late Friday at age 94 — nearly eight months after his wife of 73 years died at their Houston home — was a congressman, an ambassador to the United Nations and envoy to China, chairman of the Republican National Committee, director of the CIA, two-term vice president and, finally, president.

Bush was no ideologue — he spoke disparagingly of “the vision thing,” and derided the



AP Photo/Scott Applewhite
George H.W. Bush and his wife, Barbara, wave to supporters in 1988 after winning the presidential election.

supply-side creed of his future boss, Ronald Reagan, as “voodoo economics.” He is generally given better marks by historians for his foreign policy achievements than for his domestic record, but assessments of his presidency tend to be tepid.

“Was George Bush only a nice man with good connections, who seldom had to wrest from life the honors it frequently bestowed on him?” journalist Tom Wicker asked in his Bush biography.

Wicker’s answer: Perhaps. But he said Bush’s actions in Kuwait “reflect moments of courage and vision worthy of his office.”

The Persian Gulf War — dubbed “Operation Desert Storm” — was his greatest mark on history. In a January 2011 interview marking the war’s 20th anniversary, he said the mission sent a message that “the United States

was willing to use force way across the world, even in that part of the world where those countries over there thought we never would intervene.”

“I think it was a signature historical event,” he added. “And I think it will always be.”

After Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, Bush quickly began building an international military coalition that included other Arab states. After freeing Kuwait, he rejected suggestions that the U.S. carry the offensive to Baghdad, choosing to end the hostilities a mere 100 hours after the start of the ground offensive.

“That wasn’t our objective,” he said. “The good thing about it is there was so much less loss of human life than had been predicted, and indeed than we might have feared.”

But the decisive military defeat did not lead to the regime’s downfall, as many in

the administration had hoped.

“I miscalculated,” Bush acknowledged. The Iraqi leader was eventually ousted in 2003, in the war led by Bush’s son that was followed by a long, bloody insurgency.

Unlike his son, who joined the Texas Air National Guard during the Vietnam era but served only in the U.S., the elder Bush was a bona fide war hero. He joined the Navy on his 18th birthday in 1942 over the objections of his father, Prescott, who wanted him to stay in school. At one point the youngest pilot in the Navy, he flew 58 missions off the carrier USS San Jacinto.

His wartime exploits won him the Distinguished Flying Cross for bravery. He was shot down on Sept. 2, 1944, while completing a bombing run against a Japanese radio tower. Eight others who were shot down in that mission were captured and executed, and several were eaten by their captors. But an American submarine rescued Bush. Even then, he was an inveterate collector of friends: Aboard the sub Finback, “I made friendships that have lasted a lifetime,” he would write.

This was a man who hand wrote thousands of thank you notes — each one personalized, each one quickly dispatched. Even his political adversaries would acknowledge his exquisite manners. Admired by his mother to put others first, he rarely used the personal pronoun “I,” a quirk exploited by comedian Dana Carvey in his “Saturday Night Live” impressions of the president.



Evan Sisley/Office George H.W. Bush
Sully, President George H.W. Bush's service dog, lies in front of his casket Sunday in Houston.

Washington to pay respects, bid farewell

Associated Press

HOUSTON — George H.W. Bush is ready to embark on his final journey to Washington, D.C., as the nation salutes the 41st president for his lifetime of public service.

A long motorcade accompanied the hearse carrying Bush’s remains from a Houston funeral home to nearby Ellington Field for the trip to the nation’s capital on an aircraft that often serves as Air Force One.

Before that, students, staff and visitors had been flocking to Bush’s presidential library on the campus of Texas A&M University, with thousands of mourners paying their respects at a weekend candlelight vigil at a nearby pond and others contributing to growing flower memorials at Bush statues at both the library and a park in downtown Houston.

Bush’s casket is set to arrive in Washington this afternoon. He will lie in state in the U.S. Capitol rotunda for a ceremony and public visitation this afternoon through Wednesday. An invitation-only funeral service is set for Wednesday at Washington National Cathedral. President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump are to attend. Former President Jimmy Carter also will be there.

Afterward, Bush will be returned to Houston to lie in repose at St. Martin’s Episcopal Church before burial Thursday at his family plot on the library grounds. His final resting place will be alongside Barbara Bush, his wife of 73 years who died in April, and Robin Bush, the daughter they lost to leukemia in 1953 at age 3.

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Saturday's Cryptoquip: THAT HAIR SALON WORKER HARDLY EVER MOVES AROUND. HE SEEMS LIKE THE WORLD'S STILLEST STYLIST.
Today's Crvptoquip Clue: W equals L