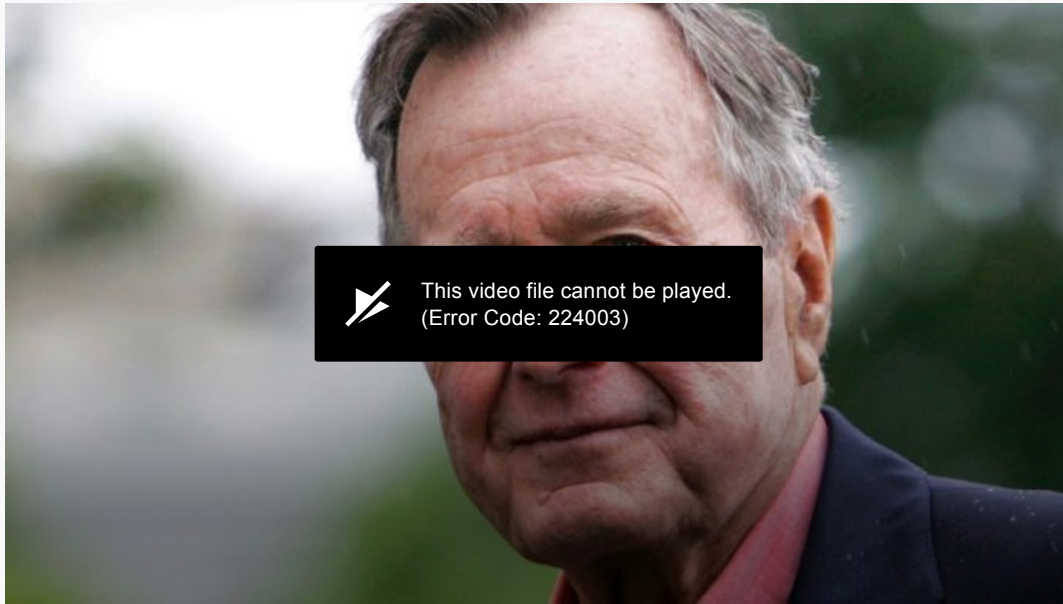


# George HW Bush, former US president, dies

By [Jennifer King](#), staff

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**VIDEO:** Mr Bush's presidency coincided with a period that saw the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Photo: AP/Lawrence Jackson (ABC News)

George HW Bush, the 41st president of the United States, has died at age 94.

Mr Bush served one term as president from 1989 to 1993.

He also served as a congressman, CIA director and Ronald Reagan's vice-president.

As the last serving US president to have fought in World War II and the country's last Cold War leader, the end of Mr Bush's time in the White House marked the end of a political era.

But Mr Bush will perhaps be best remembered as the commander-in-chief who sanctioned the Gulf War, codenamed Operation Desert Storm.

His eldest son, George W Bush, went on to become the 43rd US president.

Mr Bush and his wife, Barbara Bush, had six children and were married for 73 years — the longest presidential marriage in US history.



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## Key points:

- George HW Bush served one term as president between 1989 and 1993
- Best known for sanctioning Gulf War, codenamed Operation Desert Storm
- Also served as a congressman, CIA director and as Ronald Reagan's vice-president

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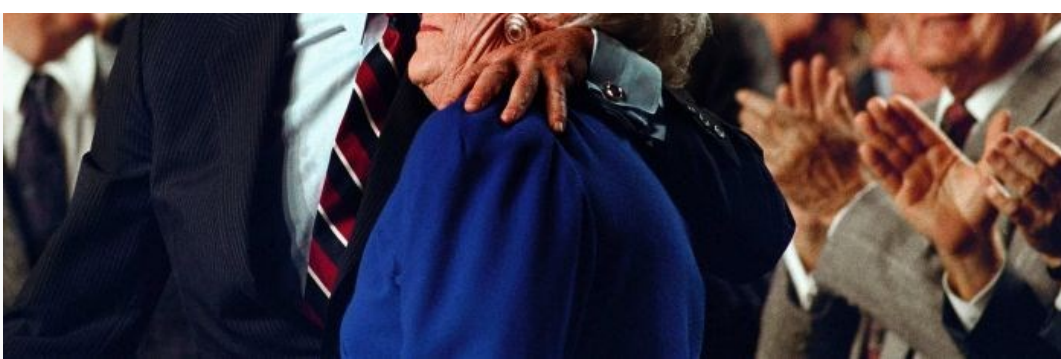
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**PHOTO:** President George HW Bush kisses his wife Barbara Bush during a pre-election rally at the Astro Arena in Houston in 1992. (AP: Ron Edmonds)

Mrs Bush died in April 2018.

At Mrs Bush's funeral, son and former Florida governor Jeb Bush said he believed the last time his mother got sick that his dad got sick on purpose so he could be with her.

"Our family has had a front-row seat to the most amazing love story," Jeb Bush said.

In a letter to his wife on January 6, 1994, Mr Bush said she had given him "joy that few men know".

"I've climbed, perhaps, the highest mountain in the world but even that cannot hold a candle to being Barbara's husband," he wrote.



**PHOTO:** George HW Bush and former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Berlin on November 9, 1999, 10 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. (Reuters)

## The White House

Republican candidate George HW Bush defeated Democrat Michael Dukakis in November 1988 in a 40-state sweep.

His presidency coincided with a period of world upheaval that saw the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the start of America's post-Cold War conflicts.

During his campaign Mr Bush pledged at the Republican National Convention his now-famous phrase:



"Read my lips: no new taxes".

**External Link:** ['Read my lips...' George HW Bush's Republican convention speech](#)

However, once in office, he reneged on that promise and raised several taxes in an attempt to reduce the national budget deficit in a compromise deal with Congressional Democrats.

Just weeks after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Mr Bush launched Operation Just Cause in December 1989.

Thousands of US troops were sent into Panama and the country's leader, Manuel Noriega, was arrested on drug trafficking charges and extradited to the US to face trial.

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The campaign was over within weeks — one of the most tactically successful military operations in US history.



**PHOTO:** US president George HW Bush meets troops serving in the First Gulf War in eastern Saudi Arabia during a Thanksgiving visit on November 20, 1990. (Reuters)

## Operation Desert Storm

Mr Bush's biggest test came with the invasion of the "small and helpless" oil-rich Kuwait by Iraq in 1990.

The invasion sent shockwaves around the world, and Mr Bush condemned the action as a direct threat to not just America, but to the world.

On January 16, 1991, Mr Bush sanctioned the Gulf War, codenamed Operation Desert Storm.

A massive US-led military campaign invasion including 425,000 American troops and 1,800 Australian Defence personnel forced Iraq to withdraw by February.

Mr Bush controversially chose to end the war without removing Iraqi president Saddam Hussein from power, but was adamant he should not exceed the authorisation of the UN Security Council.

Just over a decade later his son, George W Bush, used allegations Hussein was developing weapons of mass destruction to invade Iraq with the help of British and Australian troops.

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### Iraq timeline: Decades of war



The major events that led to the start of the decade-long Iraq War that brought down Saddam Hussein.

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PHOTO: George W Bush (right) became president eight years after his father (left) left the White House. (Reuters)

## Broccoli ban

To the delight of children across the country, in 1990 [Mr Bush famously banned broccoli from The White House and from Air Force One.](#)

"I do not like broccoli. And I haven't liked it since I was a little kid and my mother made me eat it," Mr Bush said.

"I'm the President of the United States and I'm not going to eat any more broccoli."

In retaliation, disgruntled California broccoli growers shipped 4.5 tonnes of the vegetable to the White House, where it was donated to homeless shelters and soup kitchens around Washington DC.

Mr Bush lost the presidency in 1992 after just one term in office to Democrat Bill Clinton, who used the "read my lips" phrase to paint the president as untrustworthy.

He left office with a 56 per cent job approval rating amid a faltering economy and high-deficit spending.

Mr Bush would later team up with Mr Clinton on a number of humanitarian missions.



PHOTO: US president George HW Bush (2nd right) discusses the Gulf crisis with his military advisors at the Pentagon on August 15, 1990. (Reuters)

## Early life of privilege and bravery

George Herbert Walker Bush was born in Massachusetts on June 12, 1924 to Republican senator Prescott Bush and his wife Dorothy.

As a young boy, his family moved to Connecticut and Mr Bush attended a prestigious East Coast boarding school during his teens.

In 1941 he met 16-year-old Barbara Pierce at a Christmas dance.

They became engaged a year-and-a-half later, just before he went to fight in World War II.

Mr Bush had enlisted in the US Navy on his 18th birthday, making him the youngest naval aviator at the time.

He flew 58 combat missions during World War II and



saw action at the Battle of the Philippine Sea and against the Japanese in the Bonin Islands.

In September 1944, while on a bombing mission, he was shot down and was forced to ditch into the sea; a submarine rescued him a short time later.

He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for bravery.

Mr Bush and Barbara married shortly after his return from the war in 1945.

Following the war, Mr Bush studied economics at Yale University, where he graduated in 1948.

During his time at college, he captained the Yale baseball team, was a member of the cheerleading squad and was initiated into the Skull and Bones secret society.

The couple moved to Texas and had six children — George, Robin, Jeb, Neil, Marvin and Dorothy.



PHOTO: George HW Bush talks at a young Republicans dinner on March 17, 1984. (Reuters)



PHOTO: George HW Bush celebrates his 75th, 80th, 85th (seen here), and 90th birthdays with tandem skydives. (Reuters)

Robin died from leukemia in October 1953, shortly before her fourth birthday.

Mr Bush's transition into the Texan oil business made him a millionaire by the time he was 40.

It was in 1964 that his aspirations turned to politics and public service.

He served as a member of the US House of Representatives, becoming the first Republican to represent Houston, Texas.

While generally conservative, Mr Bush resisted public opinion within his district and voted for the Civil Rights Act of 1968.

He supported Richard Nixon's Vietnam policies, but broke with Republicans on the issue of birth control.





PHOTO: Newly appointed United Nations ambassador George HW Bush in December, 1970. (AP: John Duricka, file)

Mr Bush also voted to abolish the military draft and with his popularity cemented, was re-elected to the House of Representatives for a second term in 1968.

Giving up his congressional seat in 1970 to mount an ultimately unsuccessful bid for the US Senate, Mr Bush was appointed to serve as the US ambassador to the United Nations by President Richard Nixon in 1971, staying in that role until 1972.

Mr Bush became chairman of the Republican National Committee in 1973, just as the Watergate scandal was erupting.

He stood by Mr Nixon during the scandal until joining the growing chorus calling for the president to resign in August 1974.

Following his time as president, Mr Bush was awarded an honorary knighthood by the Queen in 1993 and Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama in 2012.

He celebrated his 75th, 80th, 85th and 90th birthdays with tandem skydives.

In his final years, Mr Bush used a wheelchair and an electric scooter for mobility after developing a form of Parkinson's disease.

He was hospitalised several times for respiratory problems, including during his wife's final days when she declined ongoing medical treatment.



PHOTO: George HW Bush receives the Ronald Reagan Freedom Award from Nancy Reagan on February 6, 2007. (Reuters)



PHOTO: George HW Bush with the casket of his wife, Barbara Bush, and daughter Dorothy Bush Koch at St Martin's Episcopal Church. (Mark Burns/Office of George HW Bush via AP)

ABC/wires

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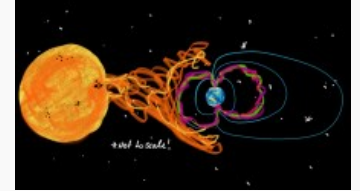
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