

46 Remarks at the Mayport Naval Air Station, Florida. *February 16, 1973*

I AM greatly appreciative of the fact that you have all come out to welcome us on this very special day for us, particularly as I note that sign over there, "Thank You For Bringing Our Boys Home."

I want to point out that, of course, the responsibility of the President as Commander in Chief is to make some of the decisions that make possible our boys coming home, and coming home with peace with honor, which they have fought for. But I also want to point out it wouldn't have been possible without the bravery and the service of those in the Armed Forces, like the 4,500 men on the *Saratoga* that is back here, and for what they did.

We know it must have been a very long and sometimes tiring assignment for you to be 10 months on station out there, but by what you did, by the service you ren-

dered, you helped make the great events that we now are thankful for possible.

And I suppose sometimes particularly your wives, your families, your loved ones here at home, when they are apart from you, wonder if it is all worthwhile. I know, too, that during the 4 years that I have had responsibility for decisions, people around me have sometimes raised doubts as to whether it is worthwhile. All those questions for me, and I am sure for the great majority of Americans, were answered when Captain Denton stepped up to that microphone, the first one to set foot on Clark Field, and said that he was proud to have served this country in difficult times. He expressed his appreciation to the American people, and then said, "God bless America." When anybody can say that after 6½ years in prison, it is all worthwhile.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:05 p.m. at the naval air station, where he visited the U.S.S. *Albany*, a guided missile cruiser on which his son-in-law, Lt. (jg.) Dwight David Eisenhower

II, USN, was serving.

In his remarks, the President referred to Capt. Jeremiah A. Denton, Jr., USN, of Norfolk, Va.