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File

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

VISIT TO FORT BENNING
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

Saturday - June 14, 1975

Departure: 7:55 A.M.

From: Terry O'Donnell *TO*

BACKGROUND

FORT BENNING

The 200th Anniversary Ceremony of the U. S. Army and the Infantry will be held at Fort Benning, Columbus, Georgia, Saturday, June 14, 1975. Fort Benning encompasses some 182,000 acres and is situated partly in Alabama and partly in Georgia on both sides of the Chattahoochee River. The "Home of the Infantry" as Fort Benning is called was named after Brig. General Henry L. Benning of the Confederate Army. Generals of the Army George C. Marshall and Omar N. Bradley were one-time heads of the Infantry School at the Fort. President Johnson visited the Fort in November 1970 on a Veterans' Day tour of military installations. In 1960, President Eisenhower dedicated the infantry statue at Fort Benning which you will see at York Field.

Upon arrival at Lawson Field, Fort Benning, you will board a motorcade en route York Field named after Sgt. Alvin York, World War I Infantry hero and Medal of Honor winner. You will deliver remarks and review units representing all 5 types of infantry as part of the "Glorious Heritage Pageant." Uniforms representing key periods in the Army's history will be worn by some of the participants.

Following the Pageant, you will proceed by motorcade to Victory Pond to view the "Rangers in Action" demonstration which will consist of mountaineering, hand-to-hand combat, and "confidence testing". You will have a box



lunch during the demonstration and you will have an opportunity to greet the participants following their performance.

From Victory Pond, you will motorcade to the parachute training area, Eubanks Field, where you will witness airborne training and tactical maneuvers and then greet some of the participants.

The mood of the day's events is festive and buoyant. You will have a chance to informally greet many infantrymen and the general public.

Historical background material on the Army and additional information on Fort Benning prepared by Ted Marrs is attached at TAB A.

MEETING WITH GOP REPRESENTATIVES

After the airborne demonstration, you will motorcade to the Holiday Inn to meet with a group of Georgia Republicans. A list of participants and political notes on the State are attached at TAB B.

SEQUENCE

7:55 a. m.

Board helicopter on South Lawn
and depart for Andrews Air Force Base.

8:10 a. m.

Arrive Andrews AFB, board Air Force
One and depart en route Lawson Army
Airfield, Fort Benning, Georgia.

(Flying Time: 1 hour, 35 minutes)
(No Time Change)

PRESIDENTIAL GUESTS

Army Secretary Bo Callaway
Senator John J. Sparkman (D-Ala.)
Senator Herman E. Talmadge (d-Ga.)
Senator Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) (Down only)
Rep. Robert Stephens, Jr. (D-Ga.)
Lawton Stephens (Son)
Rep. John Buchanan (R-Ala.)
Rep. Jack Brinkley (D-Ga.) (Down only)
Rep. William Nichols (D-Ala.)
Rep. Tom Bevill (D-Ala.)
Rep. Dawson Mathis (D-Ga.) (Down only)
Rep. Elliott H. Levitas (D-Ga.)

9:50 a. m.

Advanceman:
Robin Martin

Arrive Lawson Army Airfield, Fort
Benning, where you will be met by
MG Thomas M. Tarpley, Commanding
General.

OPEN PRESS COVERAGE

NOTE: As you depart the foot of the
ramp with MG Tarpley, you will
pass through cordon of troops
en route motorcade for boarding.

4. . . .

9:55 a. m.

Board motorcade and depart Lawson Army Airfield en route Infantry Hall. Secretary Callaway and MG Tarpley will ride with you in your car.

10:00 a. m.

Arrive Infantry Hall.

PRESS POOL COVERAGE

You proceed inside the Infantry Hall where MG Tarpley will introduce you to Governor George Busbee (D-Ga.), Mr. James Woodruff, National Association of the U. S. Army President, Mr. Joseph Windsor, President of the Local Chapter of the National Association of the U. S. Army, and Mr. Charles Daley, Chairman of the Columbus Bicentennial Steering Committee.

Following introductions, MG Tarpley will escort you to the Holding Room to await announcement of the guests.

NOTE: Secretary Callaway, Governor Busby, and the Congressional guests will be escorted to the lobby to await individual announcements to the Army Bicentennial Celebration.

10:04 a. m.

You arrive Holding Room.

10:05 a. m.

Guest announcements begin, with each guest proceeding to his seat as his name is announced to the audience.

10:08 a. m.

Escorted by MG Tarpley, you depart Holding Room en route announcement area.



10:10 a.m. Ruffles and Flourishes.
Announcement.
• "Hail to the Chief"

10:10 a.m. Escorted by MG Tarpley, you depart
Infantry Hall en route platform.

OPEN PRESS COVERAGE
CROWD SITUATION

NOTE: A 21-gun salute will be
rendered en route to the
platform.

10:12 a.m. You arrive stage and remain standing.

10:13 a.m. Offstage announcement of Chaplain
Wetherell.

Invocation by Chaplain Wetherell.

You take your seat following the invocation.

10:16 a.m. Introduction of the platform guests
by MG Tarpley, concluding with the
introduction of you.

10:20 a.m. PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS.

FULL PRESS COVERAGE

10:40 a.m. Remarks conclude. You return to your seat.

10:41 a.m. The Glorious Heritage Pageant on
York Field begins.

10:43 a.m. You stand at attention on the platform for
the National Anthem, then sit down.

NOTE: During a continuous narration, companies symbolizing the U. S. Army's involvement in thirteen wars will march forward on York Field in chronological order.

10:59 a. m.

The troops post colors.

11:00 a. m.

At MG Tarpley's invitation, depart platform en route reviewing stand. You will walk between the crowd and may, if you wish, shake a few hands en route.

11:02 a. m.

You arrive reviewing stand and stand at attention.

NOTE: You will stand to the right of Tarpley. Your position will be marked with tape.

11:03 a. m.

Pass-in-review and fly-by commences.

NOTE: Units and organizations representing all five types of infantry will pass the reviewing stand from left to right. This is one of the few occasions in which all five of the different types of infantry are assembled simultaneously. As each group passes, a salute will be rendered you. It is not necessary for you to return the salute. As the colors pass, you place your hand over your heart.

11:18 a. m.

The Army Song.

11:20 a. m.

Escorted by MG Tarpley, you depart reviewing stand en route motorcade for boarding. You will move to your right first to greet the infantry commanders and guests en route the motorcade.

7.

11:30 a. m.

Board motorcade and depart York Field en route Victory Pond.

NOTE: Governor Busbee has another commitment in Atlanta and must bid you goodbye at the motorcade. Secretary Callaway and MG Tarpley will accompany you in your car.

(Driving Time: 20 minutes)

11:50 a. m.

Arrive Victory Pond where you will be met by Col. James M. Bowers, Ranger Department Director.

PRESS POOL COVERAGE

Escorted by MG Tarpley and Col. Bowers, proceed to viewing area.

NOTE: En route, you will pause at the food tables to select a box lunch to carry to the viewing stands.

11:55 a. m.

You arrive viewing stand area bleachers and take your seat. To your right will be soldiers; Col. Bowers will be to your left.

PRESS POOL COVERAGE

ATTENDANCE: 1,100 troops

11:56 a. m.

"Rangers in Action" demonstration begins.

NOTE: The demonstration will consist of a narration and display of hand-to-hand combat, mountaineering, and confidence testing. Near the end of the demonstration there will be depth charge demolitions in water which generate a loud noise.

8.

12:25 p. m.

Demonstration concludes.

You leave your seat and walk to the demonstration pit where you greet the Ranger participants.

PRESS POOL COVERAGE

NOTE: Captain Dennis C. Deming, principal instructor, will present a plaque to you.

12:30 p. m.

Escorted by MG Tarpley and Col. Bowers, you depart Victory Pond en route motorcade for boarding.

NOTE: Col. Bowers will bid you farewell at the motorcade.

12:35 p. m.

Motorcade departs Victory Pond en route parachute training area (Eubanks Field). Secretary Callaway and MG Tarpley will accompany you in your car.

(Driving Time: 20 minutes)

12:55 p. m.

Arrive parachute training area where you will be met by Col. Jack Whitted, Airborne Department Director.

PRESS POOL COVERAGE

Escorted by MG Tarpley and Col. Whitted, you proceed to viewing area.

12:59 p. m.

Arrive bleachers viewing area and take your seat. On your left will be soldiers; to your right will be Col. Whitted.

OPEN PRESS COVERAGE
CROWD SITUATION

9.

1:00 p. m.

Airborne 5000 demonstration commences.

NOTE: This demonstration will consist of narrative and display of Airborne training and tactical maneuvers. Of interest, Jack Marsh is still remembered for his "distinguished" exploits on the parachute tower.

1:35 p. m.

Demonstration concludes.

1:35 p. m.

You leave your seat and greet the Airborne 5000 participants.

NOTE: Major Ken Johnston will present an "Iron Mike" trophy (Airborne Soldiers Memorial) to you. You should pause briefly for a photograph.

Escorted by MG Tarpley and Col. Whitted, proceed to motorcade for boarding.

NOTE: MG Tarpley and Col. Whitted will bid you farewell at the motorcade. Motorcade departs en route Holiday Inn of Columbus Airport. Secretary Callaway will accompany you.

1:40 p. m.

(Driving Time: 25 minutes)

2:05 p. m.

Motorcade arrives Holiday Inn where you will be met by Mack Mattingly, Georgia GOP Chairman and Albert Lellie, Holiday Inn Innkeeper.

PRESS POOL COVERAGE

Escorted by Mack Mattingly, proceed to Meeting Room I to informally greet Georgia State GOP members.

10.

2:10 p.m.

Arrive Meeting Room I for informal reception.

• OFFICIAL PHOTO COVERAGE
ATTENDANCE: 28

2:40 p.m.

You thank the guests and depart Meeting Room I en route motorcade for boarding, bidding farewell to Mack Mattingly as you board your vehicle.

2:45 p.m.

Motorcade departs Holiday Inn of Columbus Airport en route Lawson Army Airfield. Sec. Callaway will accompany you.
(Driving Time: 25 minutes)

3:10 p.m.

Motorcade arrives Lawson Army Airfield where you will be met by MG Tarpley and Major Robert Williams, USA, Base Airfield Commander.

NOTE: MG Tarpley will present an "Infantryman" salute to you at the car. En route to the foot of the ramp, you will pass through a cordon of troops.

3:15 p.m.

Board Air Force One and depart Lawson Army Airfield en route Andrews AFB.

(Flying Time: 1 hour, 30 min.)
(No Time Change)

PRESIDENTIAL GUESTS

Army Secretary Bo Callaway
Senator Sparkman
Senator Talmadge
Senator Nunn
Rep. Stephens and Lawton Stephens
Rep. Buchanan
Rep. Nichols
Rep. Bevill
Rep. Levitas

NOTE:

Congressman and Mrs. Bob Jones (D-Ala.) and Congressman and Mrs. John Flynt (D-Ga.) have been in a La Grange, Georgia hospital recuperating from the recent bus accident en route Callaway Gardens and may accompany you back to Washington.

4:45 p.m.

Arrive Andrews AFB. Board helicopter and depart en route the White House.

5:05 p.m.

Arrive South Grounds.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

ADDRESS

U.S. ARMY'S BICENTENNIAL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION
SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 1975
10:00 AM
YORK FIELD, FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

FROM: DR. THEODORE C. MARRS *TCM*

I. PURPOSE

To commemorate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the United States Army.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS AND PRESS PLAN

A. Background: "Birth of the Army"

The American Revolution was well under way when the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia on May 10, 1775. It began more than a year and a half earlier as a protest by American patriots in Boston and elsewhere against British duties on the import of tea. In reprisal the British Government closed the port of Boston, ordered punitive and restrictive measures, and placed the colony of Massachusetts under the military rule of Major General Thomas Gage. All the North American colonies took the British measure against Massachusetts as evidence that they might be reduced to complete subservience. To meet the threat they moved to form governments of their own. Delegates were then sent to the First Continental Congress to discuss mutual problems and to decide on concerted measures to protect American rights. Following the recommendation of the First Continental Congress, many of the patriot governments siezed control of their militias during the winter of 1774-1775, formed into effective military forces, and gathered the wherewithal to oppose the British.

The measure to revitalize the militia paid off for Massachusetts and the other New England colonies as witnessed in the battles of Lexington and Concord. After those skirmishes the New England colonies were aroused to open and determined resistance. The British army in Boston found itself under close siege by voluntary forces from the militias of the New England colonies.

To hold the British soon became a major problem as the soldiers who made up the besiegers tended to stray home as the necessity of making a living for themselves and their families became acute. The plan adopted to remedy this situation was to replace the original besiegers with volunteer forces organized in the traditional colonial manner, the officers appointed

by the various colonies and the men enlisted by the officers. The New England Army gathered in this way by late spring of 1775 consisted of 26 Massachusetts and 8 Connecticut battalions, and 3 each from Rhode Island and New Hampshire. These men were enlisted through the end of the year.

There was a significant shortage of heavy artillery. This prompted the seizure of Fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point where many cannon and other military stores were obtained.

The Continental Congress which was asked for help to hold the captured posts acted quickly to enlist 3,000 more men.

It soon became apparent that weapons and supplies would have to be given the other colonies if the British were to be resisted. An emissary was sent to the Continental Congress to discuss matters necessary to the defense of the colony and the state of the army therein. To gain the support of the other colonies the Continental Congress was asked to take over "the regulation and general direction" of the army collected at Boston "for the general defense of the rights of America." Congress recognized the cogency of this request and ordered in the next few weeks that gunpowder and flour, of which there was a great need, be supplied to the "Continental" or "American" Army before Boston.

Two provisions were implicit in the Massachusetts request for the adoption of the New England Army.

- 1) Continental Articles of War should be drawn up to provide a uniform set of laws by which all colonial forces might be governed.
- 2) a "generalissimo" or Continental commander in chief, whom all the individual colonial commanders in chief would obey, should be appointed.

The Congress satisfied the first provision on June 14, 1775 when it appointed a committee to bring in "a draft of rules and regulations for the government of the army." It also authorized on the same day the enlistment of riflemen from the middle states, renowned as sharpshooters, to serve as light infantry under command of the chief officer of the army before Boston. The second provision was satisfied one day later when Congress appointed George Washington as the "General and Commander in Chief of the Army of the United Colonies." The earlier day, June 14, 1775, is the one we celebrate as the birthdate of the Army.

B. History of Fort Benning

Fort Benning, "The Home of the Infantry," which celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 1963, is named in honor of Brig. General Henry L. Benning, a Confederate officer from nearby Columbus,

Georgia, who commanded a Georgia brigade in Hood's Division, Army of Northern Virginia, 1863-1865.

On the high ground in the post headquarters area there was once an Indian village called Kasihta, and across the reservation there was a main Indian trail which Congress converted into a federal road in 1811. This road became the main westward route for settlers moving from the east to the Mississippi Valley.

The Battle of Hitchitti, fought in February 1836 during the Creek War, is the only recorded battle fought on Benning soil. However, General Benning commanded a Confederate detachment which took part in one of the final battles of the Civil War, fought near the Chattahoochee River, less than ten miles from the present post.

In October 1918 construction of Camp Benning was authorized in order to establish an infantry school of arms there. The original reservation of approximately 96,618 acres in Chattahoochee and Muscogee Counties, about 10 miles from Columbus, was acquired by purchase in 1919 and 1920. Camp Benning was announced as a permanent post and the name changed to Fort Benning in 1922.

The USA Infantry School at Fort Benning is a development of the Infantry School of Arms at Fort Sill, Oklahoma (originally established as the School of Musketry at the Presidio of Monterey, California, in 1907), and the Small Arms Firing School at Camp Perry, Ohio, both of which moved to Benning in October 1918; and the Machine Gun School at Camp Hancock, Georgia, which moved to Benning in 1919. A group of West Point graduates came to Benning in December 1918 and became the first class turned out by Benning's Infantry School of Arms. In 1920 the school at Benning was designated as The Infantry School, and the names of the three schools which had been moved to Benning and included in The Infantry School were discontinued.

During World War II more than 100,000 students---officers and enlisted men---graduated from Infantry School courses, and in addition 90,000 men received airborne training at the post. Between July 1941 and December 1946, over 66,000 second lieutenants were commissioned from Infantry OCS classes. Fourteen airborne ranger companies were formed and trained at Benning between September 1950 and September 1951, and in October 1951 the Ranger Department of the Infantry School was established.

Most of the units and activities at Fort Benning are now part of the United States Army Infantry Center, originally established as the Infantry Center in 1946. The USA Training Center, Infantry and the USA Reception Aviation Command, Martin Army Hospital,

and the following which are not part of the USA Infantry Center: USA Infantry Board, USA Infantry Human Research Unit; USA Marksmanship Training Unit; Third USA Advanced Marksmanship Training Unit; and USACDC Infantry Agency.

State GOP Chairman Mack Mattingly has selected the following prominent Republicans to meet with you as a group during your visit to Georgia on June 14:

Mrs. Nora Allen, Republican National Committeewoman

Mr. Nolan Murrah, Jr., Republican National Committeeman

Mack Mattingly, State Chairman

Donald Layfield, 1st Vice Chairman

Mrs. Lucy Taylor, 1st Vice Chairwoman

Mrs. Roena Moseley, Vice Chairwoman

Dennis Whitfield, Vice Chairman

Mrs. Gi Gi Crain, Vice Chairwoman

Dr. Hollis Tanksley, Vice Chairman

Dr. Lloyd Darby, III, District Chairman

Mrs. Eleanor Roseen, District Chairman

Bob Hydrick, District Chairman

Clarence Lorentzson, District Chairman

Matthew Patton, District Chairman

Robert Simpkins, District Chairman

Truett Moss, District Chairman

Mrs. Carolyn Smalley, District Chairman

David Ralston, District Chairman

Mrs. Annette McEachin, Secretary, State GOP

* Paul Womack, Treasurer, State GOP

* Robert Shaw, former State GOP Chairman

Mrs. Lil McAffe, President, Georgia Women's Federation

Mrs. Jeannette Longley, Assistant Secretary

Mrs. Ellen DeLind, Chairman, Georgia Young Republicans

Richard McBride, Executive Director, Republican Party of
Georgia

* Paul Coverdell, Senate Minority Leader

* Mike Egan, House Minority Leader

* Were among Republicans who met with you in Atlanta during February 3-4 visit. Bob Shaw and Paul Womack hosted that meeting. Paul Coverdell recently wrote you a letter of strong support for your 1976 candidacy as well as offer of assistance with the campaign in Ga.

REPUBLICAN PARTY OF GEORGIA

With the Georgia Republican State Convention over, and a new State Chairman elected, the Republican National Committee sees the GOP's fortunes rising in that State. The State Party has been in a virtual state of limbo for the past six months, according to RNC fieldman Ron Rietdorf, because of widespread dissatisfaction with past State Chairman Bob Shaw, who had held the post for the last four years.

During the recent State Convention held May 30-31 in Atlanta, approximately 1,000 persons attended, including 480 of 506 authorized delegates and approximately 400 alternate delegates. The two day session featured Governor Jim Edwards of South Carolina keynoting the Friday session and former Governor Ronald Reagan keynoting the Saturday session.

The major business was the election of the new Chairman. Opposing Shaw were Mack Mattingly of Brunswick, and Gary Pleger, a nominal GOP candidate for Congress in 1974 from the 10th Congressional District. Mattingly won a first ballot victory quite handily. Shaw called for the unanimous election of Mattingly, and following the vote they strode arm in arm to the podium. Shaw received many kudos from Mattingly and others, and everyone is now reasonably happy.

Mattingly is a fine young man, has the capacity for decision making and has the ability to bring divergent points of view together. He has the respect of Party leaders and grass roots people across the State, and the RNC fieldman reports that Mattingly's administration should be characterized by solid progress. He will, in the opinion of the fieldman, make an outstanding leader for Georgia and be a GOP leader throughout the South in time.

Of some interest at the Convention was the pro-Reagan sentiment. One resolution offered from the floor (subsequent to the Reagan speech) resolved, to wit: "We the delegates of the 1975 Georgia State Republican Convention do, without any reservation whatsoever, give our full support to Governor Ronald Reagan of California for the Republican nomination for President of these United States of America.

The motion, had it passed, would have had no real meaning as Georgia's Presidential Preference Primary calls for the candidate winning a particular Congressional District to receive all delegate votes at the National Convention for the first two ballots. The statewide winner would receive the at-large delegate votes for the first two ballots. Hence, the tabled motion, had it passed, would be "advisory" and would only express the mood of those attending this convention.

Cooler heads prevailed on the floor, however, and helped guide the Reagan Resolution to the table. According to fieldman Ron Rietdorf, while the voting delegates were primarily pro-Reagan, the "cooler heads" saw the folly and even potential damage that the resolution, had it passed, could have. Therefore, they helped table the motion, feeling that going on record supporting a candidate who hasn't even decided to run yet would be somewhat foolish. There were approximately 400 delegates with Reagan signs at the Convention, a demonstration which obviously had been prepared in advance.

The Georgia Presidential Primary will be held no earlier than March 1, 1976 and no later than June 1.

Both Governor Edwards and Governor Reagan indicated to the press in separate interviews that, in their opinions, Ted Kennedy would be the Democratic Presidential nominee in 1976.

The State Party has some very real problems with which to contend:

- Low morale in the GOP across the State,
- No GOP Congressmen from the State of Georgia, all of whose ten Representatives as well as both U.S. Senators are Democrats,
- Only 24 of 180 State Representatives and 5 of 56 State Senators are Republicans,
- All statewide constitutional offices are held by Democrats,
- Only three Congressional Districts can be identified at this time as possible GOP target Districts in 1976: the 4th (incumbent is first term Elliott Levitas; Ben Blackburn's old District), the 6th (incumbent is 12 term John Flynt) and the 7th

- (incumbent is 1st term Lawrence P. McDonald),
- Georgia's GOP has severe finance problems and is practically broke, and
 - The GOP suffers from an extremely poor image in the State.

In spite of these and other problems, the new Chairman and other newly elected Party officials are dedicated to solving the problems and to bringing a new enthusiasm and sense of direction to the Georgia political scene. The RNC fieldman feels that perhaps more will be achieved in this respect in the next 90 days than has been accomplished in the last two years.

It is of interest that the City of Columbus now has a Democrat Mayor, Jack Mickle, elected in the fall of 1974. Mickle defeated Republican Mayor Bob Hydrick who had served in that post for two years. Hydrick is now the Third District Congressional Chairman for the State GOP and is among those Republicans invited to meet with you during this trip.

Governor Busbee of Georgia, who served 18 years in the State Legislature, is enjoying above average popularity as is Democrat Lt. Governor Zel Miller. Miller particularly enjoys a very excellent reputation in the State and might be even more popular than Governor Busbee. Lt. Governor Miller intends to run for Governor in 1978 according to RNC sources.

There are several outstanding Georgians currently serving in your Administration: Bo Callaway, Secretary of the Army; Phil Campbell, Under Secretary of Agriculture; and Richard Ashworth, Assistant to Mr. Campbell.

JUNE 13, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED AT FLAG DAY/
ARMY BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

This is a great day for the Army and for all Americans. And it is a special honor for me to be here at Fort Benning, Home of the Infantry. I join a grateful Nation in saluting the United States Army on its 200th year of service and sacrifice to our country.

On this day, in 1775--a year before America's independence--our Second Continental Congress created the American Army. To have meaning, the deliberations and debates of Independence Hall had to be backed up by strength. The decisions made there had to be defended at Bunker Hill and on a dozen other battlefields across this new Nation.

It was a bold step from which there could be no retreat. It was a recognition of the realities of the world in which the colonists lived--and in which we live today: that there are times when principles must be defended with the force of arms.

Since that day, in 1775, our soldiers have protected and preserved this Nation at home and throughout the world.

There is much that I will always remember about this visit. But perhaps the one thing that best sums up the spirit of this day is the simple but deeply moving statue here at Fort Benning of an American combat infantryman. The statue bears the infantry's motto -- only two short words. But it speaks volumes for the courage and sacrifice that the American fighting man has always demonstrated. The motto is, "Follow me." It is this "Follow me" spirit, this sense of courage, leadership and sacrifice, that has characterized the American Army from its beginning as a ragged band of citizen volunteers, united only in love of liberty and a deep sense of duty.

Very few people thought that this citizen's army had much of a future in 1775. After all, the colonies had no allies and only limited industrial resources. And the adversary was the greatest global military power of the 18th century.

Yet, there were some who sensed from the start that, for all its weaknesses and handicaps, this was no ordinary army -- and that the goal it served was something special, perhaps even unique, in the annals of history.

On June 15, two hundred years ago tomorrow, the Continental Congress chose a commander for its new army -- a tall, quiet Virginian. In a letter to his wife, Martha, George Washington expressed his personal faith in the mission he and his fledgling army were about to undertake together.

"It is a kind of destiny," he wrote, "that has thrown me upon this service." And that destiny saw Washington and his men march from the harsh winter and privation of Valley Forge to the ultimate victory of Yorktown.

That first American Army faced many obstacles and some defeats. But it had one enduring trait -- it wouldn't quit. The mainstay of Washington's revolutionary force was the will to be free and the willingness to pay the price of freedom. Today's Army continues in that tradition.

(MORE)

Although we still enjoy the freedom which the Continental Army won for us, we have also learned over the years that freedom is never free. Each subsequent generation, in its own time and its own way, has answered the call to service and sacrifice to preserve our legacy of liberty.

Today's generation is no exception. And one of the most important contributions it has made is a physically and morally strong United States Army -- an army that is worthy of the heritage of two centuries of heroes.

Like the men of 1775, you who serve today are volunteers. With your comrades in the other services, you are the guardians of both our peace and our liberties. For, if we are to avoid war, we must maintain a credible and ready fighting force. Today's realities have increased, rather than reduced, our need for a solid conventional fighting force and for strong and ready infantry soldiers such as these I see here today.

In today's world, as in the world of George Washington, weakness is a provocation to aggression. It took strength to win our freedom; it will take strength to keep it, and to preserve the peace. The American soldier has paid the price of freedom on countless battlefields around the world.

For my part, I will do everything I can to see that our servicemen and women continue to receive the recognition and respect that is their due. And I will continue to work with the Congress to keep our armed forces supplied with the best and most modern training, weapons and equipment in the world.

In the short time I have spent here at Fort Benning, I have seen and felt the pride and vitality of the modern volunteer soldier. Last week, I flew to West Point to give the graduation address there. My old friend and former colleague in the Congress, Secretary Callaway, was along then as he is today. I asked Bo, while we were in Air Force One, how the all-volunteer force was doing. Well, it's a good thing it was a short flight because when Bo gets to talking about the success of the all-volunteer Army, he just won't quit. But I can see here today why he's so excited -- and I share his enthusiasm.

From my days in the Congress, I can well remember the spirited debate and the concern expressed over the establishment of an all-volunteer Army. An all-volunteer Army of 782,000 soldiers was considered by many to be impractical at best and impossible at worst. I can remember one of my congressional colleagues saying: "The only way to get good volunteers . . . is to draft them."

Well, as so often happens, the doubters were wrong. Today's Army is not only an Army of volunteers. It's an Army of winners. And it is truly representative of the American people. As a matter of fact, the Army is attracting better educated, better qualified, and higher skilled young men and women into its ranks than ever before. And most importantly, from what I see here today and have observed elsewhere, this new Army has kept intact that esprit de corps which 200 years of history and tradition have instilled.

Seeing so many flags proudly flying here reminds me of the fact that, besides marking the 200th Anniversary of the Army, today is also Flag Day. As I travel across America, I am proud to see that more and more people are displaying the flag in their yards, their cars, their places of business. Perhaps the spirit of the Bicentennial has caught hold. Whatever the reason, let us never forget that the flag we honor today embodies 200 years of experiences of a great people. It symbolizes this Nation's history. As President Woodrow Wilson once said about the flag, "no man can rightly serve under that flag who has not caught some of the meaning of that history." Each of us in our daily lives -- in our sense of patriotism and purpose -- can add to that history and the flag that embodies it.

(MORE)

For, when you get right down to it, the most remarkable thing about America is not the fact that we have produced great leaders. Other nations and other civilizations have done as much.

What's unique is the way in which generation after generation of Americans -- working men and women from all national, racial, regional and religious backgrounds -- have joined together to build a new Nation and new lives for themselves. The great lesson of America is that, in a free society like ours, the so-called "common man" can rise to uncommon heights of heroism sacrifice and achievement.

That is what the American flag stood for 200 years ago and what it still stands for today -- the integrity and worth of the individual citizen. And that is what each of you are sworn to defend.

From 13 stars, the flag has grown to 50. From 13 coastal colonies on the edge of an untamed continent, America has grown into the most productive, strongest and freest nation in human history.

But strength of spirit is every bit as important as wealth and territory and material power. What the American flag will stand for tomorrow depends on each of us today.

If we live up to the trust of this Nation's founders and to the dedication of its men in uniform -- and I am confident we will -- then the flag and the Nation we pass on to posterity will still justify Oliver Wendell Holmes' eloquently stated vision -- in his words -- of . . .

"One flag, one land, one heart, one hand, one Nation, evermore!"

#

[6/14/75]

WTR

In Washington -

Sunday for Power & Gardner

If he wants to talk
politics, then he will
~~write~~
be there.



WITHDRAWAL SHEET (PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES)

| FORM OF DOCUMENT | CORRESPONDENTS OR TITLE | DATE | RESTRICTION |
|------------------|--|-----------|-------------|
| Schedule | Detailed Guest & Staff Schedule - The President's Visit to Fort Benning Columbus, Georgia (28 pages) | 6/13/1975 | B |

File Location:

James M. Cannon Files, Box 47, Visit to Fort Benning, 6/14/75 / TMH / 5/27/2015

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