

## U. S. POW RETURNEE STATEMENTS

Captain Jeremiah A. Denton Jr., USN  
Clark Air Force Base  
February 13, 1973

"We are honored to have the opportunity to serve our country, under difficult circumstances. We are profoundly grateful to our Commander-in-Chief, and to our nation for this day. God bless America."

Colonel Robinson Risner, USAF  
Clark Air Force Base  
February 13, 1973

"It's almost too wonderful to express on behalf of all the other men who have been prisoners. I would like to thank you all. I would like to thank our President and the American people for bringing us home to freedom again. Thank you ever so much."

Captain James A. Mulligan, Jr., USN  
Clark Air Force Base  
February 13, 1973

"It has been our privilege to serve you Americans these many years and during this time our faith in our God, our country and in our families has never wavered. Today I'd like to thank the President of the United States, the people of the United States and our families for maintaining their faith with us and making this wonderful day possible. Thank you very much."

Colonel James H. Kasler, USAF  
Clark Air Force Base  
March 4, 1973

"We went to Vietnam to do a job that had to be done. And, we were willing to stay until that job was complete. We wanted to come home, but we wanted to come home with honor. President Nixon has brought us home with honor. God bless those Americans who supported our President during this long ordeal. We know better than any citizen has ever known how great it is to be an American. It's good to be home."



Lt. Colonel Alan L. Brunstrom, USAF  
Travis Air Force Base  
March 1, 1973

"For all of us up there we felt very proud of our country, we were very grateful to our President, and to the American people and that is not the kind of words that people put into your mouth. That came from the hearts of everyone."

Captain David F. Gray, Jr., USAF  
Maxwell Air Force Base  
March 7, 1973

"A loving God made me an American and to America I return.  
A loving President preserved my honor and with honor I return.  
A loving wife waited with strong heart and to her I return.  
Thank you, Heavenly Father. Thank you, President Nixon.  
Thank you, Lynda. Thank you, America."

Captain William P. Lawrence, USN  
Naval Hospital, Memphis  
March 7, 1973

"It is impossible for me to find the words to describe our feelings as we reunite with our families after a separation of six and more years. But during those years we never lost our hope, and our spirit was never diminished, because we knew that our great nation led by our great President would never rest until every POW was free. And I would like to assure you that every POW is eternally grateful for the magnificent effort which was performed by the U. S. public in their behalf. And though we three today have finally realized our hopes and dreams of so many years, we will continue to pray for those brave Americans who are still in captivity and until they are finally reunited with their loved ones. We are very proud today to be American fighting men returning home in honor and dignity. And we know far better than anyone else what a great privilege it is to be an American and to live in the United States."



Captain Harry T. Jenkins, USN  
Naval Hospital, San Diego, California  
February 23, 1973

"I haven't changed my mind nor do I think I stayed there in vain. I think we came out of there with honor. I heard someone say we didn't go there just to get released, we went there for a purpose and I'm in hopes that purpose was served to each his own.

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"Our society is supposed to be governed by the will of the majority. I am a little disgruntled that what I believe has been described as the small minority has seen fit to loudly oppose this majority ruling once it has been made. I think they have every right to express their opinion, but I think once this majority decision has been made that they've done nothing but hinder the mechanism that has been set in motion. I do not consider my time as having been in vain there at all even more so after I have come home and seen the welcome and have been informed of the prayers and thoughts and support of what has also been described as the 'silent majority.'"

Lt. Commander Ralph Gaither  
Navy Hospital, Jacksonville, Florida  
February 28, 1973

"We are military men, we're military motivated toward fighting for our country, we fought for our country, we did it honorably. I believe each man in the United States has an obligation to serve his country from the time he is born. Whatever our President decides to do in reference to law is up to him.

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"I would like to make one comment if I might, that is that I realize the importance of our governmental agencies in effecting our release and peace in Vietnam. However, I personally feel that there is an immeasurable debt which I owe -- which we all owe -- to the American public in general, because I believe that our President could not have achieved his goals had it not been for the support of the people in our country."



Colonel Gordon A. Larsen, USAF  
Clark Air Force Base  
March 7, 1973

Question: "How do you feel about your experience and your imprisonment in the war? Do you think, the way things have turned out, it was worthwhile for you?"

Answer: "There was never a doubt. We went there to do something and we did it, along with a lot of other people. I've been surprised at some comments, I've read from some others, but we have won a fantastic victory against Communism and those who do not know it, in my estimation, are ignorant. They simply do not know what is going on. It's a fantastic victory and I'm proud to be part of it. And if I had to do exactly what I did, I would do it again happily and with no grudge. And if it means spending another six and a half years, it would be after my first 55 missions began. As I say, I have absolutely no regrets: I have no apprehensions about the outlook. We were going to go home complete victors, and that's the way I feel that we are going home."

Lt. Colonel Armand J. Myers  
Lackland Air Force Base, Texas  
February 28, 1973

"Wherever I looked I saw signs saying 'welcome home' 'we love you' and the smiles, the cheers, and those delightful kisses left no doubt it was genuine. But in a deeper sense I think what the people are really saying is 'we love America.'"

"I'm told that the prisoner issue is one of the few things in recent years on which the entire country was united. I think that we POWs, through some sort of transference, have become a symbol of that unity we would like to see in America once more -- the unity we had before this was precipitated so many diverging view points on what the role of America should be. I am proud of the part I had in the fight against Communism. And the past seven years have convinced me more than ever of the need to continue the fight, preferably by peaceful means."



Colonel William D. Burroughs, USAF  
Clark Air Force Base, Philippines  
February 6, 1973

"I spent a lot of time in prayer. I spent a lot of time in thinking of what would sustain me and what was necessary, and the sustenance had to come from inside but it had to be real, based on something real. I had two things that I fell back on personally, and that was trust in my country and faith in God."

Colonel Ronald E. Byrne, Jr., USAF  
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base  
March 3, 1973

Question: "What was your guiding light?"

Answer: "Mine was faith. Faith in God, faith in my family faith in my country, faith in the leaders of our great land. I said before one time that this faith was justified, and it really was."

Colonel Gordon A. Larson, USAF  
Clark Air Force Base  
March 4, 1973

"We now know what freedom really is and how great that role was that we left so many years ago. It was our faith in God, our country and our families that sustained us through these long years. We are overjoyed to be here. On behalf of all of us, God bless you all."

Colonel Normal C. Gaddis, USAF  
Clark Air Force Base  
March 4, 1973

"During our incarceration, we kept faith in the divine providence, in our nation and in our fellow prisoners."



Lt. Commander Paul Galanti  
Portsmouth Naval Hospital  
February 28, 1973

Question: "Are you 100 percent satisfied with the way the Nixon Administration handled the war? The release of the prisoners and so forth?"

Answer: "Yes."

Question: "Can you expand on that?"

Answer: "From what I've been able to see, I was just fantastically impressed with the courage that President Nixon displayed in an election year, reopening the bombing war against North Vietnam and I strongly feel that had it not been for such a powerful decision that it might still be dragging out for years."

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Question: "Do you feel that the divisiveness over the war here at home prolonged the war? What do you think of the divisiveness?"

Answer: "Commander Mulligan, Captain Mulligan, excuse me, expressed that better than I ever could the other day. We could not understand over there where we just Americans like everybody else once a week we would get up and say the Pledge of Allegiance; we could not understand how people could be so unpatriotic as to condemn the Government in time of war and like Captain Mulligan said, and I think it's a beautiful phrase -- I think it's time we start raising flags instead of burning them."



Colonel John Flynn, USAF  
Clark Air Force Base  
March 14, 1973

"This is the most exciting moment for all of us here. I would just like to state simply that as a group, we have been privileged to serve our country under difficult circumstances. We would also like to thank our President, the services and the people of the United States for the effort and lives that have been expended in our behalf. I would like to particularly acknowledge the courage and integrity of our President. We knew that he must have been faced with many difficult decisions and circumstances, such as the bombing of Hanoi. He held our support and our prayers, always, and we knew about the efforts of millions of American people. We knew about the bumper stickers, we knew about the silences in football games, we knew about the buttons on the lapels. It sustained us. It had a tremendous impact on our morale. We never lost faith in our country. And finally, I would like to say that I have been in better places, but I have never been with better people. Our men performed magnificently. They were first class soldiers. They were first class citizens and they asked me to thank you for your support and to say, 'God Bless', to all of you."