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And they show what a former President, a former general, Dwight Eisenhower, meant when he said, ''Morale is the greatest single factor in successful wars.'' The communities of Jacksonville and Havelock care. And so, like communities all across America, they've joined hands to support military troops and their families. And I think of your schools, touching troops with their letters and their love. And the ''Key Wives Program,'' linking families and hearts. And if there's anyone around this country who wonders what we're fighting for, they need look no farther than right here in this room.

Unfortunately, there are no medals of valor for military families. If there were, there would be as much decoration on your chests as there is pride within them. Two weeks ago, a monument was dedicated a mile from here. It has five service seals and this inscription: ''Operation Desert Storm: This beacon burning bright is a constant reminder of Havelock's home fires burning in support of our military men and women and their families.'' To all of you—spouses, children, parents, loved ones, marines—you're doing more than just keeping the home fires burning. Your dedication and bravery is lighting the heart—believe me—it is lighting the heart of every American. You're hastening the day when your men and women will come home. And let me repeat this to the families: We will stay in the Gulf for as long as necessary, but not one day longer than it takes us to complete this mission.

Today, in the Gulf, marines are enduring much to keep America strong and great. Let me leave you with words that were written more than a century ago. Back then, the marines had just landed on another distant shore, and a reporter wrote, ''The Marines have landed, and the situation is well in hand.'' Nothing has changed, and nothing will.

You know, I heard on the radio, ''The President is going to North Carolina to lift the morale of the people.'' Let me assure you, it's the other way around after seeing this group.

So, thank you, thank you for your support. God bless you and this great country. And most of all, God bless the finest soldiers, sailors, airmen, coastguardsmen, and marines any nation has ever had. Thank you very much.

Note: The President spoke at 8:43 a.m. in a hangar at the air station. In his remarks, he referred to Maggie Hearney, wife of Richard D. Hearney, commanding general, 2d Marine Air Wing; Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett II; Gen. A.M. Gray, Jr., Marine Corps commandant; Lt. Gen. Carl E. Mundy, Jr., commanding general, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic; Brig. Gen. David A. Richwine, commanding general, Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point; Col. Daniel B. McDyre, commander, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing; Gov. James G. Martin of North Carolina; Zandra Krulak, wife of Brig. Gen. Charles C. Krulak, commanding general, 2d Forces Service Support Group; Linda Sutton, wife of Brig. Gen. Russell H. Sutton, Director, Operations Division, Plans, Policies, and Operations Department; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Following his remarks, President Bush traveled to Goldsboro, NC.

Remarks to Community Members at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, North Carolina

February 1, 1991

Thank you so very much. Cynthia, thank you for that introduction. This is the warmest picnic on a cold day I've ever attended, I'll tell you. And really, it's great to be here at Seymour Johnson, home of the 4th Tactical Fighter Wing—the ''Rocketeers'' and the ''Chiefs''—as well as these great refueling units, the 68th and the 916th. And let me just pay my respects and say what an unbelievable job Colonel ''Jumbo'' Wray is

doing here on this base. We're very proud of him. While your wing commander, Colonel Hornburg, is deployed with Desert Storm, "Jumbo" is filling in, doing just great.

And I'm also glad to see a man that flew over with me from our last stop—that's Governor Martin out here, the Governor of this State. Congressman Martin Lancaster, from this district, and I am very proud he is with us here today. And, of course, the mayor, Mayor Plonk, is with us, too. And I wanted to specifically thank the military affairs committee of the Wayne County Chamber of Commerce for hosting this fantastic picnic. I don't believe I've had so much fun in a long, long time.

And of course, I do want to salute two others: our very able Secretary of the Air Force that you just met, Don Rice back there, as well as the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Tony McPeak—both of them doing a fantastic job for our country.

This is a three-stop day for me. We just came here from the Marine Air Station at Cherry Point, and from here we head to Fort Stewart. But I want to tell you how very pleased I am to be able to spend some time meeting and talking to at least some of you—especially the kids—because I know in my heart how tough these days can be. There's a lot of waiting, a lot of uncertainty—the not knowing. But each of you do know this: The men and women from Seymour Johnson are doing a fantastic job for this country, and we are very, very grateful.

You've got the tactical fighters and the refuelers and the medical personnel and the civil engineers and the security police. I just want you to know how grateful the Nation is to this entire team—and to you—and to share with you here today just a few thoughts. I cast fear and horror into the heart of one guy I was having lunch with because I told him this was going to take 45 minutes; it won't, believe me.

But let me just share some thoughts with you. I probably don't need to tell you that the brave service men and women of this base are part of the most motivated, the best educated, the best equipped Armed Forces in the history of this great country of ours, bar none. Because they are—and you are—doing the hard work of freedom, the cause of freedom will prevail. I'm absolutely certain of that.

You know, we're now more than 2 weeks into Desert Storm. And I'm happy to say—and put it this way—we are on course and we are on schedule. And as each day passes, Iraq's war machine, thanks to many of your loved ones, is being systematically destroyed by our allied military forces. Our investment, our training, and our planning are paying off. And yes, sacrifices still lay ahead, but we will succeed. And when we do, we will have taught Saddam Hussein and all others like him that there is no place for lawless aggression in the region or in this new world order that we envision.

While I'm here, I would be remiss if I didn't salute what the U.S. and coalition airmen have accomplished. Air superiority is an established fact now. The Iraqi Air Force is no longer a factor. And I know that this base—as much as any base in this country—this base is very proud of the way that we have used air superiority to go after Saddam's missiles of terror.

And yes, our mission in the Gulf is demanding and it's difficult, but I can tell you that our troops will not be asked to accomplish their mission with one hand tied behind their back. We are not going to do that in this war. And let me say something else: Your husbands and wives and your moms and dads will not be in that Gulf one day longer than is absolutely necessary. I want them home, and I want them all home.

And finally—and I don't think I have to tell this particular group this point—but I want each of you and all our troops—this really is for the troops—I want you to know that the American people stand with you. And I hope you had a chance to watch at least the part of the State of the Union Message that I want to mention to you because if you did, you would have seen a very moving scene: The entire Congress—and Congressman Lancaster was there; he will tell you this is true—the entire Congress, the Cabinet, the Supreme Court, the Joint Chiefs, the diplomatic corps rose to their feet in a prolonged, heartfelt tribute to the troops. It was a moving thing. And if only you could have felt it, as I did standing

up there in front of the Congress—felt the thunder of the applause and sensed the emotion that filled that Chamber. And the cheering for our armed forces—and it was strong, it was for them—was followed by two more standing ovations for you, the courageous families of our service men and women. And it was for you and for our troops. And that's exactly the way it should have been.

And I hope that that Saddam Hussein, in his bunker somewhere in Baghdad, saw every single minute of it. And if he did, maybe he now understands that we are a nation united in support of our troops.

I know it's been tough on a lot of you—maybe all of you here at Seymour Johnson. And I know also what it is that you have offered this great nation of ours. I understand what it is that I have asked of you, what General McPeak has asked of you. Members of this fighting unit have voluntarily set aside their freedom to wage this battle. But while today some may be prisoners of war, and others may have made the ultimate sacrifice, a lifetime of democracy and faith in God keeps their spirit free. No foreign dictator can imprison the love of liberty that beats in the hearts of every American.

And before I finish, I'd like to say something to all of the kids here today. I want you to know that your parents, your loved ones, our troops in the Gulf are enduring the hardships of war today so that you may know the blessings of peace tomorrow.

And seeing such strong, wonderful families here today and knowing the support that you have received from this community is good for the soul and proves the strength of America's spirit. And I think each and every one of you—I thank each and every one of you. And when I climbed on Air Force One this morning out there—I told them this over at Cherry Point—I heard on the television, "President Bush is visiting the bases to help lift the morale." And it's been exactly 180 degrees the other way around. My morale has been pretty darn good, frankly, but seeing those people over there and now all of you, my morale has never been more sky-high.

Thank you for this fantastic support for the troops—because you see, you see, I do draw strength and courage from your forbearance—for the job that the colonel and all the others are doing around here. And I ask God's blessing upon you all—every one of you—and upon every soldier and sailor, marine, airman, and coastguardsman—every man and woman now serving in the Persian Gulf. What a wonderful country we have. And nothing could prove that more than the patriotism and the courage and the devotion of your loved ones, our beloved troops, halfway around the world.

May God bless the United States of America and each and every one of you. Thank you very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. at the base picnic grounds. In his remarks, he referred to Cynthia Hornburg, wife of Col. Al Hornburg, wing commander, 4th Tactical Fighter Wing; Col. James "Jumbo" Wray, vice commander, 4th Tactical Fighter Wing; Gov. James G. Martin of North Carolina; Representative H. Martin Lancaster; Hal K. Plonk, mayor of Goldsboro; Secretary of the Air Force Donald B. Rice; Gen. Merrill A. McPeak, Air Force Chief of Staff; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Following his remarks, President Bush traveled to Fort Stewart, GA.

Remarks to Community Members at Fort Stewart, Georgia

February 1, 1991

Thank you for that great welcome. Jill—Jill McCaffrey—it is my great pleasure to be here and to meet with you. Barbara and I met the commanding general—met Jill's husband, Gen. Barry McCaffrey, and many of his troops, many of your loved ones—and we shared a meal with them on Thanksgiving Day. And it was special, and we Bushes