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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 3, 1975

Two hundred years ago the Continental Congress authorized the outfitting of the first ships of the United States Navy. Ever since, the Navy has served to protect our country and to ensure safe passage for our merchant ships on the world's oceans.

All of us are aware of the necessity for maintaining a strong, modern fleet. As Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, I am firmly committed to this priority national task.

On this great milestone in the Navy's history, Americans can salute with pride the active duty men and women and civilian employees who serve our country in ships and shore stations around the world. We can look with admiration on the members of the Naval Reserve who devote so much of their time and talents to our national defense. We can remember with gratitude the retired members of the Navy who have served our country honorably in the past. And we can express our special thanks to the families of our Navy men and women who give them the support they need and deserve in their important duties.

I am confident that our Navy will continue to build on the gallant traditions of its first two centuries, and that it will continue to exemplify the finest spirit of our heritage as a free nation.

Gerald R. Ford

