

pool report el cortez hotel to san diego naval training center

president ford left the hotel at 5:40 p.m. for an uneventful 12-minute ride to the naval training station. he was met outside the huge mess hall by captain a.g. frank, the base commander.

ford immediately went through the chow line, walking with several recruits and making light conversation with them. the menu consisted of roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, salad, a strawberry short cake, some ice cream and ice tea. one of our colleagues said "there goes his diet."

ford sat down with 12 enlisted recruits, all of them part of a winning company in brigade competition which includes classroom grades, proficiency scores, ^{conduct} etc. the president shook hands with all the men, patted several on the back and then invited them to sit down. the mess hall capacity is 980 and was filled when ford came in.

throughout the meal, ford chatted with the recruits. the pool was too far away to hear the conversation.

after he finished eating, the president went around to several tables and shook hands with recruits. he asked several of them where they were from the conversations were apparently small talk

the president then walked through the kitchen and bakery of the mess hall, talking to several recruits as he went along. asked how he enjoyed the dinner, ford answered "it was excellent."

then, the training commands at the base presented ford with a special plaque and coffee mug marking his visit. ford cut a special cake baked for him. it was a 6 foot by four foot cake, weighing 350 pounds and requiring 7 days to prepare. the cake had the seals of the six training commands a San Diego plus a big presidential seal in the middle.

ford cut the cake with a huge navy sword which he then raised to show the recruits and took off some frosting with his finger. when he licked the frosting, he got a big ovation from the navy men.

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ford at naval training station

the president then made a ~~few~~ few remarks including some inside type jokes which ~~were~~ went over big with the recruits.

he said there were two political parties in washington, and ~~he~~ he understood there was a third party ~~at~~ at the ~~station~~ station--the marching party. there was lots of applause and cheering. (we were told the recruits do a lot of marching at night.

the president said "under his authority as commander in chief, I order the marching party tonight cancelled." That was greeted with ~~a~~ a roar of approval, to which ford said "there must be a lot of marching here."

then, the president also announced that "short tours" for friday on the base would be cancelled. those tours are ~~disciplinarily~~ disciplinary kinds of action. Another roar of approval for that ~~executive~~ executive action.

the president made some jokes about navy food, saying it was plain and simple food when he was in the navy. but he said all that was changed now ~~with~~ and "you have a rare, sumptuous delicacies like mystery meat or sea gull and jello." the recruits howled.

turning serious, the president told the recruits that the navy would give them the ~~best~~ best possible training and urged them to take advantage of it. He added: "There's something the Navy can't give you. It is what you feel inside.... the sense of duty and teamwork."

ford said "each of you are a vital link in the chain of national security." He said they ~~could~~ could go as "high as your ability and energy can take you." As an old Navy man, my personal best wishes are with you."

he thanked the ~~recruits~~ recruits again for having supper with him and left the mess hall for the motorcade at ~~6:40~~ 6:40 for the short ride to Air Force One and departure.

mashek