

serving on the frontlines halfway across the world, it is natural to wonder what all this means for you. I want our troops to know that while the coming year will bring change, one thing will not change, and that is our Nation's support for you and the vital work you do to achieve a victory in Iraq. The American people are keeping you in our thoughts and prayers, and we will make sure you have the resources you need to accomplish your mission.

This Christmas, millions of Americans are coming together to show our deployed forces and wounded warriors love and support. Patriotic groups and charities all across America are sending gifts and care packages to our service men and women, visiting our troops recovering at military hospitals, reaching out to children whose moms and dads are serving abroad, and going to airports to welcome our troops home and to let them know they are appreciated by a grateful nation.

One man who's making a difference this holiday season is Jim Wareing. Jim is the founder of New England Caring for Our Military. This year Jim helped organize a gift drive by thousands of students from Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Students from kindergarten to high school collected more than 20,000 gifts for our troops abroad. The gifts are being sent to troops stationed in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Korea, Japan, and Africa. The care packages include books and puzzles, board games, phone cards, fresh socks, and T-shirts, and about 7,000 handmade holiday greeting cards and posters. Jim says, quote, "It's probably always hard for troops to be far away from home, but especially hard

on the holidays. I use this as an opportunity to try to pay them back for my freedom."

Citizens like Jim Wareing represent the true strength of our country, and they make America proud. I urge every American to find some way to thank our military this Christmas season. If you see a soldier, sailor, airman, marine, or a member of the Coast Guard, take a moment to stop and say, "Thanks for your service." And if you want to reach out to our troops or help out the military family down the street, the Department of Defense has set up a web site to help. It is americasupportsyou.mil. This web site lists more than 150 compassionate organizations that can use your help. In this season of giving, let us stand with the men and women who stand up for America.

At this special time of year, we reflect on the miraculous life that began in a humble manger 2,000 years ago. That single life changed the world and continues to change hearts today. To everyone celebrating Christmas, Laura and I wish you a day of glad tidings.

Thank you for listening, and Merry Christmas.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:35 a.m. on December 22 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 22 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Death of James Brown *December 25, 2006*

Laura and I are saddened by the death of James Brown. For half a century, the

innovative talent of the "Godfather of Soul"

enriched our culture and influenced generations of musicians. An American original, his fans came from all walks of life and

backgrounds. James Brown's family and friends are in our thoughts and prayers this Christmas.

Statement on the Death of Former President Gerald R. Ford *December 26, 2006*

Laura and I are greatly saddened by the passing of former President Gerald R. Ford.

President Ford was a great American who gave many years of dedicated service to our country. On August 9, 1974, after a long career in the House of Representatives and service as Vice President, he assumed the Presidency in an hour of national turmoil and division. With his quiet integrity, common sense, and kind instincts, President Ford helped heal our land and restore public confidence in the Presidency.

The American people will always admire Gerald Ford's devotion to duty, his per-

sonal character, and the honorable conduct of his administration. We mourn the loss of such a leader, and our 38th President will always have a special place in our Nation's memory.

On behalf of all Americans, Laura and I offer our deepest sympathies to Betty Ford and all of President Ford's family. Our thoughts and prayers will be with them in the hours and days ahead.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

Remarks on the Death of Former President Gerald R. Ford in Crawford, Texas *December 27, 2006*

My fellow Americans, all of us are saddened by the news that former President Gerald R. Ford passed away last night. I spoke with Betty Ford. On behalf of all Americans, Laura and I extend to Mrs. Ford and all President Ford's family our prayers and our condolences.

President Ford was a great man who devoted the best years of his life in serving the United States. He was a true gentleman who reflected the best in America's character. Before the world knew his name, he served with distinction in the United States Navy and in the United States Congress.

As a Congressman from Michigan and then as Vice President, he commanded the respect and earned the good will of all who had the privilege of knowing him. On August 9th, 1974, he stepped into the Presidency without ever having sought the office. He assumed power in a period of great division and turmoil. For a nation that needed healing and for an office that needed a calm and steady hand, Gerald Ford came along when we needed him most.

During his time in office, the American people came to know President Ford as a man of complete integrity who led our