

OCTOBER 25, 1976

POOL REPORT

POOL FROM PIER 57 TO VA HOSPITAL
AIR FORCE ONE TO PORTLAND, OREGON

Uneventful trip to hospital. Talking car did its magic to sparse crowds. President did not stand...just talked into his nifty mike.

At VA hospital he made a quick tour -- then appeared before a small crowd (150 with maybe six vets in wheel chairs) on a green behind the 8 story facility. The building was long...patients and staff were at windows on virtually every floor.

The President was there to plant a symbolic tree honoring Medal of Honor winners. Tree was a Nordman fir that had already been planted with a few shovelfuls of dirt left out.

President said the planting was "symbolic of an America that stands tall for freedom." "I will keep faith with our American veterans," he said.

He cited one of his last acts as Vice-President, the presentation of 14 posthumous Medals of Honor. "...made me even more determined when I became President to build the kind of America they would have wanted." "America's goodwill must never be misconstrued as a lack of will." "As President and as a veteran, I am determined that America should recognize the veteran as a human being not just a c-number to be processed by a computer."

There were some hecklers, some distance away, from the unemployed workers organizing committee -- steel-workers apparently who were shouting "we want jobs". They could be heard faintly through the brief ceremonies.

Advance on economic speech to be delivered in Pittsburgh tomorrow is due to be released on the flight to Pittsburgh hopefully tonight for 6:00 a.m. release tomorrow morning. PM release. Text of President's second radio show -- already recorded -- on taxes due for release soon if you don't already have it.

Thin gruel -- but we tried.

Gibson, ABC
Bergholz, L.A. Times

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