

Ladies and Gentlemen, Granaderos de Gálvez,

I cannot think of anything more pleasant for a Spanish soldier than being a witness, as I am now, of the homage that a great country, the United States, pays to a Spanish serviceman whose sound spirit and great deeds have not been forgotten after two hundred years. Thanks for this fervor of yours, that brings you to this land of Spain in search of the origins of that extraordinary man, in order to pay your homage to his memory there where he was born and where he carried out his duty. Thanks for the enthusiasm that you show by wearing your uniforms, which are relics and souvenirs of those worn far back in 1779 by the "granaderos", with whom Spain contributed to the success of your War of Independence. History has proved that the King of Spain was right and that General Gálvez was right in joining with his Forces those of a country which was about to be born and that was to become the spearhead and the support of whatever spirituality and culture the Western World has still left.

It would take us a long, long time to gloss the effort of the soldiers of Spain who, dressed just as you are now, went from Manchac to Pensacola and fought for almost three years in the beautiful and dangerous jungles of Louisiana and Florida. The blood of those great soldiers was generously shed on the land where your independence and your freedom took root. Bonds such as those coming from the mixing of your land and our blood can never disappear. It is truly our and your duty to renew this alliance in as many occasions as possible, to increase the bonds that tie us together, to feel that we are partners in the dearly loved mission of transforming lands and men into an enterprise of solidarity where neither selfishness nor tyranny can have a place.

I know that many of you feel honored with your Spanish ancestry and with family names the origin of which come from the lands that you are visiting now. To you, and also to your fellow countrymen who do

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not share those conditions, Spain offers her hospitality and her gratitude for your noble gesture of honor, friendship and homage.

I also know, let me mention it with deep emotion, that one of you carried the Colours of Spain above the Earth and out into Space, along with your Stars and Stripes. From Space, the astronaut could see the Iberian peninsula as one more small spot on the Planet at which he possibly looked with the curiosity of the scientist, rather than with the eyes of a man in love. I am sure, though, that the spirit of Bernardo de Gálvez was up there too, and that, as his spirit saw the lands of Spain, he realized that it was his effort, as well as the effort of the Spanish soldiers and of all those who contributed to the victory in that war, that made it possible for this American to achieve the great exploit of conquering the skies.

It is on behalf of those soldiers of Spain that I am speaking now. I also speak on behalf of our Army Chief of Staff, whose inescapable duties and engagements previous to knowing about your visit, prevent him from being here with you today and from having the pleasure of receiving the precious present that you offer to our Army.

Let me also offer to you, Ladies and Gentlemen Granaderos de Gálvez, a small souvenir of this visit. It does not have a great material value, but it will always give evidence to you that, at all times, the arms of Spain have been and will be ready to join those who, just like the 1779 soldiers, carry out the fight for independence and justice.