

# History's on His Side, Nixon Says

## Washington

President Nixon predicted yesterday that history will vindicate his Vietnam policies because they reminded both allies and potential adversaries that the U.S. is a credible, dependable power in the world.

The President spoke in the now-familiar setting of a picture-taking session in his White House office, and then drove to lunch at the Pentagon where he lifted his water glass in a toast to peace.

"This is a very special occasion," Mr. Nixon told the Defense Department's highest civilian and military leaders surrounding him at the table.

### FIRST

"It's the first time I've been here since the war was over. Let's raise our glasses . . . All the Defense Department wants to be is the peace force."

Leaving the Pentagon after a two-hour briefing arranged by Defense Secretary Elliot L. Richardson, Mr. Nixon walked over to chat with spectators behind a roped-off area. Speaking of the returning U.S. prisoners of war, he said:

"No one should thank me. We should thank them. They served — they wanted to come home the right way, standing tall and proud. Their sacrifice was not in vain. The American people deserve the credit."

### CHEERS

Cheered by Defense Department workers as he left the Pentagon, Mr. Nixon commented to the servicemen: "The uniform looks very fine these days . . . It's good for Americans to be reminded of so many brave men who did so much for their country, suffered so much to have peace in the world."

He recalled seeing the television film of the returning prisoners. "Some of them looked weak coming down the steps, holding the rail," he observed. "It took a lot of guts."

One man kept shouting "God bless you" to Mr. Nixon who smiled and shook hands all around.

"What do you think of our POWs?" asked the President.

"Mighty proud, aren't you?"

Then one woman told him, "Thank you for bringing them home."

Whereupon, Mr. Nixon interjected, "in the right way."

United Press

## POWs Are the War's Heroes, A Wife Says

Virginia Beach, Va.

"How can you say it's a war without heroes," said Louise Mulligan of her husband and other returning prisoners of war, "when you look into their faces?"

"They are the real heroes," she said in an interview in her home after her visit in seven years with her husband, Navy Captain James A. Mulligan Jr.

The prisoners, added the mother of six sons, "have a great message. I hope it will help to bind some of the wounds the country has suffered from the Vietnam war.

"I hope the country will gain a greater strength through looking at them. They survived through their own stamina, their own strength and their own courage."

Associated Press