

REMARKS PREPARED FOR SECRETARY DOLE
WHITE HOUSE CEREMONY HONORING AMTRAK CRASH HEROES
WASHINGTON, D.C.
FEBRUARY 3, 1987

I am proud to be a part of this ceremony and to join the President in honoring all of you special and selfless people who gave so many long hours of time in helping the victims of the tragic Amtrak/Conrail train accident.

While we all feel a tremendous sense of loss for the families of the crash victims, we can take comfort in the outpouring of bravery and compassion in the wake of the crash. You here today, as well as the countless other residents of Chase, Maryland and volunteers from the surrounding area are heroes in the truest sense of the word. The stories of your valor abound. Many train passengers remained at the scene to help those trapped inside, offering words of encouragement that help was on the way. Residents rushed to the burning wreckage to help survivors. Some even literally gave the shirts off their backs to freezing and injured passengers. Others of you, without a moment's hesitation, opened your hearts and your homes, providing food, shelter and companionship. Over a thousand people lined up in the freezing cold to donate blood to help the crash victims. In short, you did everything humanly possible -- and more, to help.

As Secretary of Transportation, I am the head of the U.S. Coast Guard, so you will please forgive me for singling out one of the heroes -- a man under my command -- Coast Guard Marine Machinery Mechanic Charles Brickell

(Brick'-uhl). Upon hearing the explosion and seeing the burning wreck, Charles linked garden hoses from his neighbors and put out the fire in the yards and attempted to douse the flames in the burning train car. Though the hoses could not reach the train, Charles did not give up. He began pulling people out of the train and continued to work with the rescue teams after they arrived. Meanwhile, his wife Sharon opened their home to the Baltimore County Police for use as a command post during that afternoon. The Brickell's courage, compassion and resourcefulness exemplifies the motto to which the men and women of the Coast Guard live daily, "Semper paratus" -- "always prepared." And Charles' actions in this tragedy are just another reason why I feel a special sense of pride in the Coast Guard.

The people of Chase have proven to the nation that no one is a stranger when tragedy strikes; every helping hand or kind word will be remembered by the survivors -- and all of us, for years to come.

Your efforts made what was a long, harrowing experience a little more bearable for the Colonial's survivors, and renewed our faith in the inherent goodness of our fellow man. We owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude.