



*This deployment definitely separated the men from the boys. Just lately I looked around the ship and realized there were no more boys.*

*I suppose it started during those three hard weeks in San Diego, showing the Navy just what a dedicated ship's company could do toward mastery of drills which lead to a well integrated team. When fire at sea hit us, you showed just how well you had learned from the drills. Then, when it was time to clean up the mess and get the ship back to fully operational status, you all settled for nothing less than 100%.*

*I've seen you in action time and again during this deployment, and there's no doubt in my mind you are all professionals in the finest sense of the word. From the record breaking onload at Hueneme to the record breaking offload at Palmer, from the thousand and one engineering casualties met and mastered to produce an operationally successful deployment, you're done it all. Professionally. And with a sense of humor to keep it human. You make the word shipmate say it all.*

*So to each of you, I render a hand salute I wish you the best of luck in the years ahead and, from one professional to another...well done.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "John Dinschel".