

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 26, 1987

Dear Mrs. DeAngelis:

Nancy and I send you our deepest condolences on the death of your husband aboard the USS STARK. Our hearts go out to you in your time of grief.

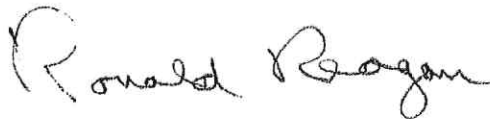
Our men and women in uniform venture far from our shores and from their families, defending freedoms that, I know, must often look like no more than abstractions in a world of harsh and hostile realities. I am sure there have been many occasions in the past, and certainly now, that you have wondered whether the missions assigned our Armed Forces in distant places like the Persian Gulf are worth the terrible risks and costs.

I have no simple answer to give you as to why history has handed America this burden, why our military personnel are so often asked to go in harm's way not just to serve this Nation's best interests but also to protect the lives and well-being of people they will never meet. I do know that if we did not accept this responsibility, if we wished away its sometimes bitter cup, it would not disappear. The burden would only fall on those less prepared to assume it or too weak to uphold it.

Your husband took on the rigors of duty, and in your sacrifices and love for him you took them on as well. Petty Officer Christopher DeAngelis will be remembered and revered through the generations to come for his selfless service to the noblest ideals of liberty and peace.

We join with all Americans in sharing your sorrow and in offering our heartfelt sympathy. May God bless you, and may He comfort you as only He can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Ronald Reagan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R".

Mrs. Christopher DeAngelis

A solid black rectangular redaction mark covering several lines of text, likely a mailing address.