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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 19, 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR CHRISS WINSTON

FROM:

BOB SIMON 

SUBJECT:

GB THANKSGIVING

According to Don Rhodes, the Bushes have spent most Thanksgivings over the last two decades like most Americans: at home, having a traditional dinner. From at least 1983 through 1988, they were in Kennebunkport. Last year, they were at Camp David. There are, however, a couple of interesting cases.

In 1974 and 1975, George and Barbara Bush spent Thanksgiving in China.

On Nov. 26, 1942, George Bush spent what is believed to be his first Thanksgiving away from home. That summer, he enlisted in the Navy. In November, he had Thanksgiving dinner at the Naval Flight Training Center in Minneapolis, MN. On the menu: fruit cocktail, sweet pickles, chicken noodle soup, Waldorf salad, turkey, ham, giblet gravy, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, turnips, mince pie, pumpkin pie, and apple pie.

On November 25, 1943 -- Thanksgiving -- Bush was at the Hyannis, Mass. Naval Air Station completing his flight training. He flew a training mission that day. (During this period, he was based at Chincoteague, Va. but happened to be in Hyannis on Thanksgiving.) At this point, he knew he would be shipping out to the Pacific on the USS San Jacinto. He reported to that ship three weeks later in Philadelphia on Dec. 15. The Bushes had secretly gotten engaged in Kennebunkport in August, 1943.

On Nov. 23, 1944 -- Thanksgiving -- Bush was on the USS San Jacinto off the coast of the Philippines. He did not fly that day. Six days later, on Nov. 29, Bush flew his 58th and final combat of the war. The next day, he began the long journey home, culminating in a Christmas eve reunion with his family in Connecticut. Their wedding had been planned for Dec. 19, but had to be pushed back to Jan. 6, 1945.