

Mr. President, it is my intention to give a very brief tribute and then ask Senator HAGEL to manage the time on our side. I see Senator LINCOLN is here and I am sure she will manage time for the Democrats for our daily tribute to the troops.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, as I have said before, every day our troops have been in the field the Senate has opened with a tribute to them. We have had Members from both sides, from many States, talk about their own Members and colleagues. We have talked about different groups in the field. I begin today giving a tribute to a group of Navy reservists from Texas who are making history in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The unit is the Strike Fighter Squadron that hails from the Joint Reserve base at Fort Worth. As we speak, the members of this outstanding unit are flying jet fighters in combat against Saddam Hussein's evil regime. They are best known by their nickname the "Hunters."

When President Bush ordered the Hunters to active duty last October, this distinguished squadron joined the crew of the aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt* for duty in the Persian Gulf—the first time since the Korean War that an entire Naval Air Reserve squadron has deployed aboard an aircraft carrier.

Since then, the Hunters have exceeded all of the Navy's requirements. The 12 Hornets that comprise the squadron have flown 1,500 sorties over Iraq. The air crews have made more than 500 landings aboard the *Theodore Roosevelt* at night and nearly twice that number during the day.

But it takes more than just remarkable statistics to truly tell how well the Hunters are serving our Nation. You can hear the pride in their voices. One crew member described the personal sacrifices his comrades were making when he said, "Some of us are taking pay cuts of \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year to be out here and make this happen. We're happy to be a part of this ship and this air wing, and we're ready to do our job." Many of the pilots left their jobs as civilian airline pilots to fight for our country.

These brave Naval reservists also are facing what many feel is the worst part of a deployment: being away from family. That means missing birthdays, anniversaries, and other important family obligations that are gone forever. Yet they are undaunted. One proud member said, "We're leaving our jobs and our families behind until this mobilization is done. Several members of the squadron are also geographic bachelors who don't live in Fort Worth, which means that they'll still be away from their loved ones after we've come back to base."

The feeling among members of the squadron is that each volunteered to

serve in the operation they describe as "America's Big Stick." One officer pointed out, "If our country needs us, we're going to step up, because this job is about something that's bigger than all of us."

Mr. President, with volunteers like the Hunters, this operation and the future of our national security is in good hands. We owe them and their families a debt we never can repay.

I yield to the Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, the world has been watching images from Iraq, of the Iraqi people celebrating the end of a brutal tyranny, and of the American soldiers who have given the Iraqi people hope for a new beginning.

Over the past 3 weeks, the men and women of America's Armed Forces have shown a degree of precision and professionalism unprecedented in military history. Their commitment to their country builds on the expectations, traditions and character of those who have gone before them. It builds on the traditions of over two centuries of American courage and sense of honor, built by people such as DAN INOUE, Bob Dole, CHARLIE RANGEL, JOHN MCCAIN and millions of other American veterans.

The end of Saddam's regime does not end our commitment in Iraq. It is only the beginning. America's soldiers will continue to face great risks in Iraq. Lives will continue to be lost.

Restoring order, peace-keeping, and rebuilding in Iraq are the tasks ahead, and our men and women in uniform will be asked to risk their lives to meet these challenges, as they have in bringing an end to Saddam Hussein's tyranny.

Among the many brave men and women who have sacrificed in Iraq, I would like to acknowledge the contributions and sacrifices of those men and women in uniform from my State of Nebraska.

Thousands of Nebraskans are on active duty in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard. Their stories are the stories of America's courage, achievement, and sacrifice in Iraq.

On Monday, Army LTC Mike Presnell phoned his mother in Grand Island, NE. He placed the call on a reporter's phone from the gold-plated bathroom in one of Saddam Hussein's Baghdad palaces, now under coalition control.

Colonel Presnell told his mother about his historic experience and how proud he was of his colleagues.

Nearly 60 years after the first American landed at Omaha Beach, a courageous Omahan landed the first coalition aircraft at Baghdad International Airport.

Piloting an Apache helicopter disabled by enemy gunfire unable to radio for help, CWO 4 Greg Inman, Of Omaha, NEB, touched down shortly after U.S. forces staked claim to the airport. Warrant Officer Inman's landing was the standard for the courageous service that we have come to expect from our forces in Iraq.

CPT Travis Ford, a 30-year-old Marine from Ogallala, NE, lost his life in service to his country. Captain Ford was killed on April 4 when his Cobra helicopter crashed during combat operations near Ali Aziziyah, Iraq. He leaves behind a wife and 2-year-old daughter. He was, in the words of his father-in-law, a "Marine's Marine."

I spoke to his mother and wife yesterday. His mother, Josie Ford said, "Senator, Travis did something very important for his country. I'm proud of him." Mrs. Ford, we're all proud of him.

Our military men and women are the Nation's quiet heroes, for there is no glory in war.

Behind headlines and beyond breaking news, there is the human struggle and the human tragedy. Lives are risked and lost.

The experience of war reinforces the desire for peace. General Douglas MacArthur once said:

The soldier above all other people prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war.

Our sacrifices in Iraq, we pray, will make a better and more secure life for the people of America, Iraq and the world.

For their service, bravery and sacrifice, in this noble cause of defending freedom and making a better world, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing—in honoring—the men and women of the United States Armed Forces. They have always been America's quiet heroes. Upon their sacrifice and courage we are inspired to build a more noble and just world.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I thank all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for coming down and being a part of what we have to do here in the Senate. It is incredibly important that we pay tribute to our troops. We see much progress over recent days in the conflict in Iraq, in our efforts to topple a totalitarian regime that has been incredibly harsh on its people. The progress we have seen is incredible, and it is due to the unbelievable professionalism and training of the service men and women in the Armed Forces of the United States. They have done an incredible job. They have had the best technology. We have had the best individuals, professionally trained, out there making an enormous difference.

I think all you have to do is look at what we have done in Baghdad on the Iraqi regime's strategic sites, where we have tried so diligently and our forces have been so successful in minimizing what has happened to the civilians in Iraq. We have also seen the joy on the faces of the Iraqi people as they have seen the liberation from a regime that has been so daunting to them.

I come from a rural State. It is most important, certainly when you live out

in the rural areas, to have good neighbors because you depend on your neighbors for a lot, whether you need to borrow a cup of sugar or you need someone to help you bring your crops in from the field or, more importantly, the way we depend on our neighbors to help us as a community in raising our families, making sure we are safe.

We are in a global community now. Our actions in Iraq that will follow—and in neighboring countries—in rebuilding not only Iraq but certainly the alliances we have with other countries, are going to be so important. These are our neighbors in the global community.

I think we are all anxious to see other nations join, those that may not have been there during the war, in making sure those alliances will be made and that we will have a concerted effort globally in rebuilding Iraq and the total of the Middle East because we all understand how important it is in the global community for us to have good neighbors. There is no doubt the Iraqi people, with the assistance of the U.N., the United States, and other alliances and neighbors, can build a very strong democracy which will be a guidepost as well as a good example for others.

I, too, want to reach out to our soldiers, our men and women in the armed services. One of the most important thoughts I have heard from some of our service men and women is for us here in the States and at home to reach out to their families. We have an incredible opportunity, as Senator HUTCHISON has said, to recognize those missed birthdays—they have missed births altogether—important dates, and other events. Let's make sure in our communities we reach out to those families; that we lift them up in our prayers and reach out in ways in which we can be helpful. I think one of the greatest ways we can honor the men and women who are serving us in the Armed Forces is to reach out to their families and make sure we are supportive.

I know we have a medical unit out in Jonesboro, AR, that is headed now to Washington to finish up training in Walter Reed. They will be shipped out shortly after that to Kuwait. We are seeing new families who are obviously having their loved ones shipped out. We want to make sure we continue the process of supporting them.

As we look to that rebuilding, we know the reconstruction in Iraq is going to be challenging. But because of the professionalism, because of the technical aspects of the Armed Forces of the United States, the rebuilding will be not nearly as challenging as that of past wars because we have been able to determine where we wanted to make the biggest impact and target that without disturbing, as much as was possible, the overall community in Iraq, particularly civilians.

We pay tribute once again to the troops, to our service men and women. We are very proud of their profes-

sionalism, their technical capabilities. We lift up their families once again as a body in prayer for all of them.

I now yield to the Senator from Montana, Mr. BAUCUS.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I would like to take a minute to honor the contributions of Montanans serving overseas. There are thousands of Montanans in harm's way. Today I would like to mention a few.

Army SGT Charles Horgan is a soldier with the Army's 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Scout Platoon of Fort Benning, GA. Many of you undoubtedly heard the stories of battle outside of the Iraqi city of An Nasiriyah. Sergeant Horgan was a Humvee gunner in the lead scout unit. His vehicle encountered a group of Iraqis in Bedouin robes running the other direction.

A wire-guided missile struck the bridge, blowing him from his gunning position. Shrapnel from the rocket tore open his leg and foot and wounded the driver, SSG. Jamie Villafane. For the next 10 minutes, their unit was engulfed in a shootout with enemy troops. Charles Horgan, part of his right heel blown off, crawled to safety. Horgan is currently recovering at Walter Reed.

It is not known if Horgan will ever walk again unaided. He is 21 years old from Helena, MT, and a graduate of Helena High—my alma mater. He is an aspiring artist who loves drawing. I wish him the best as he recovers, and I take my hat off to him.

I talked to him on the phone the night before last. I have talked to his parents a couple of times. He will be on his way home to Montana very shortly. He is a terrific young man.

Navy E3 Phillip Lance Stewart, 20, a 2001 graduate of Great Falls High in Great Falls, MT, is a firefighter aboard the USS *Abraham Lincoln* in the Persian Gulf.

Lance, the son of Chuck and Gail Stewart and grandson of Delphine Murphy, all of Great Falls, told his family in a short phone call recently that the letters and boxes from family and friends is what keeps all of them going.

He also really misses his brothers and sister—and that is a lot to miss because Lance has six brothers and sisters, including a twin brother.

Lance's family has decorated his house with big yellow ribbons and can hardly wait until Lance is home again, safe and sound.

Army PFC Sedar Steinert, 19 a former North Middle School and Skyline Alternative School student from Great Falls, MT, was deployed to Iraq with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, with headquarters at Fort Polk, LA.

Sedar's unit is providing artillery and scout support on the road to Baghdad. We all hope for his safe return.

SP Ryan Richard Carpenter was born in Dillon, MT. His family currently resides in Belgrade and Dillon, MT. His

parents are Richard and Julie Carpenter. Specialist Carpenter joined the Army Reserve in 1997 and met his wife in 2001. His wife is also in the Army Reserve, the couple met while serving an Army Reserve drill weekend that was focused on night vision goggle training.

During the drill weekend the couple's squad's call name for the training exercise was Ammo 3. That is what they called it: Ammo 3. From that chance encounter, the couple soon realized that they signed up for the Army Reserve in the same month of the same year, but met by chance roughly 4 years later. The couple was married later that year.

Specialist Carpenter was called up to active on February 7, 2003, and is serving with the 811th Ammunition Ordnance Company, based out of West Virginia. The unit has been stationed at Camp New York since arriving in Kuwait and will soon be going into Iraq to provide ammunition support for the 101st Airborne. Specialist Carpenter was able to contact his wife from Kuwait and let her know that he had arrived safely and was in good health.

During the conversation, Specialist Carpenter explained to his wife that he was assigned night vision goggles for use while driving his HumVee, and every time he picks them up, he thinks of the weekend he met her, both doing such training. Hearing this, his wife smiled and tenderly cried over the telephone, "Ammo 3!" The couple then reminisced about the weekend they met and then came to a joint resolution: It was the United States Army that brought them together, and it was the only entity that could temporarily separate them.

Specialist Carpenter is deeply loved and missed by his wife, family and friends, and they pray for his safe and expedient return.

PFC Jeremiah Coyne of Dillon, MT, went to boot camp during the summer between his junior and senior year of high school. He entered the National Guard after graduation. Not content simply to serve as a guardsman, he went to Active Duty and is now serving proudly in the gulf region. We pray for his safety.

PFC Adam Eversole recently celebrated his 22nd birthday in Kuwait, where he was deployed on March 15 as an ambulance nurse. After losing his mother, this caring, religious young man enlisted, following in the footsteps of his father who served and was wounded in Vietnam.

After receiving the news that he was headed for Kuwait, he wrote his Grandmother, "Let's remember, I have Jesus with me always, and He will look over me and keep me safe. When I get back, I hope to come and see you and visit Montana." It will be a grateful Montana that greets him.

Marine CPL Patrick O'Connell is serving in the Unit Fox 25, attached to the Second Tank Battalion in Iraq. He is a committed public servant who has already been of great service to our

State, both as a community lifeguard and as a wildland firefighter. He courageously helped battle the devastating wildfires of 2000. Now he has extended that generosity of character to serve our entire Nation, and he deserves the gratitude of us all.

Brock Patera of the Army's 40th transportation company will undergo review on April 15 to become a Sergeant in the U.S. Army. He is busy earning that rank in the desert. He spends long, difficult, dangerous hours behind the wheel of a Humvee. His platoon has been sleeping on the ground and unable to receive mail, but like so many countless others around him, he remains committed to the task at hand. We wish him luck in his coming review and a safe return to his wife Cassandra and his 15-month-old son Devin, who miss him dearly.

John Falconer of the 7th Marines Motor T surprised his parents on the morning of April 1 with a phone call from the front lines.

The phone call was made on a cell phone borrowed from CNN correspondent Martin Savage. Savage is repaired with John's unit. John had repaired the fuel pump on Savage's Humvee, and the phone call was offered in thanks. This was the first time his parents had heard the sound of their son's voice in almost a month. When asked what he needed the most, John told his mother, "a mattress." He told his mother that because he slept on the ground, the dirt was so embedded in his pores it would never come out. In the face of hardship, John has remained strong and committed to the task before him. He is in our prayers, and we all hope for his safe return.

Mr. President, this is not a complete list of folks from Montana serving our Nation. There are many, many more. I do not plan to return to the Senate floor every day to give stories, but I do plan to return frequently with more stories. I believe that the job our troops are doing is a dangerous one and that they are upholding the freedom we, as a nation, hold so dear. We honor them and wish then continued success and a safe return.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, last Saturday I visited Fort Campbell, which is on the line between Kentucky and Tennessee. It is the home of the famous 101st Airborne Division. It is also the home of a couple of Army Special Forces units we don't hear so much about. Almost all of them are in Iraq today. Some have been there for a long time.

What was nice about Saturday was the Secretary of the Army was there and held and attended a luncheon in honor of the families. Awards were given to members of the families of the service men and women who were there and those who support our troops at home.

I heard a great many stories, as you might imagine, about bravery, dedica-

tion, and professionalism. One was a story about a major whose unit was advancing on a mosque when a crowd of Iraqis thought there was about to be some damage done to the cleric. The major had the presence of mind to order all of the men and women in his unit to go down on one knee and point their guns to the ground. It signaled to the Iraqis that they were there to help them, not to hurt them.

But one of the most interesting stories that came out of the 101st Airborne Division in Fort Campbell is one I would like to report this morning to the Members of the Senate. It is about a special group of Tennesseans who embody the qualities that make our Nation exceptional. You may have seen the piece on the news about them on CBS News last week. They exemplify why our State is called the Volunteer State. It is our nickname. More importantly, their story reminds us of the meaning of family.

These men belong to a Tennessee Army National Guard artillery unit from Chattanooga. The Secretary of the Army reminded me that more than half of our National Guard men and women and reservists have been deployed in one way or another since 9/11. They are a big part of what we are doing today. We have one integrated army, as he says.

But these men whom I am talking about are part of an Army National Guard artillery unit from Chattanooga that is training at Fort Campbell. Like many units, they may be deployed any day.

While I have endless gratitude for all of the men and women who are serving, this unit is special. There are seven fathers and sons in this unit; that is, two generations of seven families who are willing and ready to fight for the United States.

They are SSG Rick Mullins and his son SP Jeff Mullins; 1SG Cody Mosier and his son SP Tim Mosier; SSG Jasper Ellis and his son SSG Mike Ellis; MAJ Paul Ballinger and his son PFC Ryan Ballinger; SGT James Kittle and his son SP Jeb Kittle; SSG Roy Ware and his son, SP Jeff Ware; SFC Jimmer Bolden and his son, SP Corey Bolden.

SP Jeb Kittle got out of the Army last summer but signed on recently with the Reserve battalion to serve with his father, James. In an interview, Specialist Kittle said it would be a once-in-a-lifetime experience to go into battle with his father beside him. He said, "Everyone feels confident that we can complete the mission and bring everybody back alive." That is what we pray for every day, that the conflict is swift and the troops will come home safely.

SSG Jasper Ellis and his son, Mike, said they hope for the best; that they go in and come back together. And while none of these father-son guardsmen are assigned to fight side by side, SSG Rick Mullins said no matter what, he and his son will take care of each other. He recalled, with tears in his

eyes, when he told his wife that he would give his life before anything would happen to their son.

To hear the love and respect these men have for each other is inspiring and reminds us that we are all in this together. It reminds us of the respect we have for the men and women of our Armed Forces. That seven fathers and sons from one National Guard unit in Chattanooga would be training together at Fort Campbell to defend our country in case they are deployed is something of which I am very proud. I wanted to call the attention of the Senate to it today for my home State of Tennessee.

Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to the brave men and women from New Jersey, and from throughout the United States, serving our Nation overseas.

Mr. President, words cannot adequately express the debt of gratitude that Americans throughout our country feel for the sacrifices made by the brave men and women serving in the Middle East, and by their families. Many of these families are anxiously awaiting the return of loved ones from overseas, while others are grieving the loss of loved ones who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

At this moment, several thousand New Jerseyans are deployed in Iraq and the surrounding region to participate in Operation Iraqi Freedom. They deserve our support and our prayers. The people of my State are honored by their service.

New Jersey, like many other States, has unfortunately experienced the grim realities of war. On march 29, Cpl Michael Edward Curtin became the first New Jersey resident killed in battle in Iraq. Earlier, Sgt James Riley, another New Jerseyan, was captured by Iraqi forces in an ambush near Nasiriyah.

Mr. President, Cpl. Michael Curtin was only 23 when he was killed in a suicide bombing at a checkpoint in Iraq. His parents, Michael and Joan, had to endure the most terrible loss any parent can imagine: the death of a child—their son. They should take comfort, along with his brother, Daniel, and his three sisters, Katherine, Jennifer and Stephanie, that all of New Jersey mourns with them. The family is proud of Michael and knows he did not die in vain.

Mr. President, Michael Curtin graduated from Howell High School in 1998, where he was a standout on the football team. He then worked at the Petro-Packaging Company in Cranford before joining the Army. He was posted with the Army's 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, where he was part of the spearhead that led the invasion in Iraq. Although I did not know him personally, from those who did, he was an impressive and courageous young man—committed to his family, committed to his country.

Mr. President, along with Senator LAUTENBERG, I joined Michael's family, friends and community this morning to

attend his memorial. It was a sad and moving experience. I saw a family deep in mourning. A community deep in mourning. And it was hard not to be overwhelmed by the terrible loss they have endured. The love they have for Michael.

At the same time, through all the sadness and the tears, there also was a certain sense of pride. A well-deserved sense of pride. Because as tragic as their loss is and forever will be, it was a loss that was not in vain. It was a loss fought on behalf of an ideal. It was a loss that reflected Cpl. Curtin's commitment to his community. And his sacrifice on behalf of his country.

That commitment represented the best of America. And his family and friends should know that all Americans share in their grief and honor them for their sacrifice, as well.

Mr. President, while the family and friends of the late Cpl Curtin remain in mourning, the family and friends of Sgt James Riley also are suffering, though not without hope.

Mr. President, Athol Riley describes Sgt Riley, his son, as practical-minded, strong and stubborn. And we pray that these traits will fortify him during his captivity in Iraq. James was with the 507th Maintenance Company where he repaired tanks and serviced Patriot missile batteries for the Army. His unit was ambushed near the Euphrates River and he, along with four other soldiers, were taken captive. I know I speak for all of New Jerseyans when I express our deepest hope for his swift and safe return to New Jersey. We pray for his safe return.

Mr. President, Sgt Riley was born in New Zealand and moved to Pennsauken, a town in South Jersey when he was ten years old. He joined the military immediately after high school and has spent the last thirteen years serving his country. Sgt Riley is a man of many talents. He is known as a science fiction buff and has taught himself to play the guitar. We all hope and pray that he will return to his family very soon.

Mr. President, Cpl Michael Curtin and Sgt James Riley are just two of the outstanding individuals serving in our armed services who have made tremendous sacrifices and paid a tremendous price for their country. All of our troops, and all of their families, deserve the thanks of our entire Nation. I know I join all New Jerseyans in praying for our warriors' continued safety, and for a swift, decisive and successful end to the war.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise today to express my thanks, and the thanks of all the citizens of New Hampshire, to the amazing men and women of our United States Armed Forces, and to our coalition partners. We all are very impressed with the incredible success of our military effort in Iraq, especially the professionalism, discipline, and expertise of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines.

George Washington said, "Discipline is the soul of an army. It makes small

numbers formidable." And truly, our relatively small force has been very, very formidable. In about twenty days, they advanced some five hundred miles, while engaged in combat, and have taken Baghdad. They have fought with great skill and have acted professionally throughout, and they have accomplished this feat, with just slightly over a hundred deaths—that is an extraordinary act of military expertise.

Our reserve forces, the American citizen soldiers, have been major contributors in this effort. Patriots from New Hampshire have served our Nation with honor and distinction from Bunker Hill, to Afghanistan—and now they continue to carry on that tradition, serving in support of our nation's war on terrorism and in support of the coalition's Operation Iraqi Freedom.

While New Hampshire is a small state, over 1,000 members of our Reserves and National Guard have been called to active duty. Those called include: 290 Air National Guardsmen from the 157th Air Refueling Wing; the 260th Air Traffic Control Squadron; the 157th Security Group; and 39 Army National Guardsmen from the 1st Battery of the 172nd Field Artillery; the 114th Public Affairs Detachment; and 526 Army Reservists from the 94th Military Police Company; the 368th Engineer Battalion; the 362nd Public Affairs Detachment; and 167 Marine Reservists from B Company, 1st Battery, 25th Marines; and 13 Navy Reservists from the 4th Marine Division 125th Battery; the Amphibious Construction Battalion 2, Detachment 101; the CINC US Atlantic Fleet, Mobile Ashore Support Group; and the Submarine Support Facility, HQ Detachment 101.

They have left their homes and are serving as military police, engineers, air traffic controllers, pilots, public affairs specialists, and in other specialties, both within the United States, and abroad, in Southwest Asia, Cuba, Kosova, and the Middle East. I especially want to thank our citizen soldiers, their families, their employers—each in their own way, is making a sacrifice for our nation.

We can take tremendous pride in what our military has done, and especially in what our soldiers, marines and special forces have done on the ground, and in the fact that the results have turned out extremely positive. We have freed a people who have been oppressed by an extremely criminal regime that has killed literally tens of thousands of Iraqi people over the years. We are now seeing the people of Iraq suddenly freed, and their reaction to that freedom is so positive, and genuine. They are realizing that finally Saddam Hussein is not going to rule them any longer.

So, many are justifiably excited that we have had success up to this point—but there is still a long way to go in this war. There are many pockets of resistance still to be addressed. But as we move forward toward Tikrit and other parts of Iraq, I would expect that Sad-

dam Hussein's evil regime will continue to collapse. Hopefully we are looking at better days for the Iraqi people.

Abraham Lincoln said, "Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it." Now, 143 years later, another president, George Bush, has also clearly seen our nation's duty—and he has demonstrated the courage to pursue it to a just end.

We are a nation which goes into an event like this for good purposes. I believe the world will see that we have delivered a country into freedom—and provided their people an opportunity for a better life. We can take pride in that as a nation.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise today to offer my sincere thanks to the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families.

Last October, I voted against the resolution authorizing the use of force in Iraq and believe it was right that in recent months the country debated the wisdom of using military action against Iraq at this time. But the military action that is now underway unites us as we focus on our ongoing support for our troops. I am confident in their abilities, and I hope for their safe and quick return to their families. Even more so now that this action has begun, my thoughts, and the thoughts of all Americans, are with our service men and women, and with their families.

The dedicated men and women of our military spend time away from their homes and families in different parts of the country and the world, and are placed into harm's way in order to protect the American people and our way of life. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to all our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and members of the Coast Guard for their selfless service.

These brave individuals have volunteered to place themselves into harm's way on our behalf. Too many of them have made the ultimate sacrifice on the battlefields of Iraq. Many others have been injured. Some have been taken prisoner by our adversaries, while others remain unaccounted for.

We honor the memory of those who have given their lives and pray for their families, we wish a speedy recovery to the injured, call for the prompt and safe release of those taken prisoner, and call for an accurate accounting for those listed as missing.

Each person serving in our military has his or her own story and reasons for enlisting. All of them are brave, dedicated men and women who have made tremendous personal sacrifices on our behalf.

Young men and women who at this time last year were looking forward to their senior proms and high school graduations are now half way across the world protecting our country.

Parents who a year ago worried if their children would make their curfews now fear for their safety in a far off land.

Our thoughts are with these brave young men and women as we see and hear reports of their acts of heroism and patriotism.

One such brave young man is Petty Officer Third Class Scott Wickland of Spooner, WI. This 20-year-old sailor, who is serving aboard the USS *Constellation* in the Persian Gulf, was an integral part of the April 1 rescue of two Navy pilots whose plane ended up in the water after a suspected malfunction while taxiing on *Constellation's* flight deck. It was Petty Officer Wickland's job to be lowered into the water from a rescue helicopter and to swim out to the pilots and make sure they were brought aboard the helicopter and then returned to the carrier. All three returned to the *Constellation* safely.

This story is all the more poignant because Petty Officer Wickland's uncle, his mother Mary's 20-year-old brother, drowned just a year before Scott was born. This accident affected Mary Wickland deeply, and she named her son Scott Daniel in memory of her brother, Daniel Osborne. She also saw to it that all of her children learned how to swim. More than two decades later, Petty Officer Wickland used his swimming skills to save two lives.

Petty Officer Wickland and his fellow military personnel represent the best among us, and serve as examples of the dedication to others to which all of us should aspire.

MAJ Kevin G. Nave, a former resident of Port Washington, WI, was another example of the best whom America has to offer. Major Nave, who was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA, was tragically killed on March 26 in a vehicle accident in Iraq. He leaves behind a wife, two young children, and many other grieving family members and friends.

Major Nave and his family lived in Port Washington for about 3 years prior to his transfer to Camp Pendleton last year. While in Wisconsin, Major Nave served as an inspector instructor with Fox Company, 2nd Battalion of the 24th Marine Combat Infantry unit. In addition, he served his local community as an adviser to the Southeast Wisconsin Young Marines, a coordinator for the Marine Corps Toys for Tots program, a member of the Milwaukee Armed Services Committee, and as a Marine community outreach coordinator for area schools. Friends say that he loved his family, being a marine, and his Harley-Davidson motorcycle. He organized the first local Armed Forces Week Harley Ride last year, and he and his fellow service men and women will be honored following this year's event.

I extend my deepest sympathy to the Nave family and to their friends in Port Washington and elsewhere.

I also extend my best wishes for a speedy recovery to those who have been injured while serving in the Persian Gulf.

LT Terence W. Bacon of Allenton, WI, was one of the members of the 101st Airborne Division's 1st Brigade injured at Camp Pennsylvania, Kuwait, on March 22. He is currently recovering from the wounds he sustained in this incident.

SP Patrick McDermott, who was called to active duty as a member of the Madison-based 1st Battalion of the 147th Aviation HHSc of the Army National Guard, was wounded in the Persian Gulf and is currently recovering.

Marine Cpl Bret Woolhether from Fond du Lac, WI, suffered shrapnel wounds in fighting near Nasiriyah on March 27. Despite his injuries, Corporal Woolhether is eager to return to duty.

The servicemen about whom I have spoken today are just a few examples of the many Wisconsinites and hundreds of thousands of Americans who serve our country in the Armed Forces.

The war in Iraq and the fight against terrorism are turning upside down the lives of Active-Duty, National Guard, and Reserve personnel and their families. These men and women seek to do their duty to our country and honor commitments to their families, and, in the case of the National Guard and Reserves, to their employers. As of April 9, more than 221,000 National Guard and Reserve personnel were serving on active duty, and many more can be expected to be called upon in the future.

Some Wisconsinites are facing the latest in a series of multiple activations and deployments for family members. Others are seeing their loved ones off on their first deployment. All of these families share in the worry and concern about what awaits their relatives and hope, as we do, for their swift and safe return.

We owe it to our military personnel and their families to do everything we can to support them in this difficult time. I will continue to work to ensure that our troops and their families have the resources that they need, both to combat our adversaries and to provide for their families, during this tumultuous time and when they return home.

We hope for a quick and decisive victory for our troops, and look forward to the day when we can welcome them home into the embrace of a grateful Nation.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, over the past few days we have seen dramatic proof that the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein is nearing its end. Like many Americans, I have been thrilled and heartened by the dramatic images of United States troops helping Iraqi citizens tear down statues and paintings of this brutal tyrant. For the first time in their lives, many Iraqis are tasting freedom, and it is beautiful. I am proud of our military and America's commitment to make the people of the Middle East more free.

While our fighting men and women will surely face more difficult days ahead, the end of this war is in sight, and I rise to honor four men who made the ultimate sacrifice one can make for

their country. One of them was a native Oklahoman, and three were adopted Oklahomans by virtue of their service at Fort Sill in Lawton. I consider each of them heroes.

LCpl Thomas Alan Blair was Oklahoma's first known casualty in Operation Iraqi Freedom. This 24-year-old Broken Arrow native was killed on March 23 in a fierce battle near Nasiriyah when an enemy rocket propelled grenade hit his amphibious assault vehicle.

Tommy graduated from Broken Arrow High School in 1997, but had decided long before then that he would be a marine. He chose his career nearly a decade ago when he watched his older brother, SSgt Al Blair, graduate from boot camp. In a way, he followed in his brother's footsteps, but his family will tell you that he would have been a marine no matter what. "He truly wanted to help people," said his brother.

SFC Randall S. Rehn, 36, was a veteran of the first gulf war. His wife and baby daughter expected him to come home to Lawton in August. In his last known contact with his family, Rehn expressed his desire to come home quickly and his hope that "this is the last time I'm leaving my family for so long." Friends testify that Randy's greatest passions in life were people, family, and friends.

Randall Rehn died April 3 amid fierce fighting for control of what is now Baghdad International Airport. He is survived by his wife Raelynn and daughter Megan, of Lawton, as well as his family in Colorado.

Two fellow members of his Multiple Launch Rocket System of C Battery, 3rd Battalion, 13th Field Infantry Regiment from Fort Sill died in the same fight: SGT Todd Robbins and SP Donald Oaks.

One of eight brothers and sisters, Todd Robbins, 33, served in the Navy for the first gulf war before joining the Army. He leaves behind a wife at Fort Sill and a 13-year-old son. "He always wanted to be in the Army," said his father Dale Robbins. "He lived, ate, and slept the Army. He loved it."

Donald Oaks would have turned 21 on April 26. He was a bright young man who was good at math and computers. Also, he enjoyed playing baseball and fishing with his dad. He joined the Army to get money for a college education after his service. His mother Laurie Oaks said, "He was my best friend and was always my hero. He still is." He was engaged to be married.

Tragically, the deaths of SGT Robbins and SP Oaks were said to be a result of friendly fire in the form of coalition bombs. While our military always works to prevent such accidents, they always occur during war fighting.

The fact that their deaths were accidental in no way diminishes their sacrifice. They gave their lives to protect us, our freedoms, and to make people they had never met, half-way around the world, free in their own country.

As reports from Iraq begin to tell the story of Iraqis enjoying their long-

awaited freedom, it is important that we remember men like these who paid for that freedom with their blood.

Before our troops so bravely put their lives on the line, there was no such freedom in Iraq. Iraqi citizens were subject to the cruel and brutal whims of a mad dictator. They lived every moment in the oppressive grip of a regime whose power knew no limits. They lived in fear with rape, torture, and murder always in their minds.

Because LCpl Blair, SFC Rehn, SGT Robbins, and SP Oaks were willing to lay down their lives for freedom, many citizens of Iraq are awaking to a new day, and the world is now a safer place.

As we watch the final days of Saddam Hussein's evil regime unfold, let us never forget that the freedom we enjoy every day in America is bought at a price.

LCpl Blair, SFC Rehn, SGT Robbins, and SP Oaks did not die in vain. They died so that many others could live freely. And for that sacrifice, we are forever indebted. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families today and with the troops who are still fighting to liberate Iraq.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, it is with great sadness, but greater pride, that I rise today to recognize a true warrior and Colorado native who gave of the ultimate sacrifice. SFC Randall Rehn, of Niwot, CO, served with honor and distinction.

Sergeant Rehn was killed during one of the most significant events of this war. His vehicle was destroyed during the fight to take Saddam International Airport. It is because of sacrifices such as Sergeant Rehn's, a tyrant and his oppressive regime will be defeated.

While I grieve for the loss of Sergeant Rehn, my pride and respect abound. I know that Colorado, as Gov. Bill Owens said, "has gained a hero." My prayers go out to the family of this fallen hero and hope they know this country honors Sergeant Rehn's sacrifice and recognizes their loss.

Mr. President, I wish to salute a fallen soldier of the great State of Colorado. Capt. Russell Rippetoe gave the greatest sacrifice in the service of his country and for the freedom of his fellow Americans.

Captain Rippetoe joined an Army ROTC unit while he attended Metro State College in Denver. He entered the Army's elite Ranger unit and served in Afghanistan before being deployed to Iraq. Captain Rippetoe continued his family's proud tradition of serving his country. His father retired as a lieutenant colonel.

I think his family said it best when they said, "Russell loved this nation and America has lost a true American hero." I want to echo that sentiment by saying that Colorado has lost a warrior, a great citizen, and a son.

Mr. President, I also stand today to acknowledge a true hero. Colorado said farewell to one of its own. Marine Cpl Randall Rosacker was laid to rest, as

he requested, in a Colorado veterans graveyard with full military honors.

Corporal Rosacker served this great Nation proudly in Afghanistan and gave the ultimate sacrifice in the war with Iraq. He was killed in a firefight early in the war, but paved the way to future success on the battlefield. His service to the country will always be remembered and appreciated.

Corporal Rosacker was born in Alamosa and still has strong Colorado roots with grandparents and great-grandparents still residing in Colorado. My prayers go out to the family of this fallen hero and hope they know this country honors Corporal Rosacker's sacrifice and recognizes their loss. Today I ask the Senate to recognize this great American as Colorado has.

And I ask we recognize one of the heroes of the war in Iraq. LCpl Thomas Slocum of Thornton, CO, was killed in action while defending the principles of freedom and justice against a brutal dictator's regime.

Corporal Slocum's unit was ambushed by a group of Iraqis who cowardly indicated they were surrendering and then opened fire. He was a brave and patriotic son of Colorado. He will be remembered by all as "proud to be a marine." He believed in what he was doing over there.

Though any loss of life is tragic, we as Americans can hold our heads high because of the sacrifices of our servicemen such as Thomas Slocum. My prayers go out to the family of this fallen hero and hope they know this country honors Corporal Slocum's sacrifice and recognizes their loss.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to SP James Kiehl, who gave his life for his country as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and to express my deepest sympathy to his family. SP Kiehl was part of the 507th Ordnance Maintenance Company, which was ambushed in southern Iraq. While we still don't know for sure what happened that day, U.S. forces later recovered his body during an operation in which they rescued another member of James's company, PFC Jessica Lynch. My prayers are with James's father in Comfort, TX and James's wife, Jill, Des Moines, IA. Since James left their home in Texas to go to war, Jill has been staying with her parents in Iowa where she is expecting their first child. I can only imagine how difficult this time must be for her. Although their child will never meet James, the child can take comfort knowing that SP Kiehl died a hero and a patriot.

James Kiehl will be missed by a great many people who were a part of his life. I know I join all Iowans in expressing my support for Jill in her time of loss. Just as she will keep James's memory alive, it is our duty to recognize and remember James's sacrifice. In fact, I understand that James Kiehl spoke to his father about his military service saying that he did not want to raise his son in a world of terrorism; and so his service has helped to make

us all safer. We must not forget those who have paid the immeasurably high price in the name of freedom. Liberty-loving Americans like James Kiehl deserve our unending grates.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary status of the Senate as we speak?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate has no business pending.

Mr. REID. We hate to admit that is the way it is. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SENATE SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have had in our cloakroom numerous phone calls. I have spoken to a number of Senators. We have military funerals going on around the country people wish to attend. We have two Senators now in attendance at a military funeral. We need to move on with the business of the Senate. We are here, ready to go.

The reason I say this is that throughout the day I will get inquiries from Senators about why can't we move along more quickly. We are going to ask that our member of the Budget Committee go forward with his statement on the budget. If there is no one here from the other side, that would be unfair. But I hope we can get to this soon because if we use all 10 hours on the budget alone, we are not going to finish until approximately 10:15 tonight—I am sorry, 8:15 tonight. There will be a lot of concern about that.

We still have the supplemental. We are going to conference at 10:30. We have a lot of work to do. I am disappointed that we are not on the budget now. Senator CONRAD is ready to go. As I have said two times already in my brief discussion, we are having a lot of inquiries about people wanting to go home for the work period that we have scheduled.

We hope everybody understands that 10 minutes this morning is 10 minutes lost this afternoon. Airplanes need to be made.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I inquire of the distinguished leader, on our side, we are quite anxious to act on the nomination of MG Steven Blum to become the National Guard Commander. All 50 States are involved. The Armed Services Committee unanimously voted him out yesterday.

Mr. REID. We will be happy to look at that. Maybe if we get on the budget—if it is cleared—we can get off the