

We are here today to pay honor and respect to all the men and women who have sacrificed their lives in defense of our country. Our debt to these heroes can never be re-paid, but our gratitude and respect must last forever.

The service members we honor today came from all walks of life, but they share several fundamental qualities. They possessed courage, pride, determination, selflessness, dedication to duty, and integrity – all the qualities needed to serve a cause larger than one's self.

They didn't ask to leave their homes to fight on distant battlefields. Many didn't even volunteer. They didn't go to war because they loved fighting. They were called to be part of something bigger than themselves. They were ordinary people who responded in extraordinary ways in extreme times. They rose to the nation's call because they wanted to protect a nation which has given them, and us, so much.

Since the first shots at Lexington and Concord were fired and our Revolutionary War began, American men and women have been answering the nation's call to duty.

Millions of Americans have fought and died on battlefields here and abroad to defend our freedoms and our way of life. Today our troops continue to make the ultimate sacrifices, and even as we lose troops, more Americans step forward to say, I'm ready to serve. They follow in the footsteps of generations of fine Americans.

Today, people throughout the country will gather together to remember, to honor, and to pay gratitude to those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Our gathering is just one small spark in the flame of pride that burns across the nation today and every day. It's not a lot, but it is one small way we can honor those who have died so that we can live in freedom.

Your presence here today, and that of the people gathering all across America is a tribute to those who have sacrificed their lives for us. It is a way to say we remember. From the Soldiers who gave their lives during the Civil War, for those who fought and died in WWI and WWII, to the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam and today in Iraq and Afghanistan, we remember and honor them all.

Thank you, and God Bless those who have given their lives for the United States of America.