Mr. Speaker, March 18 will mark the 3-year anniversary

of America's involvement in Iraq. Two thousand two hundred ninety-six

American military personnel have now given their lives fighting in

Iraq. Two hundred seventy-seven Americans have also fallen in the line

of duty in Afghanistan.

We owe these great men and women and their families a debt of

gratitude that can never be fully repaid.

Last year I led a bipartisan group of 21 Members of Congress in

reading the names of the fallen into the Congressional Record. We made

a commitment to continue to read the names of our fellow citizens as

long as the fighting continues.

In the words of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, each of those heroes

stands on the unbroken line of patriots who have dared to die that

freedom might live and grow and increase in its blessings.

God bless and keep each of the brave Americans whose memory we honor

today:

Mr. Speaker, President Abraham Lincoln once wrote to the mother of

five fallen soldiers, ``I pray that our heavenly Father may assuage the

anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of

the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have

laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.''

I would also like to thank the brave men and women who continue to

serve our Nation in Iraq, Afghanistan, and throughout the world and

serve with distinction.

Our thoughts, prayers and gratitude are with you and your families at

this time until they return home.