Mr. Speaker, it is with a very

heavy heart that I rise today to express the condolences of a grateful

Nation. I rise today so that this Nation will not forget the service

and sacrifice of those fallen heroes who fight to keep us free. I rise

today because a Black Hawk helicopter was shot down over Iraq; and

Chief Warrant Officer Aaron Weaver,

one of our Nation's finest, died in the crash.

Aaron Weaver was a husband, a father, a brother, and a son; but he

was also a fighter. In Iraq, Aaron was fighting to protect our

country's way of life while fighting for his own life as well. You see,

Aaron Weaver was a cancer survivor. He was still being treated when his

unit was called to duty in Iraq. Aaron had a choice to stay, but he

elected to fight for the country that he loved. Aaron was on the way to

have his blood tested for cancer when the Black Hawk he was riding in

was shot down, killing all on board.

We know well our freedom could not have been won nor our liberty

maintained without those willing to make this ultimate sacrifice. But I

know these are weak words to the grieving family left behind. I pray

the Lord will maintain their memory of Aaron and assuage their pain.

Aaron survived the battles in Mogadishu, he fought cancer, and was

engaged in a great and noble cause in Iraq. Mr. Speaker, please join me

in honoring a true American hero.

Last Saturday, I attended services for Aaron. He lived in Citrus

County, and his father still resides there. The whole family was there.

They are a military family, a very, very devoted military family, and a

very close family who all grieved the loss of Aaron. I would like to

paraphrase his widow's comments. His widow is Nancy Weaver, and she

made a comment that Aaron's life, the loss of his life, will not be in

vain if children in America can live safely; if his children and every

other child in America can live without fear of another attack like 9-

11.

Mr. Speaker, Aaron Weaver truly was a modern American hero, and we

are grateful for his service and the service of all the men and women

who are serving our country.