

This Memorial Day is different from any that we have experienced. While we can not gather together to honor the men and women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country, we can still remember them and give them the honor and respect that they deserve.

Over the last couple of months, all of us have had to sacrifice and stay home in order to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. We have seen the heroic efforts of our first responders and our health care workers. But on this Memorial Day, I would ask you to take a moment to think of the sacrifices made by those who died fighting and defending our liberty.

Some of them volunteered to serve in the Armed Forces, but many of them were drafted and did not have a choice. Whether they were drafted or volunteered, all of them answered the call to duty to protect and serve our nation. These men and women came from all walks of life, but they shared 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 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.

Serving in the Armed Forces calls for many sacrifices: they didn't get to choose how they dressed, they didn't get a choice in what job they wanted to do, and they didn't get a choice in going to war. For those we honor today, they paid the ultimate sacrifice and gave their lives for us.

More than one million 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.

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.

Today, let us remember all those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for our country. 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.

I ask all of you to take a moment to do two important things.

First, say Thank You to all of our first responders and health care workers who are battling the COVID-19 pandemic and saving the lives of many people.

Second, take a moment to say Thank You and remember all those men and women who have given their lives in the Armed Forces to protect and defend our nation.

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