

Mr. Speaker -

I ask unanimous consent to revise and edit the remarks.

I rise today as we approach Veterans' Day to honor the brave men and women who have served our country in uniform. Earlier this year, I met with a group of young Iowans belonging to the Junior Optimists Club – they found a truly unique way to pay tribute to our Iowa veterans.

The Sidey family owned and published the Free Press in Greenfield, Iowa, for over 125 years. The Free Press would publish letters Iowa servicemen sent home to their families over the years. The Junior Optimists I met went through the Sidey's collection of soldier's letters from World War II. They picked out the ones they found most interesting or compelling and read them aloud at a Flag Day celebration that I was fortunate to attend.

I want to share them here with my colleagues in the House of Representatives and enshrine them in the Congressional Record so that we and future generations may always remember the very real and human struggles our men and women face as they leave their loved ones behind to bravely serve our country with dignity, honor, and distinction.

I'd like to read one of these letters written by Lieutenant Kenneth Eatinger of Adair County Iowa...

July 23, 1943

Dear Little Brother:

I hope and trust you will be able to read [this] all by yourself, but if you can't mother will read it to you and you will be able to save it and read it yourself at a later date after you have learned to read better.

Sonny, I know you miss me. I miss you too. It's too bad this war could not have been delayed a few more years so that I could have been with you a while longer and did all the things I planned... But I suppose we must be brave, and put those off now for a while. If I could just get home once more to see you and all

the folks again and have them meet my little wife and baby, I wouldn't ask for anything more.

When you are a little older you will know why your brother had to leave home for so long. You know we have a big country and we have ideals as to how people should live and enjoy the riches of it and how each is born with equal rights to life, freedom and the pursuit of happiness. Unfortunately there are some countries in the world where they do not have these ideals where a boy cannot grow up to be what he wants to be, with no limits on his opportunity to be a great man such as a great statesman or business man, farmer or soldier. Because there are people in other countries who want to change our nation, its ideals, its form of government and way of life, we must leave our homes and families to fight.

When it is all over, your brother is going to bring his little family home to see you and mom and dad and Inez and all the rest. In the meantime, take good care of mom and dad and grow up to be a good boy and a good young man. Study hard when you are in school. Be a good leader in everything good in life. Be a Good American, strive to win, but if you must lose, lose like a gentleman and be a good sport. Don't be a quitter, either in sports or in your business or profession, when you grow up. Get all the education you can. Stay close to mom and follow her advice. Obey her in everything, no matter how you may at times disagree. She knows what is best and will never let you down or lead you away from the right and honorable things of life.

If I don't come back, you will have to be mom and dad's protectors when they get older, because you will be the only one they have. You must grow up to take my place as well as your own in their life and heart.

Last of all, don't forget your brother. Pray for him to come back from this war and if it is God's will that he does not be the kind of boy and man your brother wants you to be.

Kiss mother, dad and Inez for me every night. Good-by for now little brother.

With Love to you and all the family,

Your brother,

These are the words of a brave man. And they ring as true today as they did over seventy years ago when they were written. They embody the ideals of this great nation and the ethos of our armed forces that have fought, sacrificed, and died for our country so that we can remain free.

Next week when we recognize these men and women on Veterans' Day, look them in the eye and say "Thank You." They know all too well what the words in this letter mean. And for their bravery and sacrifices, they deserve our unwavering gratitude and respect. May God bless them. And may God bless these United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.