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The Minneota Area Chamber of Commerce /American Legion gathering on Saturday, March 21st, was an excellent way for our community to come together for a time to celebrate the troops who are deploying in April. It gave me a very good feeling to see the waves of people coming in to the Legion building that day.

I was so very impressed with the confidence that our young people displayed. While they do not want to leave home, they are still upbeat and ready to do the jobs that they have been working so hard to perfect. They are going in as gunners, as maintenance personnel, as truck drivers, as leaders. And they plan to watch each other's back as they move into dangerous territory.

This group will be training in the States for a few weeks before they are sent off to their destination. They will learn even further what is expected of them, and for the first timers, this will all be new information. Many of these folks have made trips before, and they know more what to expect. And they are doing it again without reservations.

If I knew how to salute them, I would. I am so very proud of all these young men and women, who are putting their everyday lives on hold to serve our Country. I will be keeping each one of them in my prayers for their safe return to their family and friends.

It is very hard to understand those who live in this country, and who are willing to burn our flag, or turn their noses at anything that most Americans believe in and stand for. I would invite those folks to move to another country, and then think again about how good it was in America.

We live in a great country, even with our economic problems, for they will eventually turn around. I enjoy all the freedoms we have, and the luxuries we have in our everyday lives.

Yes, I like running water, refrigeration, electricity, our abundance of good food, our homes and our independent way of life. And, it is because of so many young men and women who have stepped out over the years and been willing to serve in our many branches of the military.

Thank you ... for those who have served, and for these newest recruits who are leaving soon for Texas. We appreciate all of you.