

September 11, 2001, was a sad and frightening day in American history, a day on which nearly 3,000 of our fellow Americans lost their lives in terrorist attacks carried out on American soil.

As we mark the ninth anniversary of the “9-11” terrorist attacks, we may remember the shock and sorrow we felt as we saw and heard of the collapse of the World Trade Center towers, the fire raging through the Pentagon, and the wreckage of a commercial airliner which crashed in rural Pennsylvania. But we also saw and heard of unbelievable acts of heroism carried out by first responders who rushed into places of unbelievable danger as others fled, by anonymous individuals who risked their own lives to save others, and by brave, alert passengers who assured that United Flight 93 would not reach its intended target.

It soon became apparent that, while the terrorists may have taken down some buildings, they did not – and could never – take down our spirit, our will or our unity. We responded with determination to defeat the perpetrators of these awful attacks, and with renewed commitment to our freedom and our love for our great nation. Fear was soon replaced by resolve, and shock was soon replaced by pride.

We mourned the victims of the attacks knowing that we could best honor their memories by ridding the world of the scourge of terrorism. We commenced the War on Terror knowing that the fight would be long and hard, and that further sacrifices would be required.

Nine years on, we remain a nation at war. The forces of terrorism and enemies of freedom have suffered crippling losses and have seen their capabilities diminished, but they have not yet been totally defeated.

Since September 11, 2001, more than 5,600 Americans have given their lives for their nation. On this anniversary, please remember all of them, and please keep their families and loved ones in your thoughts and prayers.

Remember also the men and women in uniform who remain deployed overseas in defense of freedom, and who face danger and experience deprivation every day on our behalf. These warfighters receive direct support from civilian and contractor employees – many of them from the Army Sustainment Command – who are deployed forward to combat theaters, and so face similar dangers and deprivations. The people of ASC came through when needed on September 11, 2001, and remain critical to victory in the War on Terror.

While we still face the threat of terrorism, America stands strong and our flag flies tall and proud. Let us mark the anniversary of the terrorist attacks by reflecting on the meaning of heroism and service and sacrifice; by giving thanks to those who give of themselves so that we can enjoy the blessings of freedom; by committing ourselves to building a better world, free of fear and terror, for all people; and by renewing our faith and trust in America and in our nation's founding values. Airborne!

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