

Thirteen years have now passed since that clear September morning when hijacked planes were crashed into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and that hallowed field in Pennsylvania, killing thousands of innocent people and forever changing our lives, our country and the world. During that time, we... the American people, have mourned, we have prayed, we have sought those responsible for this horrible attack and we have brought them to justice. And yet, the memories of those events and the feelings we experienced on that day are still deeply ingrained in our hearts and minds. The details of that day are still as clear as the blue skies were on that terrible day; the confusion, the disbelief, the feelings of outrage, the haunting and horrific images; the tears that we shed for the souls that were lost right before our eyes still dwell inside us. We were reminded that day, that there is great evil in the world, but we were also reminded of something else. Something more powerful... That our neighbor, that the person that we see at work everyday, that the police officers and firefighters in our town, that the person sitting next to you right now, that we are all bound together by a sacred tie. We are Americans. And in the face of great tragedy, at a time of peril and danger, when our lives or our country is threatened... they... our American brothers and sisters will not hesitate to stand up next to us, to come to our aid and fight for us. In the months that followed those attacks on our Country, we acted as one... as one nation, under god, indivisible in order to fight for the liberty and justice of all. Our faith in those words and our love for our fellow Americans became physically real that day and the vulnerability we felt during that one horrible moment in time was replaced by the strength of our pride in being an American; by the courage born of a willingness to fight for a cause greater than our own self interests; by the will of brave men and woman to risk their lives to make sure that justice, freedom and liberty is held in trust, not for just some... but for all. Today, we honor these values and the people that continue to make America great and good. That proud feeling that you had in your heart when our flag was presented a moment ago, was Patriotism. That is the solemn tie that binds you to that person standing next to you, to the police officer, to the firefighter, to the soldier, to the veteran and to the millions of freedom loving people of America. It is proof that today... we are still one! That is the legacy of that September day. So, as we mourn the loss of the men, woman and children whose lives were so senselessly taken from them, as we honor the emergency responders who still bravely and without hesitation put their lives on the line for their fellow Americans and as we honor and pray for our veterans and for the safe return of the valiant soldiers who continue to fight a fierce battle to protect their country and their fellow Americans, let one thing be certain to those that threaten our freedom... let there be no doubt... that today and for all the days that follow, we Americans, we stand together... united as one; One people and one country. God Bless this United States of America, today and all the days that follow...let freedom ring!