

9/11/23 Speech Tech. Sgt. Cristopher Williams, USAF, Speech
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
Anchorage, Alaska

On this sacred day, we mark the 22nd anniversary of the attacks that took place on September 11, 2001. These events are permanently etched into our memories, experiences, and the pages of our nation's history...history that beckons us to fight for a brighter future. History that recalls perilous fights, rocket's glare, and bombs bursting in air. History that allows future generations to know what it means to be the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Every individual who dons the uniform has stood before our nation's flag, their right hand in the air, affirming the words: "I solemnly swear that I will support and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic. Standing ready at a moment's notice to be our nation's sword and shield, its sentry and avenger.

On September 11, we are reminded of this oath to defend the freedom and liberty of our nation's innocent civilians, brave first responders, firefighters, police and medics who summoned the courage to run towards danger and harm.

And so, on this day, we reflect on the hallowed history of the past twenty-two years, made sacred through those who gave their full measure in Korengal Valley, Kandahar, Mazar-i-Sharif, and Kabul. Tested even further in Mosul, Fallujah, Haditha, and Baghdad. Brothers and sisters who fought, who sacrificed, who gave all so that our future could be stronger than our past.

As we pause to reflect, we are reminded that every life is sacred. Every day is a gift, and our tomorrow is never promised. And yet we hope that as we heal from our past, and embrace the present, that together we can move into the future with a deeper sense of meaning and purpose. Let us reflect on that future as we listen to 'America the Beautiful'.