

by Congressman Kevin McCarthy

The anniversary of September 11, 2001 brings back strong emotions for all of us. We all remember where we were and how we received the news that airplanes flown by terrorists had attacked our nation. Recently, I was reading a story of a soldier who had been wounded in Afghanistan by a land mine and as a result had lost one of his legs. He is quoted as saying, "I want to get back and do what I was sent to Afghanistan to do in 2007 - take the fight to the Taliban." His determination and resolve are both encouraging and challenging to us all. Local soldiers like Evan Morgan who was seriously injured during his second tour in Iraq or Ricardo Ruiz who just returned from abroad are reminders to us all of the bravery and courage of the men and women that defend our nation. Our memories of the attacks of September of 11th, now eight years later, should strengthen our nation's resolve to support our present day war fighters and their families, continue to care for our veterans and continue the fight against extremism that threatens our way of life.

In August, I joined our new Ranking Member on the House Armed Services Committee, Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon (CA-25) to tour our facilities at China Lake. We learned first hand about the work being done at China Lake that directly supports our men and women in uniform serving overseas, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan. We met with folks at China Lake who are supporting anti-improvised explosive device research in order to save lives on the front lines. We talked to folks in the Navy going through Explosive Ordnance Disposal training - sailors who have signed up to do a dangerous job in order to protect others. I am privileged to represent and know these men and women, and their work, on a daily basis, reminds us that freedom is not free.

As we reflect eight years later we remember those who have served and are serving now to protect us and keep us free. We must continue to support our sons and daughters as they risk their lives daily. Future challenges remain - more time and resources will be needed to protect our country. The road ahead will be difficult, but we cannot waiver our support for those who serve us now. Let our memories strengthen our resolve, and let us continue this fight against evil that threatens our country and all those who love freedom. We will succeed as we seek to defeat those who oppose our way of life, government, democracy and freedom.