This past Sunday was the 10th anniversary of the horrendous attacks on this country on Sept. 11, 2001.

The memories of that day loom as large and fresh as if it happened yesterday. Most, if not all of us, remember exactly where we were and what we were doing when the announcement came over the airwaves about this senseless, brutal act of terrorism.

To say it changed our lives significantly would be one of the greatest understatements of modern times.

And it did change our lives... in some instances, for the better… we became more focused on what it meant to be an American and that drew us closer in those terrible weeks and months that followed.

In some instances, it changed us for the worst. It hit upon a nerve of distrust and an attitude that we'll go it alone and the heck with everyone else.

What stands out most for me is the vast numbers of people, from New York firemen and policemen to those who aboard those planes, who risked their lives trying to save as many of innocent victims as they could.

Valiant, yes… but that's the code of ethics for so many of these unsung heroes live by as they go about their daily lives, willing to risk their lives to save another.

We know from first hand here in Iron County how many times a firefighters or police officers put their own lives at risk to save others.

On Sept. 11, 2001, that code of ethics was carried out with no thought of self safety, and they stayed on the job at Ground Zero for an immeasurable amount of time. Unfortunately, their acts of heroism seem to have faded in the minds of some of our elected officials who won't acknowledge the health issues many of these heroes are now dealing with.

Sept. 11, 2001, was a day of utter chaos in New York City, in Washington, D.C., and in the lives of everyone who either lost someone close to them, or for those of us who lost a our sense of security.

No one knew what had happened or why, who or what was responsible and, most of all, why. Why would anyone in his or her right mind set about to murder so many innocents?

It was something we never dreamed could possible happen, but it did, and once the numbness wore off and the answers began to surface, we would never be the same again.

It didn't take long for all of us to know the name Osama bin Laden or recognize his face, or to learn that we in this country were now a marked target by a group of extremists known as Al-Qaeda.

It's been 10 years since that day and the empty space in the city only slightly compares to the empty space we've all endured these past years.

Bin Laden is no longer and Al-Qaeda, we're told, is losing ground. But it's the heroes we should always remember… the ones who lost their lives that day and the hundreds of men and women who risked their lives in service to God and country.

--Allyce Westphal