

## 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>

Where were you when the Towers fell? This has been a question that has been asked many times in the past 20 years. 20 years, seems like yesterday, I was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade English class, and my Science teacher, Mr. Veeseey, came into the room and he was ghost white and told us the news. Those of us who were alive for this day, much like those who were alive when Pearl Harbor was attacked or JFK was killed, remember exactly where they we were when we heard the news. The news that American Airlines Flight 11, was flown into the North Tower of the World Trade Center, and when United Airlines Flight 175 was flown into the South Tower 17 minutes later. We then watched in horror as American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon. A fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93 was hijacked and crashed into a field, killing all on board, in Pennsylvania after passengers realized the intent of the hijackers and attempted to retake the plane. The casualties for these attacks were almost 3,000 killed, 6,000 injured and with countless others effected by long term diseases from rescue operations.

The 9/11 Terrorist Attacks changed the landscape of America as we know it. I remember 9/12 as vividly as I remember 9/11. My father, mother, brother, sister and I were at a local Korean War monument with a group of other people living in our neighborhood. All of us with American Flags, wearing Red, White or Blue, singing the National Anthem or chanting USA, and a local police officer driving by with sirens and lights on to show support. This is a far cry from just two years earlier when I was being bullied for my Patriotic views and support of my father, a Marine, and my grandfather, a Soldier. We all have these memories, but it is important for us to remember them, especially in today's day in age where Patriotic themes are under attack by many in popular culture. It is important to remember that 9/11 caused many of my generation to join the military or to become a police officer or firefighter, whose bravery was center stage on that horrific day. Of the casualties that day there were 343 firefighters, 72 police officers, 55 military personnel, 8 EMTs and 1 fire patrolmen (these 9 were part of privately funded emergency response teams thus not included in the FDNYs 343 count) that lost their lives during the attacks. Their bravery and sacrifice saved countless lives and inspired millions of Americans.

As we close a chapter in the Global War on Terror and pull forces out of Afghanistan, we must resolve that these brave men and women are remembered and that their sacrifices were not in vain. We owe it to those who lost their lives on that horrible day, or the days that followed, to live our best lives in honor of them: to men and women like Officer John Perry, NYPD, 11 Sep 2001 New York City; Firefighter Leon Smith Jr, FDNY, 11 Sep 2001 New York City; John P. O'Neill, CWO4 William Ruth, USA, 11 Sep 2001 Washington DC; LCpl David Espinoza, USMC, 26 Aug 2021 Kabul, Afghanistan, Sgt. Nicole Gee, USMC, 26 Aug 2021 Kabul, Afghanistan, SSgt. Darin Hoover, USMC, 26 Aug 2021 Kabul, Afghanistan, SSgt Ryan Knauss, USA, 26 Aug 2021 Kabul, Afghanistan, Cpl. Hunter Lopez, USMC 26 Aug 2021 Kabul, Afghanistan, LCpl. Rylee McCollum, USMC, 26 Aug 2021 Kabul, Afghanistan, LCpl. Dylan Merola, USMC, 26 Aug 2021 Kabul, Afghanistan, LCpl, Kareem Nikoui, USMC 26 Aug 2021 Kabul, Afghanistan, Cpl. Daegan Page, USMC, 26 Aug 2021 Kabul, Afghanistan, Sgt. Johanny Rosario, USMC, 26 Aug 2021 Kabul, Afghanistan, Cpl. Humberto Sanchez, USMC, 26 Aug 2021 Kabul, Afghanistan, LCpl. Jared Schmitz, USMC, 26 Aug 2021 Kabul, Afghanistan, and HM3 Max Soviak, USN, 26 Aug 2021 Kabul, Afghanistan,

Twenty years ago, the 9/11 Terror Attacks helped shape how we have viewed Patriotism for these past two decades, an idea that has been attacked over the last couple of years. The valuable lessons we have learned as a country in the days and years after the attacks we must pass on to our

communities and more importantly our children. We need to make sure that the next generations of Americans know of the sacrifices made by these brave men and women. This way our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren will know why we have a deep love for this country, and by doing this, our great country will flourish for generations to come. I have seen a fitting phrase over the past few months that I wish to leave you all with, "Live like its 9/12" meaning, think back to the Patriotism and love of country we all felt on 9/12 and that every house had an American flag flying and every person living here, regardless of race, religion, political affiliation, sexual preference, or gender, was openly proud to be an American, proud of our flag, our anthem and all symbols that represented our freedom. So Brothers, I challenge you all, Live like its 9/12.

In Fraternity Charity and Loyalty,

Ben Frail, PDC

National Patriotic Instructor