



Flight 93 Volunteer Newsletter

January 2009

Volunteer Reflections from Pentagon Memorial

On Saturday November 8, 2008 I was honored to be able to visit the Memorial built outside the Pentagon to remember all those who lost their lives when Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon that terrible day, September 11, 2001. I came away from our time with Mr. James Laychak, who met us and gave us an introduction and explanation of the site, informed and moved. His presentation gave me a renewed realization of how important it is to have someone available to interpret what visitors to the memorials sites are seeing.

Mr. Laychak explained that the height of the wall surrounding the inner portion of the memorial represented the ages of those who perished that day, in a visual way, increasing inch by inch for each year of life. The benches were set, as well as a time line, beginning with the youngest, aged 3, at the entrance to the memorial and ending with the oldest. Additionally all those who perished on that terrible day who were the same age have benches on the respective line for their birth year.

The site includes lighted benches which hover over pools of water, one representing each of the 184 persons who died there on September 11, 2001. The benches are situated so that the names of those who were inside the Pentagon can be read as you face the Pentagon Building and the names of those who were aboard Flight 77 can be read as you face away from the building. Each bench had the name of one person and if they had family members along with them that day they are included at the edge of the bench.

There were several young children on this flight. I felt especially drawn to their benches and more upset as I approached their time line. The reality that these terrorist acts are not committed by warriors but by brutal individuals without regard to life. There

were several other clusters of people at the memorial that day, besides the Ambassadors from the Flight 93 National Memorial, but did not have the privilege of having someone explain what the design of the memorial meant. Again, this made me realize how much they were missing by not having a guide, a person, pamphlet or written explanation to let them know the significant facts of the design of the memorial. I felt compelled to impart all that I knew so they could understand the deeper meaning of all that surrounded them. My husband Bob, joked: (you can take the Ambassador off-site, but once an Ambassador, always an Ambassador.) I felt that even though my own understanding was quite new about this memorial, I was compelled to transmit that information to those who had as much a right to know as I did. I needed them to understand and appreciate the design of the memorial. It just felt right. I noticed that Bob and a few others were imparting that information as well.

Bob, myself and a few others visited the Holocaust Memorial during our trip. It was an interesting but

troubling experience. I will never understand how 'inhuman' we humans can be. My education did not stop there. After we toured a building or two at the Smithsonian we proceeded across the block to join the group where I was able to witness a large group several blocks long, who were peacefully, though powerfully marching for gay rights. However, a sudden cloud burst soon revealed that they were not all, totally committed to the cause, as most of the group disbanded to find shelter.

It was a long, beautiful, warm, autumn day. It was as well, an emotional day and a day that I am thankful to have as one of my memories. *-Pam Way*

The morning of our Pentagon trip dawned cloudy and cool. The bus trip to Washington was filled with fellowship with the other Ambassadors and NPS staff. We viewed the video "A Nation Remembers" about the Pentagon attack and the building of the Pentagon Memorial. We arrived at the Pentagon and were introduced to Mr. James Laychak, President and Chairman of the Board of the Pentagon Memorial Fund. Mr. Laychak lost his brother, David, in the attack. We were given a personalized and

informative tour of the Memorial by Mr. Laychak. As soon as we stepped onto the Memorial the sun came out from behind the clouds as if to welcome us to this hallowed ground. Mr. Laychak explained how each of the 184 cantilever benches, one for each of the victims, 59 on Flight 77 and 125 in the Pentagon, were set on age lines, aligned with the flight path of Flight 77, according to the age of each victim starting with the



Flight 93 volunteers walk through the Pentagon Memorial

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Winter Calendar:

- Jan. 1** New Years Day (NPS office closed)
- Jan. 19** MLK Jr. Day (NPS office closed)
- Feb. 7** Commission/Task Force Meeting- 10 AM
Somerset County Courthouse

Flight 93 National Memorial Founding Sponsors

The Flight 93 National Memorial Campaign under the leadership of the National Park Foundation has recently distributed Founding Sponsor membership cards. An example card is pictured below. These cards do not entitle the card carrier to any extra benefits. If a visitor shows their card to you at the Memorial or office, you're welcome to thank them for their support of the project.



Winter Weather Traveling

NP Safe

If traveling in winter weather, be sure to carry a winter-survival kit in your car that contains first-aid supplies, blankets, a compass, a flash light with extra batteries, flares, a shovel and quick-energy foods such as dried fruits and nuts. Also take a bag of salt, sand or cat litter to use for traction in case your car gets stuck in ice or snow. If you are driving in rain, ice or snow, be sure to increase your following distance.

REMEMBER: Always buckle your seat belts and use child-safety restraints when appropriate.

Courtesy of InsideNPS

Holiday Thanks



Each year the NPS typically closes many sites for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years, holidays which are posted at Flight 93 without staffing. Untypical for many parks is a volunteer group willing to take two hours of their holiday to share with the public. To the volunteers who this year and over the past several have remembered the passengers and crew by sharing the Flight 93 story with visitors over the holiday season, thank you! You have made the visitor experience at Flight 93 all the more meaningful to many, many, visitors.

Ambassador Advisory Team Meeting Summary

On Thursday, December 11th five Ambassadors assembled in Shanksville to discuss training ideas for the 2009 season. The top ideas for 2009 included the release of recently declassified FBI documents, a first responder panel session and a site tour/or session with Paul Murdoch dependent on Paul's next visit to Somerset. A list of all the ideas presented at the meeting is available at the park office for all volunteers interested.

The NPS will use the recommendations from the meeting when selecting the upcoming trainings for the new year. We are currently working to release the full schedule of training opportunities for the newsletter in February.

Pentagon Reflections, (Cont.)

youngest, 3 year old Dana Falkensberg to the oldest, 71 year old John D. Yamincky. Each Memorial bench had a reflective, illuminated constantly rippling pool of water under it. I often visit the website, www.pentagonmemorial.net to view and remember the many details of the Memorial that Mr. Laychack so proudly and solemnly shared with us. Two of the most touching moments of my personal tour of the Memorial came when I walked across the space separating the age lines of the 3 children's benches and the next in age of 21 and seeing the children's benches. Then seeing Mr. Laychack approach his Brother David's bench, touch it, look at the Pentagon and then walk off of the

Memorial.

We were then dropped off at our chosen locations in Washington. Between raindrops I visited the Air and Space Museum and watched a Demonstration march originate at the Capitol Building and proceed down the length of the Mall with Police escort. I then turned and looked at the Capitol building and realized that this is the building Our Heroes probably saved along with many lives.

The bus ride back to Shanksville contained a dinner stop, rest and relaxation and watching a movie. I secretly listened to "Oldies Music" on my MP3 player. We arrived in Shanksville, bid farewell to each other and our bus driver and I drove home with the memories and these reflections of the day.

Thank you to Donna, the NPS staff and my fellow Ambassadors for a very memorable day.

-Barry D. Smith



Overheard at the Memorial

This note was recently sent by a person from Florida:

I just want to say thank you to the family members of the crew and passengers on flight 93. I know many of you encouraged your loved ones to fight for our safety and to help overtake the plane. I know that took a lot of courage from not only them, but also for you, their family members. I am so grateful for what was done for us. You are all in our prayers.