

Lake Stevens remembers 9/11

BY PAM STEVENS | MANAGING EDITOR

It was a beautiful, sunny morning in September only 10 short years ago when the world as we knew it then came to a screeching halt as two commercial jetliners plowed into the Twin Towers in New York.

Soon two more commercial planes were heading towards Washington D.C. where one hit the Pentagon and the other was taken over by passengers and soon dropped into a field in Pennsylvania.

Thousands of heroes came to life that day and many of them also lost their lives as well.

Although these terrible events took place on the east coast, we here in Lake Stevens have felt the reverberations of that event over the past decade.

On a day eerily similar to the one only ten short years ago, American Legion Post 181 in Lake Stevens held a memorial at the downtown War Memorial in remembrance of those who died

at the hands of the terrorists who took over those planes.

Flags were lowered to half-mast as Mayor Vern Little, Lake Stevens Police Chief Randy Celori and Lake Stevens Fire Marshal Robert Marshall spoke to the crowd who gathered to remember together.

"I'll never forget that day," Little said.

He told how he had spoken to a Lake Stevens first responder earlier that morning. This responder was one of the hundreds of men and women from around the country who traveled to New York to help in the recovery efforts. His memories of 9/11 are different than most of us here.

"Until you really smell it, you don't really understand," he told Little.

"Let us never forget those people who lost their lives, those who responded there and those who responded here in Lake Stevens," Little said.

Police Chief Randy Celori stepped up to the podium and



Community members gather at the Downtown War Memorial in remembrance of those who died on 9/11 ten years ago.

Photo by Pam Stevens

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reminded us of how we united as a country that day. He reminded us to continue to preserve our freedom and to stand united as a country, community and as families.

"Today we are here to honor those who died in the attack on our freedom," he said. "It is our responsibility to ensure that patriotism is instilled in our families and children. United we stand, together we will prevail."

In front of those who were speaking sat three helmets and sets of boots, one each representing the police, firefighters and military men and women who have lost their lives in service.

"We did not know these heroes personally but we know them in spirit," Marshall said. "We share a connection with these men and we should honor them."

He went on to explain that since that day our eyes have been opened to the very real threat against Americans.

"On September 11 our culture, our nation, our systems were shocked to the core."

Because of this shock to the systems we previously had in place, Assistance to Firefighters grants were established to help equip and train first responders in fire departments across the country.

Lake Stevens Fire has received many of these grants which have been used to purchase self contained breathing apparatus, 800 megahertz radios and to promote public education and prevention.

The crowd then stood as a Lake Stevens Firefighter finished with the tradition of the ringing of the bell. In memory of all who died during the attacks on September 11, 2001 the bell is rung five times in series of fives (5 x 5 x 5 x 5 x 5).

Multiplied out this equals 3,125, a number close to the number of people who died as a result of the attacks.

"May we never forget the legacy of those who have gone before us," Marshall said.