



DMORT NATIONAL NEWS

Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team

SEPTEMBER 11, 2011 MEMORIAL EDITION

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On September 11, 2011 many DMORT team members spent the day remembering those lives lost on that tragic day. The following stories are among the ways our friends spent the day attending memorial dedications around the country:



September 11, 2011
10th Anniversary Ceremony
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
New York City
By: Gerianne B. Kenny
DMORT Region II

During the months following the tragedy on Sept. 11, 2001 countless members of DMORTs from around the country assisted the OCME in NY with the daunting task of helping identify the remains of those lost that day. With 2011 being the 10th anniversary of the attacks, DMORT received an invitation from **Dr. Hirsch** from the OCME to share in their ceremony this year. The afternoon began at the Medical Examiners new Forensic Biology Lab where we were greeted by Dr. Hirsch and given a briefing by Christian Crowder, Dep. Director of Forensic Anthropology on what has been happening with the ongoing processing of 9-11 remains since 2001. There have been tireless efforts made by the Medical Examiner to investigate any reports of possible human remains to include anthropological excavations of reported areas, and going back over layers of earth and debris. With the advances over the last several years in DNA technology, they have increased the number of profiles achieved, and some additional identifications have also been successfully made. It is truly amazing how they have gone back over an enormous amount of possible evidence and debris and are continuing to do so to this day in an effort to find any additional ID's that can possibly be made.

Following the briefing, we walked over to their Chapel at Memorial Park on 30th Street, which is where the original trailers were kept in the months following 9-11. The chapel was built to respectfully shelter the remains still in their care. An incident several years later destroyed the chapel. It has since been replaced, and will remain a place of remembrance and reverence for not only the staff, but for some of the families who visit and attend the service, in hopes that their loved ones who are still unidentified may be resting there.

The service was conducted by **Reverend Charles Flood**, Disaster Chaplain for the OCME. As we gathered to pray, honor and remember the sacred remains of those enshrined in within the chapel, we also remembered the souls of those who died in the shadow of the Pentagon, and the lonely field in Pennsylvania. We recalled those who serve in the medical arts, who transport the dead, share in the sorrow of the loved ones, who work to identify those who have died and those who stand by without fear and extend their compassion to others. He also shared a quote from a letter Canadian politician Jack Layton wrote shortly before his death in August which reminds us that: "My friends, love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world."

After the chapel service, Region II Commander **Kevin Costigan** informed us that we were granted the honor of receiving a special pass for DMORT to be able to see the 9-11 Memorial at Ground Zero on Monday. The Memorial opened to the families on Sept. 11th and can only be visited by special pass for the next few months. Several members were able to stay the extra day which made the trip that much more special for those who were able to share it with us. The

pools of the Memorial are built on the “footprints” of the towers. The names of those who perished at the towers, the Pentagon, Flt. 11, Flt. 93, Flt. 77, Flt. 175, and those from the terrorist attack at the towers in 1993 are inscribed in bronze in a special arrangement around the two pools.

It was indeed an honor to be able to attend the service and return the following day to see the Memorial. I joined DMORT right after Sept. 11th, but felt it was important to remember those who perished, especially those who are still unidentified. I also wanted to acknowledge and honor my fellow teammates who spent weeks and months attempting to accomplish the impossible task of trying to make the identifications so the victims could be returned to the families. It was truly a special day of remembrance of another day that will live in infamy in our country’s history.



Barb Salisbury (Region II) John Frasco (Region VII) and Pete Valentin (WMD)



Marnie Sperling (Region II) and Gerianne Kenny (Region II)



Pete Valentin (WMD), Marnie Sperling (Region II), Gerianne Kenny (Region II) and Paul Verdino (Region II)

September 11, 2011
10th Anniversary Ceremony
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
New York City

By: Ed Mockler
Family Assistance Center Team

On Sunday, September 11, 2011, the NYC Medical Examiner's Office invited DMORT members to be part of a memorial service commemorating the 10-year anniversary.

The following is a brief summary and reflection on the day's events:

My wife and I arrived at the OCME's DNA building on 26th St. in Manhattan at 12:30 pm to meet up with the rest of the DMORT members and other attendees. Several regions were represented, along with yours truly from FACT, with one of our newest members, **Mary-Ann Mulawka**, who also works in that building.

Following the security/admittance procedure and brief mingling in the break area, we moved to the auditorium for an overview of NYC OCME 9/11 operations from Sept 11, 2001 to the present, which was given by the lead forensic anthropologist for that office. The amount of painstaking recovery of remains that is still ongoing is hard to believe. Attention to detail,

respect for the PHRs (Possible Human Remains) and the need for expediency in the midst of continuing construction is incredible. The sifting process alone still amazes me (given what I witnessed at the Staten Island landfill back in 2001).

After the overview, we all walked the 4 blocks to Memorial Park on 30th St. across the street from the Medical Examiner's office. While not my first time returning there, it still affects me when I think about how it began, what it grew into, and what it is today . . . a temporary repository for those who perished and are awaiting final entombment in the permanent memorial downtown at Ground Zero. (Despite Mayor Bloomberg's urging to the contrary, it will always be Ground Zero to me).

The service began at approximately 2:00 pm, and lasted about 30 minutes. Two nondenominational clergy recited prayers and reflections, and offered the opportunity for anyone present to mention specific persons who were killed that day. Several families who lost loved ones were also in attendance, and (at least to me) seemed to acknowledge and even smile at us as they entered and exited the chapel. It felt like a silent, brief, "thank you" passed between us. That millisecond of eye contact is why I / we do what we do. Nothing said. Nothing needed to be said.

After the service – and for those who couldn't fit inside during the program – people were free to remain in the chapel to visit.

The afternoon ended with folks heading to various local restaurants to catch up with friends and team members, perhaps not seen since "back then."

Despite the heightened security alert and presence in the city, the more notable event at Ground Zero and the overall feeling of "can you believe it's been 10 years?", that Sunday, there was no other place I would have rather been than with friends at Memorial Park. I thank Meg for accompanying me to share the experience and to meet those with whom I've been deployed in the past, and may be deployed with in the future.



Ed Mockler and Mary Ann Mulawka



Flight 93 Memorial Dedication

*By: Vicki Atchley
DMORT Region VI*

United Flight 93 Memorial Dedication took place on September 10, 2011... This is the first time I have ever re-visited a site of a deployment. I had mixed feelings about attending, but knew if there was one event I would attend, this would be the one. The day started off dark, rainy and dreary and by the time we reached the Memorial, it was overcast. Eventually the sun did shine.

President Bush greeted the audience as if he were talking to each person individually; you could feel his emotion and sincerity in every word. President Clinton's charisma provided a sense of calmness and steadfastness over the attendees. Sarah McLachlan's piano and voice surrounded you with warmth and comfort. I cried, I sobbed, I laughed, I smiled; but most of all I realized how lucky I am.



Flight 93 Memorial Dedication

*By: Cindy Mathews
DMORT Region VI
Administrative Officer*

I wish I could express the emotions I felt during the Flight 93 Memorial Weekend. I met with Don Bloom at Seven Springs Resort for dinner on Friday evening, September 9th. Seeing him and being at the location of the Family Assistance Center brought back a flood of memories. When we arrived in Shanksville, Pennsylvania in 2001, and I found Don Bloom was already there, the feeling of anxiety simply disappeared, since I knew that with him, we could get the computer end of the mission up and ready in no time. Don, Robyne Bohn and I shared many tears over those few days. And in the midst of this awful tragedy, we did find a peace that was much needed at Seven Springs Resort.

First of all, it was beautiful. The mountainsides, the smell of pines and cool temperatures were very calming. Most of the victims' family members made comments on the peace they felt there. In returning to this location, I found the same feeling ten years later, even though we had about a 2 - 3 hour wait in bumper to bumper traffic on the roads leading to the location for the Memorial. Sarah MacLachlan sang her two most famous songs..."In the Arms of the Angels" and "I Will Remember You". They were pure and flawless, causing both goose bumps and tears. When President Bush stood to walk to the podium, the standing ovation and applause was overwhelming. He was compassionate and thoughtful, and gave you that glimpse of ten years ago once again. President Clinton and Vice President Biden also did a tremendous job in their speeches.

In all my years of being a part of DMORT, this was the first time I have ever returned to the site of a deployment, and seeing the family members after all of these years drove home the meaning of us being there for them. We were not able to mingle, as they were secured to a place of their own, but we were just to the left of that area. I did get to speak to a few of them and they were doing well.

On Saturday night, several of us met up at Seven Springs for dinner and it was just the best.

Paul Sledzik, I miss you not being in DMORT. Our work together for Flight 93 was a profound experience.

Vicki Atchley, what a blessing it was when they could finally fly you in. You worked like a trojan and made me so proud.

Kim Plunk, I remember you were just chompin' at the bit to get to New York City.

Robyne Bohn....we have worked many hours together and I can truly say that no one demonstrates the compassion that you do and I know it comes from the heart.

Don Bloom, my hero.....there is only one other person that comes close. If I were stranded in the middle of a deployment and could only ask for a few folks, you would be the first!

As we all know, it is the people who make this thing work. It is the dedication of all of us that makes this work so well. It is the challenge of leaving home and not knowing what we are truly facing until we arrive that keeps us on our toes. And it is our families back home that deserve the most thanks. Until we all meet again, whether at a training or on a deployment, may you all be safe, happy, and healthy.



Don Bloom, Vicki Atchley and Cindy Mathews

DMORT Region III

DMORT III, DMORT FACT, and DMORT personnel from other regions were deployed to Shanksville, Pennsylvania, in the days following September 11, 2001. They successfully identified all 40 passengers and crew members of United Airlines Flight 93.

DMORT III personnel were invited guests of the National Park Service at the dedication of the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville, on September 10, 2011.

This photo, taken at the Flight 93 Memorial Wall, features the following DMORT III team members:



Top row, from left to right: Jack Ingle (Deputy Commander), John McGuire (Deputy Commander), Dale Fox (Mortuary Officer), Frank George (Mortuary Officer), John Semmel (Mortuary Officer), Joyce Williams (Nurse), John Hosage (Forensic Dentist), Tracy Doran (Medico-Legal Investigator), Todd Wolfe (Administrative Officer), Dave McBride (X-Ray Technologist), Dave Quain (Medico-Legal Investigator), Ray Juriga (Forensic Dentist), Kathy Franklin (X-Ray Technologist), Michael Cerveris (Forensic Dentist), Chuck McWilliam (Mortuary Officer), Glenda Snook (X-Ray Technologist), Patrick Murray (Training Officer)

Bottom row, from left to right: Patricia Kauffman (Commander), Greg Shanko (Mortuary Officer), Alice Moore-Powell (Forensic Dentist), Charlie Beall (Forensic Dentist), Bryan Allison (Mortuary Officer), John Carson (Deputy Commander), Ellen Grimes (Medico-Legal Investigator), Lisa Slawianowski (Medico-Legal Investigator), Kathy Davies (Dental Assistant), Michael Kaner (Forensic Dentist)

Additional DMORT personnel who attended the dedication, but are not pictured, included **Don Bloom**, Deputy Commander (FACT), **Cindy Mathews**, Administrative Officer (DMORT VI), and **Vicky Atchley**, Training Officer (DMORT VI).

September 11, 2011
Ridgewood Cemetery
Des Plaines, Illinois

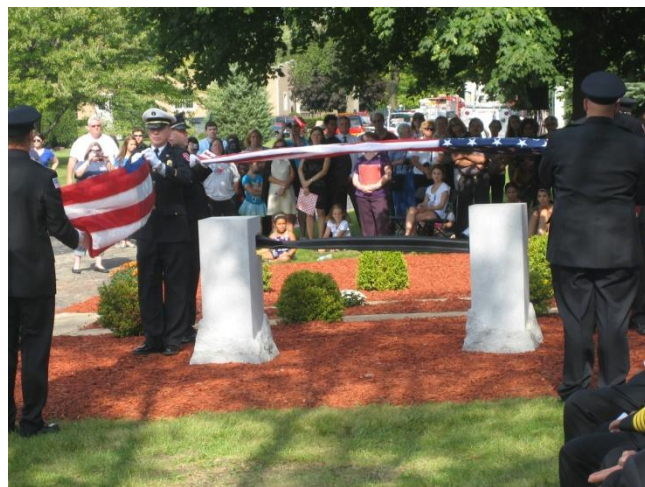
By: Rick Lohrstorfer
DMORT Region V

In 2002, the Alderwoods Group (the second largest owner of funeral homes and cemeteries) made a commitment to have a permanent memorial to the events of September 11, 2001 at every cemetery they owned. **Rick Lohrstorfer** (DMORT Region V), a manager with Alderwoods, was chosen to lead a team to design and develop the memorials in the Chicago land area. Rick was the only funeral director and DMORT member from Chicago to go to New York after the events of September 11, 2001. The memorial was completed in time for the one year anniversary. Rick spoke at most of the dedications and was very involved with the memorial at Ridgewood Cemetery in Des Plaines, Illinois. At the same time, the Maine Township Fire Dept also became involved with the memorial site at Ridgewood.

In 2010, Rick's daughter Julie, a manager at the time with Ridgewood, partnered with the Maine Township Fire Dept to apply for a piece from the towers to be part of the permanent memorial at Ridgewood Cemetery. This spring, they were notified that a piece from the towers would be sent and would arrive in time to be dedicated at the 10 year anniversary program. The memorial stands as a tribute to those who lost their lives on that horrific day, their families and all those who responded to the events that will never be forgotten. Along with the beam, which is held up by 2 towers, the site has the flags from New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, DC. There are also flags representing police, fire and EMS. In the center of the memorial is a monument dedicated to "those who gave all." Rick and his daughter Julie welcomed DMORT members **Dr. Sanford Block, Dr. Jack Horbal** and **Dr. Terry Swanson**. Media and dignitaries from surrounding communities joined firefighters, police and EMS in dedicating the piece at the memorial.



Original Ridgewood 9/11 Memorial Monument



10 year anniversary Ridgewood Memorial Monument



Rick Lohrstorfer speaks at the 9/11 Ridgewood Memorial Service



DMORT Region V team members: Terry Swanson, Sandy Block, Rick Lohrstorfer and Jack Horbal

David Williams (DMORT Region V) attended a memorial service at The Old Virginia Brick Company in Salem, Virginia. The two beams in the photo supported floors 33-36 in one of the two Towers. They are part of the permanent memorial to the victims of 9/11.



Don Simpson (DMORT Region V) attended a 9/11 Memorial in Cross Pointe Trinity Church in Evansville, Indiana. The flag used at the church was the flag that was flown in the DMORT camp in Haiti following the devastating earthquake. A flag was also displayed in the lobby of the church. This was the flag from Ground Zero following September 11, 2001.

He also attended a parade in Fort Branch, Indiana on September 11, 2011. The flag in the parade was the one from Ground Zero. The parade organizer told the Boy Scouts this flag was the most important piece in the parade. The parade watchers all stood as the flag passed.



9/11 Memorial Cross Pointe Trinity Church in Evansville, Indiana



Don Simpson (Region V) was recognized by University of Southern Indiana as a responder to 9/11



Parade in Fort Branch, Indiana

September 11, 2011

By Victor Kolch

DMORT Region V

As a hospital chaplain, I often get asked to fill in to conduct worship services at area churches who are without a pastor or if the pastor is on vacation. Yesterday (September 11), I filled in at a local country church which just so happened to plan its 9/11 memorial service outside in the parking lot. It was to celebrate a church picnic on what many churches call Rally Day, the start of a new Sunday school year. As you might expect, the church also wanted to honor September 11th. At the close of the service, the small men's choir wanted to lead the congregation in singing the Star Spangled Banner. At exactly the same time as the last words of the song were being sung, "land of the free and home of the brave", 2 A-10s banked left right over the church (probably on their way back to the nearby Air Guard Base). You could feel the

awesome power of the A-10s and sense the goose bumps of all attending because the timing couldn't have been better. I'm not that good, so we all knew it was a "God Thing!"

September 11, 2011

***By: Jim Offrink
DMORT Region V***

On September 11, 2011, at Hill Funeral Home in Grand Blanc, Michigan, I spoke at a memorial service given by a group of SCI funeral homes. As there were several 9/11 memorials going on at the same time, I was impressed that the funeral directors and their spouses showed up in force and were very attentive to my thoughts. Sometimes we forget that some of the more stressed groups in these events are the people who deal directly with the families and the funeral services that follow.

I recalled seeing an interview with the Chaplain of the Pentagon, who stated that when the airplane hit the Pentagon, he was first a victim, being burned and rescued. Then he became a rescuer, as he led others into places where people were trapped. Finally, he felt in his comfort zone days later when the funerals began and he started to conduct/ attend two or three, sometimes four funerals a day. That was what he was trained to do and it was his place in the scheme of things. I think the funeral directors were happy to process their own stress during difficult times with families.

We also watched a remarkable documentary titled, "Rebirth", which was produced by one of the companies that lost many people at the World Trade Center. The documentary followed five people who had been involved in the World Trade Center loss in some way. Interviews spanned 8 years and showed the varied fates, and the changes in the lives of those who had been through this experience. Although a heavy theme, it was extremely well done, and was released to the media on the evening of 9/11/11.

My theme centered around some scriptures of the Old Testament, which read of contentious arguments with God. One mentions "getting a lawyer and taking God to court to answer for his neglect or misbehavior". In other places, there are "Lamentations", which acknowledge that something that cannot be righted has happened. The events are too terrible to simply win a court case against God. Rather, we come to recognize that it's more than we can know or understand. Our text was Psalm 46... "God is our refuge". To 'hear' that God is still there and still loves us, even though the unthinkable has happened, is good news and a different kind of security. There is nothing more to say, only to ponder the reality of this truth.

Brad Targhetta (Region V Acting Commander) and his wife, Ronda attended two 9/11 programs. The first was a Macoupin County remembrance in Bunker Hill, Illinois. The second was at their church - St Paul United Methodist Church in Brighton, Illinois.

Brad talked about the way victims were removed from the site and explained how the American flag was used to cover the member of service (Fire, Police and EMS) victims.

Thank you to all who worked at the World Trade Center deployment. A great job was done by all. We are proud to be DMORT team members and are always glad to help in any way we can, even in the most tragic situations.



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