

REMEMBERING 9/11

20TH ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE
TO SURVIVORS, VICTIMS,
AND LOCAL 9/11 HEROES

By Ellen Manzo, Veterans Memorial & Support Foundation Board Member

As Bay area residents woke up on Saturday, September 11, 2021, they rose to a perfectly beautiful day which for some, may have been a rear view mirror of September 11 twenty years earlier. The day was perfect for flying. A day, pilots would refer to as “severe clear.” The day echoed the same kind of weather our country experienced on the east coast twenty years prior when four planes – American Airlines Flight 11, American Airlines Flight 77, United Airlines Flight 175 and United Airlines Flight 93, all departed their northeastern airports full of jet fuel headed for the west coast, none of which would make their intended destinations.

However, this September 11 was a day for reflection. A day to remember as community first responders, active and veteran military members, Disaster Response personnel, and citizens gathered to honor the 9/11 survivors, victims, and local heroes at The Flame of Liberty Memorial located in the Town of Los Gatos Civic Center. The Veterans Memorial & Support Foundation hosted the tribute.

Combine the ingredients of the Santa Clara County Fire Department Honor guard, a crystal clear and beautiful rendition of the National Anthem, a 21-gun salute, Taps from the bells of echoing buglers, vocalists accompanied by instruments, the 191st Army Band, children launching doves of peace, Town Council members past and present, leaders and dignitaries, poignant speeches combined with passion, a community of citizens, all set against the backdrop of a world class memorial – The Flame of Liberty, that honors veterans, first responders and two local 9/11 heroes, and one has the recipe for a perfect tribute to commemorate the heroism that brought America together twenty years ago.

Keynote speaker Santa Clara County Fire Chief Tony Bowden traveled east following 9/11 to assist with rescue efforts in the rubble at the scene of the Twin Towers as a young firefighter. He described the horrible feeling in the pits of stomachs of firefighters observing the events of 9/11 and helping in the aftermath. “As the cameras continued to roll and the dust cloud blew through the streets, all the firefighters in the fire station that day went silent. All we could hear was that sound... the piercing sound of alarms going off, singling when a firefighter stopped moving. The alarms are triggered by personal devices integrated into the air pass worn by every firefighter across our nation. Our hearts sank because all we could do was watch and listen, unable to help our fallen brothers and sisters. That day we lost 343 firefighters and 72 police officers. And many more later who have succumbed to their injuries.”

“As we honor and remember all the first responders who lost their lives on September 11, I feel it is essential to focus on the many lives saved that day. There are countless stories of first responders making their way up stairwells and rescuing those trapped or struggling to make their way out of the Twin Towers. There are stories of law enforcement officers clearing the streets so emergency medical personnel can provide care to those who needed it.” Chief Bowden cited that the actions of first responders evacuating those they could in the Twin Towers and surrounded areas are responsible for saving well over 4,000 lives on 9/11.

Hometown raised, Air Force Academy alum and Veterans Memorial Board Member Lieutenant Colonel Walker Pearce-Percy reflected on his 200+ combat missions from the war on terrorism resulting from 9/11. “By the time I was qualified to fly the C-5 in September 2003, the Iraq War was full-on. As aircrew, we were on the road for three weeks at a time, flying routes between the United States and multiple downrange locations, moving anything and everything: boats, tanks, helicopters, people, tires. You name it; we moved it.”

And with emotional sentiment, Lt. Col. Pearce-Percy concluded with positive reflections on Los Gatos and two local 9/11 heroes – Todd Beamer and Mark Bingham - members of a four-person pickup team aboard United Flight 93 who attempted to take back cockpit control from terrorists. As a result of their actions, United Airlines Flight 93 crashed into Shanksville, Pennsylvania, rather than its intended target – the United States Capitol Building, thereby saving our government from being decimated at a time when it needed to act.

“Today is about remembering that twenty years ago, a bunch of heroes stood up out of their seats and took action to protect our team, the United States of America. I appreciate you allowing me time today to share my military story with you, the community that raised me. I have to say that we must be doing something right around here. All one has to do is look at the plaque [the 9/11 element] at that end of the memorial with Todd's and Mark's names, the pavers along this walkway [the Walk of Heroes] to the



fire bell [which commemorates first responders], and the plaques we're about to unveil, on the other side of this wall, to realize that this Town has some grit. It continues to be a community that will do what it takes to stand up and be counted and take a stand against the evil in the world."

Los Gatos Mayor Marico Sayoc was working in the Whitehouse that fateful morning. "Twenty years ago, I was one of the staff members who was told to flee because United Flight 93 had been hijacked, and we did not know whether it was headed to the Whitehouse or to the Capitol. Twenty years ago, Mark Bingham and Todd Beamer became my heroes as well as the heroes of all of us because of what we have heard today."

Mayor Sayoc continued, "I do think there's Divine Intervention that allows me to stand here today twenty years later because of the heroic actions of two boys who graduated from that high school across the street. So the Council and I stand always to hold this day in remembrance. But we also ask today of all days 'Let's not only remember, but let's take that Los Gatos grit we heard about. Let's absorb that and let's remember that they were one of us and with courage and with that same grit; we could be someone else's hero.'"

My fellow Veterans Foundation committee members and I had the exceptional honor of knowing fellow committee member, Alice Hoagland, mother of Mark Bingham. I was graced with the distinction to eulogize Alice who passed late last year, and praise the bravery she exhibited in the wake of her son's tragic death.

"It takes a unique parent to view the silver lining of the actions of a son killed in a terrorist attack, yet this mother found the inner strength to convey Mark's contribution to America to an audience of 1500 strangers at our memorial dedication in June 2019. Alice Hoagland declared 'United Flight 93 was good news on a terrible morning of tragedy. Our guys succeeded in saving the ultimate target of the thugs who held them captive.'" The target to which Alice referred was the U.S. Capitol Building, our country's Representatives, and all on the ground who were in or near it.

"Alice Hoagland was not just any ordinary citizen. Challenges in her life propelled Alice to act." Following her son's death, Alice chose to continue her son's legacy. While carrying on her son's legacy, in a twist of fate, Alice created a legacy of her own.

Mayor Marico Sayoc and Veterans Foundation President Major General Kent Hillhouse US Army (Ret.) unveiled the Wall of Gratitude at The Flame of Liberty Memorial which identifies the parties who contributed resources to support the construction of The Flame of Liberty Memorial. General Hillhouse concluded the day's celebration by reinforcing a few key takeaways in the audience's mind. "I believe we were attacked because we were a freedom-loving nation, and we stand behind our ideals. We're here to honor those 3000 people who died on September 11th, 2001. Some were first responders; some were military. Most were civilians. We are also here in appreciation of the youth of our Town, the youth of our country and the six million who put on uniforms to protect us. And, as a result of that, we have not had a major terrorist attack on our Town since then. So we never want to forget."

For more information, please visit honoravet.org

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COMMUNITY INTEREST

Is Your Routine Wasting Water Every Day? *By Mark Hall*



Does this sound anything like you? Your wakeup alarm goes off, you roll out of bed and head over to warm up the shower while you pour a quick cup of coffee or check your text messages. By the time you're done it's "just right" and you proceed to get in and get on with your day.

A scenario something like this plays out daily in over 2.5 million homes across the Bay Area. For every minute we wait for water to warm up at our shower, bathroom sink or kitchen faucet, we waste up to 3 gallons down the drain. Ask yourself: "how many minutes does it take for my water to warm up?" and you begin to understand the impact your daily routines have on our water shortage crisis. But what can you realistically do about it?

Join The Bucket Brigade?

Numerous water authorities recommend capturing water at your faucets while you wait for it to warm up, then using it to water plants, for pets, and other household uses. An excellent suggestion – and dedicated environmentally conscientious homeowners have been doing this for many years. But let's face it, they are few. Getting people to change habits is difficult. Some don't have plants to water, some can't physically haul the water around, and others just don't want the inconvenience and logistical issues the practice creates.

Improve Your Shower Efficiency?

Taking shorter showers (using a shower timer), changing to a low-flow showerhead (available free from watersavings.org), and installing an on/off valve immediately behind your showerhead to stop water flow while you lather up (about \$6.00 at popular hardware stores) are other common recommendations. Combining all 3 of these is sure to conserve thousands of gallons of water per year in your home. But unfortunately, none of them deal with the fact that you still must wait for the water to heat up initially.

Choose The "No Brainer" Solution!

There is one solution that doesn't require changing your habits at all. In fact, your water savings become virtually automatic. A whole house hot water recirculating system gives you the comfort and convenience of instant hot water everywhere, while enabling everyone in your home to effortlessly conserve water year-round. These systems combine your existing plumbing with a small, silent pump mounted on your conventional water heater, and a thermal sensor valve at the sink(s) farthest away. No new pipes and no breaking into walls needed.

A whole house hot water recirculating system can be professionally installed in about an hour and helps you conserve up to 15,000 gallons of water per year, depending on your household size, usage patterns, and number of bathrooms. That's enough water to fill most standard size swimming pools. Imagine all the other people who can use that water instead of it being needlessly wasted down your drain!

Soon coming rains will not immediately end our extreme drought conditions. Do your part and become a water conservationist! Reducing your water-use footprint is not only good for our environment but can also save you money year-round on your water and sewer bills.

Mark Hall is the CEO of Instant Hot Water Systems LLC. His vision is to conserve 300 billion gallons of water wasted down drains every year across America.

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