

Army War College 9/11 Commemoration: Memories of sacrifice, unity, patriotism

By Carol Kerr, Public Affairs Office 11 September 2021



US Army War College Commandant Maj. Gen. David Hill (L) and Command Sgt. Major Brian Flom give honors at the wreath to the fallen of Sept. 11, 2001, at Carlisle, Pa.



SFC Joseph Johnson and PFC Darrell Sykes carry the wreath in honor of those who died on 9/11 and the Global War on Terror at the 20th anniversary commemoration ceremony at the Army Heritage and Education Center, Sept. 11, 2021, Carlisle Pa.



Carlisle Barracks Firefighter Thomas Cook tolls the bell, signifying the crash of Flight 77 at the 20th anniversary commemoration of the victims of the 9-11-2001 attacks, at the Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, Pa., Sept. 11, 2021.

“They shall not grow old, as we who are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them. Lest we forget,” New Zealand Army Lt. Col. Aidan Shattock quoted Laurence Binyon’s Ode to the Fallen at the U.S. Army War College’s 20th anniversary commemoration of September 11, 2001.

On a blue-sky day as perfect as that of September 11, 2001, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, several hundred gathered to commemorate the events of that day, the victims, and the responders. Veterans, first responders, military members, Army War College students, and public servants gathered to remember the fallen and honor the courage of responders, then



and now. Saint Patrick's Middle School Chorale, Cumberland County Honor Guard, buglers, and bagpiper contributed honors, and a group representative of the 9/11 responders – civilian, police, firefighter, emergency medical technician, and Soldier – tolled the bell in memory of the heartbreaking moments of attack and loss that day.

"It is our collective responsibility to remember, to share in firm resolve that those who were lost will never be forgotten, and to reflect on the response and resilience of the survivors and first responders of that day, and all who have served since, around the globe and in our communities here at home, to secure our great nation," said Maj. Gen. David Hill, USAWC Commandant.

"The attacks of 9-11 transformed our society, transformed law enforcement at every level, transformed intelligence operations, instituted the new Department of Homeland Security, and transformed the lives of service men and women through multiple operations and years," he said, noting that the War College students, faculty, and staff have dedicated a substantial portion of their professional lifetime engaged in the war on terror that followed 9/11.

"The war on terror, as with all wars has been a hard thing – perhaps the hardest of things," he said. We've experienced it, processed it, and remembered it differently, but all are changed by it, he said. "And no seasoned military man or woman would seek war.

"But when it seeks us, we must be ready."

"To you here who have served, for your children who are serving, and those among us who serve today – you, they, we have done important work in the past 20 years at home and abroad. You have done so on behalf of your nation and your fellow citizens. You have sacrificed

"Hold your heads high," said Hill. "That service across decades, to me, is emblematic of Patriotism, and worthy of remembrance on this Patriot Day.

"We gather to remember and honor the victims of 9/11 who perished that day," he said, "and we remember and honor the heroic efforts of so many on September 11 and after, whose tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime – whose patriotism – can serve as an inspiration for the generations of today and tomorrow."

Command Sgt. Major Brian Flom was one of several who began his remarks with his memory of Sept. 11, 2001, as a young Military Policeman

Army Lt. Col. Nina Hill, Army War College student, shares stories, reflection about 9/11 and the following 20 years at the 20th anniversary ceremony to commemorate loss and resolve, at the Army Heritage & Education Center, Carlisle Pa. Sept. 11, 2021



New Zealand Army Lt. Col. Aidan Shattock, Army War College International Fellow, speaks of common cause, "safeguarding our nations and the world through our actions - willing to do what so many cannot," at the 9-11 commemoration, Carlisle Pa., Sept.



Army veteran Gus Person plays the Lament of the Flowers at the U.S. Army War College anniversary commemoration of Sept. 11, 2001 at the Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, Pa., Sept. 11, 2021.

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responding to newly raised force protection standards at Fort Hood. Within weeks, he traded his colored garrison MP brassard for a subdued one, for a deployed environment, in Afghanistan.

“I remember the sacrifice made by so many,” said Flom. “I remember exactly where I was as I learned that one of my brothers or sisters in arms had fallen.”

“I remember when I learned that his watch was over – and he would not be returning to base,” he said, after sharing stories about Lt. Matt Coutu. “I remember the day in 2005 that Tim Hines was struck and critically wounded by an Improvised Explosive Device. It was Father’s Day... I remember the 2 a.m. phone call ... Tim was no longer with us. It was July 14 th.”

“I carry the memories of Lt. Coutu and PFC Hines with me and could stand here for hours telling stories of many more,” said Flom. “The weight of their sacrifice resets on the shoulders of so many of us and shall we let their sacrifice be in vain.”

Army Lt. Col. Nina Hill, USAWC student, contrasted the early days of September 2001, when her unit was fighting the fictional ‘Krasnovians’ at the National Training Center, with the quickly-developing reality: “We knew then that our worlds and our military service were forever changed,” she said.

In short time, she was in Saudi Arabia coordinating movement of Patriot missiles for the ‘shock and awe’ campaign – the first of three assignments to logistical missions in theater, supporting movement of troops, equipment, and weapons into and out of Iraq.

“I never called any of my assignments ‘deployments’ I never felt like what I did was enough,” said Nina Hill, although everyone’s contribution mattered, she said, noting the planners, analysts, communication specialists, DoD civilians, contractors and coalition partners who worked tirelessly to support the war effort.

New Zealand Army Lt. Col. Aidan Shattock, USAWC student, was in a mission readiness exercise for deployment to the UN Mission to East Timor, when they stopped to watch the attacks on the towers of New York City – half a world and many time zones apart.

“While the world reacted in horror, nations, friends, and even old adversaries united and offered support,” said Shattock. “New Zealand was

one of many who answered the call to uphold the international rules-based order – and do what we could to prevent such acts of terror from ever occurring again.”

“All countries involved in this fight feel the hurt and loss which stemmed from that day 20 years ago,” he said. “The sacrifices and bravery displayed that day have been a legacy that we have all upheld as we fight for what is right.

“We have lost many in this fight. Many more have returned with scars seen and unseen. Countless families all over the world have suffered the effects of this conflict,” said Shattock. “Yet we have shared the common cause of safeguarding our nations and the world through our actions.

“We have all been willing to do what so many cannot.”

“It is up to us to shape the future of our military forces to ensure that when we are called upon, as we were 20 years ago, we are ready to fight alongside each other once again,” he proposed, in anticipation of the historic view of the next speaker.

Dr. Michael Neiberg, historian on USAWC faculty, described his parallel responses to 9/11: the hope and promise of his newly adopted toddler and the horror and fear inspired by the attacks unfolding on TV.

“Later that day ... a message from a French two-star general ... expressed both his profound sorrow and his certainty that America’s allies would stand side by side with us in this hour of need. France, too, would be a target of terrorists, and we would all need to work together once again to fight a common enemy,” said Neiberg, remembering a feeling both momentous and terrifying in its uncertainty.

“Those who study the past know that great events do not care at all about our personal lives,” said Neiberg. “Parents everywhere hope that they will have the strength and wisdom to lessen the impact of such events on their children. That little girl who laughed in the living room [as her parents kept her away from the TV that day] is now 21 Life, however different from what we may have imagined it would be, has gone on.

Chap. (Col.) Herb Franklin ended the ceremony:

“May we never forget, and may our lives honor the lives of all who have been lost and who have given so much in the wake of that terrible day.

“May we honor them with a commitment to work for world where we are not

at each other's mercy but in each other's care."

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