

NEVER FORGOTTEN, ALWAYS REMEMBERED



Echo Press file photo
On Sept. 11, 2018, Douglas County Honor Guard members stood silently among nearly 3,000 flags placed in the lawn at 3M in Alexandria. For several years, volunteers have been placing the flags in that location to commemorate the September 11 attacks and to remember those who lost their lives on that day.

‘In our hearts forever’ Echo Press readers share thoughts about 9/11

Echo Press readers were asked via Facebook to share comments about Sept. 11, 2001. They were asked the following questions: What do you remember from that day? What sticks out the most for you? Where were you? What were you doing when you heard the news of the terrorist attack?

Below are just some of the comments that were shared:

I was in first-hour biology and we heard there had been a crash. Murmurs started that it was two planes and then we knew it wasn't an accident. We spent most of the day watching the TVs in class. We started talking about how this meant we were going to war with someone and in a couple years, our classmates would be eligible for a draft. We listened as the expected death toll went to around 100,000 (the Towers usually saw 70,000 people a day) and they weren't sure about how many buildings or planes were involved at the time. Going home to watch it and understanding our place in the world was different now. That we were not untouchable.

— Nicole Wagner

I remember exactly where I was on 9/11. On my way to work at the Marshfield Clinic in Merrill, WI. We would later learn that a community shop keeper lost her son in one of the towers. The community would later lose a young military man on the day before his discharge, he was killed during an effort to disable a roadside bomb. Another acquaintance, the cashier's son where I would stop daily for the newspaper on my way to work, was critically injured in the war. They posted his journey on Car-ingBridge. I cried.

— Esther Schock Mehrer

I was at work, then went home sick and watched everything on TV.

— Lyn Stans

I had just dropped off my kids at their school and was driving to work when I heard that a plane had struck the World Trade Center. At that point it was unclear whether this was a small plane that was off

course or something far more calamitous. The answer to that question wasn't long in coming. I was horrified, of course, like everyone else. But I was horrified on a personal level, because those two kids I had just dropped off at school were with my wife and me just 46 days earlier, standing atop the World Trade Center. To this day, it unnerves me to think about what would have happened to those two beautiful children, 10 and 8 at the time, had the attack been planned for the morning we were there. I will always remember the victims of the attack and hope that we as a nation, keep them in our hearts forever.

— Michael Dempsey



Contributed photo

The Dempsey sisters of Alexandria, Cristin, 8, left, and Kathleen, 10, had their photo taken atop the World Trade Center. The photo was taken on July 27, 2001 – 46 days before the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11. The girls are the daughters of Michael and Lynette Dempsey.

My dad also passed away that day. My brothers and sisters and I had spent the night before in the hospital as we knew our father's time on Earth was coming to an end. I remember waking up in the waiting room and turning on the television. The first plan had already hit the towers in New York. I thought, "Wow, what a terrible

accident!" I then saw the second plane hit and I knew immediately that it wasn't an accident. It was a terrible day for our country and personally for our family.

— Laura Demers Nill

We had just gotten married – Sept. 8 – and had gone to Cragun's in Brainerd for a couple of days. We had gotten up that Tuesday morning to come back home when we watched it all unfold on TV. We drove home just glued to the radio. We went from the "high" of our wedding day to being scared for the future all within a couple of days. Also, we both worked at Dairyland in Glenwood and many people we worked with had traveled/flown to various places in the U.S. and were stuck. And they didn't know when they would get home. The fear of the unknown was the scariest.

— Emily Sagedahl Uhde

I remember watching my small 13-inch TV in my bedroom, telling my husband what had just happened. We were just bustling about getting ready for work. I remember bringing that TV to work and watching it on the front counter. I took my 2-year-old to music class at Shalom later that morning and just as we finished class and got outside and into the car, I turned on the radio to hear about the collapse of the first tower. The remainder of the day was spent watching the television at work. I had just purchased tickets to Las Vegas the day prior for my husband's birthday. We were expecting to fly out that Sunday. It was our first "real" trip on a plane anywhere. I was crushed. But we ended up being able to fly out, as we were on some of the first flights being allowed after it all happened. Las Vegas was a nightmare. It was quiet, silent. There were no buffets and most restaurants were closed. Workers were very worried about their jobs, their future. It was just plain yucky. By the time we left for home on Thursday, the Japanese and other international flights finally started to roll in. It was many years before we visited Las Vegas again and what a difference it was.

— Jody Berning

Echo Press employees share memories of 9/11

Echo Press employees were asked where they were, what they were doing and what they remembered about Sept. 11, 2001. Here are their responses:

I was a sophomore at the University of South Dakota and was waiting for Spanish class to start when the professor came in and told us about the Pentagon. We were supposed to have a test that day, so of course after a moment passed, some loser said, "Are we still gonna have our test?" After class I went to my academic advisor's office and found her watching footage of the World Trade Center. As I rode my bicycle back to the dorm I remember noting what a nice day it was, but how everything suddenly seemed off.

"Oh," I thought. "That's what it's like when the world changes."

— Travis Gulbrandson



Edlenloff

I was working at the Echo Press. It was a hectic Tuesday morning and we were busy getting the paper ready for press when we heard a report of a plane hitting the Twin Towers. We turned on

the TV in our conference room and watched, shaking our heads at how horrible it was. At first, we all thought it was probably a terrible accident, a plane with mechanical problems or pilot error. After the second plane hit, we knew this was a huge story, perhaps the biggest in decades. Up against a tight deadline, we did what we could – getting photos of Jefferson High School students watching, in stunned silence, as the story unfolded on TV. The front page of our next issue contained nothing but localized stories about the attack. I still remember our headline, "Terror touches home."

— Al Edlenloff

For weeks panic attacks had made my heart race and palms sweat. It was so bad, it felt like I was dying. When I got to my therapy appointment on Sept. 11, 2001, the clinic staff was gathered around a radio. They sprang apart when I entered, and turned to help me. We were all shattered, breathing hard, faces bright with pain and disbelief. That will always stay with me, though: How quickly they turned to help.

That is how it was, after 9/11. Everyone wanted to help.

— Karen Tolkkinen



Tolkkinen

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