

DEDICATED TO Airline Pilots

Herndon, Va.

It sounds so passé now. During the month of September, the public was hit with a barrage of logos, banners, headlines, movie trailers—anything and everything that had to do with the tragic events that occurred 5 years ago. Whether it was to mourn, to remember, or to make money, there was no doubt that Sept. 11, 2006, was going to be something of a spectacle.

But Herndon, Va., home of the Air Line Pilots Association, had no reporters, no television cameras, and no ostentatious event to commemorate an anniversary that no one needs prompting to remember.

A group of airline pilots, along with their families, friends, and colleagues,



WILLIAM A. FORD

Herndon, Va.: 300-plus stand solemnly under cloudy skies and a haunting mist during the dedication of the 9/11 memorial.

gathered in a circle around a simple, unadorned monument constructed of elegant rocks. This new memorial appropriately represents a profession that, although hit hard, has endured the most arduous of times since Sept. 11, 2001, but yet still stands strong.

The 300-plus who gathered stood solemnly under cloudy skies and a persistent rain and remained in silence for nearly an hour. A few addressed the crowd, with humble, concise remarks. They talked about heroes and the price of freedom.



Capt. Duane Woerth, ALPA's president, said, "Five years ago today the murder of four flight crews triggered the horror simply known as 9/11. We pledged then that we would never forget their sacrifice and the example they set. That pledge has strengthened us through these tough years. That pledge has driven our efforts to make our industry as secure as possible. That pledge has sustained us while we endured the strong winds that have relentlessly battered our pilots and their loved ones. Today we renew that pledge to never forget by setting this ground aside to honor the memory of the flight crews lost on that dark day."

What most may remember about that day in Herndon is the silence. Evoked perhaps by prayer, the compulsion to reflect, or the awe-inspiring memorial, the crowd was mute. In an intimate family built on unity, courage, and determination, no one needed to say anything. It was understood. Through the streaming tears, gentle nods of acknowledgement, and sincere, sad smiles, everyone was thinking the same thing: We will press on. If not, their deaths will have been in vain.

New York City

Capt. Bob Hesselbein (Northwest), ALPA National Security Committee chairman, led a group of fellow ALPA pilots to join the ranks of the honor

guard at the 2006 World Trade Center memorial service. The honor guard, made up of veteran firefighters, police officers, and other emergency responders who witnessed the events of Sept. 11, 2001, gathered to participate in the ceremonies of the day, a beautiful day similar to that of 5 years ago—clear skies, warm temperatures, and a steady autumn breeze.

The other ALPA pilots who were part of the honor guard were Cpts. Seth Cooperman (ATA), John Duggan (ExpressJet), Bill Gander (Continental), David Hornblower (Atlantic Southeast), Brian McManus (Delta), and Gwen Schallow (Continental); First Officers Rick Aaronson (Continental), Ted Ano (United), Brian Bassett (Continental), Mike Berrevoets (Piedmont), Glen Johnson (Continental), Kate Malone (Continental), Michael McDonald (Piedmont), William Newland (Continental), Scott Olson (Continental), Dana Reeves (Continental), Dwayne Taylor (Northwest), and Susanne Thayne (ExpressJet); and Second Officer Mike DiMento (FedEx Express).

Within the excavated center of New York's Ground Zero, the honor guard stood vigil, positioned 6 or more feet apart, marking what used to be the outer walls of the fallen North and South Towers. Hesselbein says, "It touched all of us—the pain, the sorrow, and the



CAPT. BOB HESSELBEIN (NORTHWEST)

New York City: Flowers are placed at Ground Zero. Many pilots stood as part of an honor guard, marking the Towers' outer walls.



JAMES ANDRESAKES

New York City: The Stars and Stripes fly over Ground Zero.

frustration. No matter where you stood throughout the day, you could hear the names of the dead being read and feel their silent presence."

Hesselbein commended those pilots who took the time to participate in the service: "This duty," he said, "took an exceptional deal of patience to silently view the extended scenes of sorrow and frustration manifested by the members of the families of the lost. Our pilots accomplished this task with the dignity and demeanor befitting the occasion.

"Importantly, their quiet, uniformed presence sent a clear reminder that the pilots of ALPA remember those passengers and crewmembers who lost their lives within the walls of the World Trade Center that day; as well, these pilots' respectful presence also reassured those present that we pilots will always remain vigilant in our duties to protect those entrusted to us."

Shanksville, Pa.

Somerset County, Pa., was cold and clammy, but nothing could dispel the warmth inside the big white tent on the field near Shanksville on the morning of Sept. 11, 2006, and in the smaller tent in the afternoon.

The field where United Flight 93 went down after a terrorist attack on Sept. 11, 2001, rang with morning greetings among more than 300 relatives and friends of the 40 crewmembers and passengers aboard that day 5 years ago. An anniversary service was hosted by the National Park Service, now the caretaker of the Flight

93 National Memorial, where a multi-million-dollar permanent memorial will be built.

That afternoon, the Flight 93 Crew Monument was dedicated in Shanksville, beside the Flight 93 Memorial Chapel. The octagonal black granite monument, bearing the etched likenesses of the two pilots and five flight attendants, was erected thanks to the Newark Flight 93 Benefit Committee and the CAUSE Foundation.

Three United pilots represented ALPA at both events: Capt. Wendy Morse, vice-chair of the United MEC; Capt. Ed Folsom, chairman of the United MEC Security Committee; and Capt. Joe Claffey, who was domiciled in Newark, the origination point of Flight 93, which was piloted by Capt. Jason Dahl and First Officer LeRoy Homer.

The morning's service was awash with dignitaries who spoke to the occasion: Gen. Tommy Franks, honorary co-chair of the Memorial's capital campaign; Pennsylvania Gov. Edward G. Rendell; Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pa.), who represents the Somerset district; Sens. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) and Arlen Specter (R-Pa.); and Tom Ridge, former Pennsylvania governor and secretary of Homeland Security and honorary co-chair of the capital campaign.

After a moment of silence, Capt. Stephen J. Ruda of the Los Angeles Fire Department—who dubbed the crash site "A common field one day... a field of honor forever"—read the names of each passenger and crewmember to the tolling of a bell.

The morning's solemnity was given over to camaraderie and storytelling in the afternoon at the Flight 93 Crew Monument, where many Newark-based flight attendants and crewmember families circled the monument and took pictures.

During the dedication ceremony, Sandy Dahl, a United flight attendant

and widow of Jason Dahl, remarked on the Monument's beauty: "If you look closely in each of their eyes, you can see that the artist included the sparkle. ... It seems to say, 'I'm all right, I love you, and I will see you again.' This is a comfort for us."

At the program listing "Remarks—Dignitary," Claffey stepped to the mike



SUSAN BURKE

Shanksville, Pa.: Pilots and family members gather at the Flight 93 Crew Monument.

and announced, "I'm the dignitary," to laughter and applause from the flight attendants. Then he lightened the mood even more.

"Newark was a small base," he said, "and it's now closed. I always looked forward to flying with the Newark flight attendants. Whether it was a 6-in-the-morning departure when they would meet you at the gate, smile, and say, 'Don't talk to me until I get a cup of coffee,' or 'Warm this damn airplane up'; or bringing Newark flight attendants home on the last leg of a four-day trip, and no matter how bad it was, they would say to you with that smiling face, 'We want to make the 10-after bus.'"

"Yes, we were a close-knit group in Newark," Claffey concluded. "And it is because we cared about one another that we're all here today. This memorial is a labor of love from the Flight 93 family in Newark." 🌟