

November 4, 2009

A most-fitting memorial to 9/11

It's been eight years since the 9/11 attacks that destroyed the World Trade Center and killed almost 3,000 innocent people— enough time for two presidential elections; U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq; the fall of a dictatorship; the battle of New Orleans versus Katrina; the Great Recession; and countless other famous and infamous news-making events. However, none have supplanted the memory of that tragic morning when horrified Americans and our neighbors across the world watched the devastation unfold.

Throughout these eight years, **many 9/11 memorials** have been suggested. Some have been realized, some scrapped, and some are in development. Perhaps the most fitting to date, the USS New York, steamed into New York harbor Nov. 2 as firefighters, bagpipers, and those who lost loved ones on 9/11 watched. As **reported on CNN.com**, the new Navy assault ship's bow was fabricated using seven and a half tons of steel recovered from the wreckage of the WTC.

Quoted in the CNN report was Lee Lelpi, who lost his firefighter son, Jonathan, on 9/11. Commenting on the ship, Lelpi said, "What better way for our young men and women that are going to be on the USS New York to feel the spirit of our country than to have this ship have the steel in the bow that represents not the bad, but the good of your country."

The ship's crest is etched with an image of a phoenix rising from the twin towers and the words, "Never Forget."

Also quoted in the report is Howard Lutnick, CEO of **Cantor Fitzgerald**, which was located in the World Trade Center. Lutnick's brother and 658 of his employees died on 9/11. Lutnick said he lives with the loss every day. He also said, "I really like the idea of people going out and avenging what happened to us and protecting us so that it should never happen again, because the pain that we went through, we want no one, no other family to have to go through it."

Many of our nation's men and women are serving in the armed forces, fighting to avenge and protect. War casualties passed the 9/11 death toll in September 2006 and continue to climb. Families and loved ones of those who've sacrificed their lives are living with the pain of loss every day.

I have a cousin in **Special Operations** who retired in 2008 after serving for 24 years. He just e-mailed me to let me know he's back in the Middle East, serving again. Exactly where and doing what, I have no clue. All I know is that I appreciate what he's doing and pray for his safety.

One of thefabricator.com's most popular authors, a Vietnam veteran whose father served in World War II, is very proud of, yet beside himself with worry for his son who has volunteered for a special military operation and is destined to be in harm's way in the coming months.

The USS New York is a fitting tribute to 9/11. We will never forget. But while we're on the tribute trail, we need to honor and never forget the brave men and women who fight not only to protect *us* from those who wish us harm, but also to protect citizens of other countries from dangerous factions that repress and harm their own.

Nov. 11 is **Veterans Day**. Commit 11/11 to your memory alongside 9/11. Reach out to servicemen and –women and their families. Express your gratitude for all they do for us and keep them in your thoughts and prayers. Their service has helped make the **U.S. the number one destination for millions who want to move permanently to another country**.

And while you're at it ... hug a veteran. I'll start by e-mailing a **virtual hug** to my octogenarian uncle who lives 3,000 miles away. He served in WWII and is the most handsome Marine I've ever seen.

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