

Local Search Site Search

GO

- HOME
- TODAY'S GLOBE
- NEWS
- BUSINESS
- SPORTS
- LIFESTYLE
- A&E
- THINGS TO DO
- TRAVEL
- CARS
- JOB
- HOMES
- LOCAL SEARCH

HOME / NEWS / LOCAL / MASS.

8 years later, memories of 9/11 still ache The Boston Globe



The Massachusetts Military Heroes Fund marked Sept. 11 by sending care packages to military units abroad. Joe Barkas of Kingston piled up boxes in Boston. (Wendy Maeda/Globe Staff)

By Peter Schworm
Globe Staff / September 12, 2009

Email | Print | Reprints | |

Text size - +

In the Public Garden, loved ones tenderly brushed their hands over names etched in stone, whispering that they missed them. On the steps of the State House, they read their names aloud in a solemn litany, the words ringing forth like a church bell. Inside, families smiled through tears at photographs of the victims, frozen at the full of life.

From the memorial at Logan International Airport, where the doomed flights departed, to a suburban high school where students planted nearly 3,000 flags to honor the dead, people across the state gathered yesterday in remembrance on the eighth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

In sweeping, song-filled ceremonies and poignant private moments, mourners bowed their heads in tribute to those killed that day, and vowed to honor their memory with renewed sense of purpose.

“Today, we gather to observe and remember a moment that took so much from so many families,” Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray said outside the State House under iron-gray skies. “Eight years have passed, and the terror of 9/11 slips further into history. But we do not forget. We can never forget.”

Murray then carried a crisply folded US flag to a ranger, who raised it to half-staff. One trumpeter played taps, then a second. Hearing the sad, slow strain, passersby paused in homage, hands over their hearts.

Stoically stepping onto the podium, family members called out the name of each victim with Massachusetts ties, sometimes adding a personal tribute.

Peter Alan Gay was recalled by his widow, Linda, as “my loving husband, father, friend, and son”; Susan Blair as “beautiful, and always in our hearts” by

ADVERTISEMENT

LOCAL NEWS ON TWITTER »



FOLLOW GLOBEMETRO ON TWITTER ▶
Follow other Boston.com Tweets | What is Twitter?

MOST E-MAILED »

1. [The extreme Republican Party](#)
2. [Let the kids play!](#)
3. [Is Somerville's hot rental market cooling, or just taking a break?](#)
4. [ESPN Radio's Boston affiliate set to sign off](#)
5. [The ageless, undaunted 'Scooby-Doo'](#)
6. [Radio days](#)
7. [Republican Scott Brown announces run for Senate](#)

RECOMMENDED SEARCHES

- iPods
- Swine flu
- Twitter
- Bob Gamere
- RECIPES Fisherman's catch
- Somerville

ABOUT THIS LIST ▶

her sister Leslie.

In Danvers, the hometown of Karen Martin, a flight attendant killed in the hijackings, four firetrucks rumbled out of their bays to coincide with the fall of the first tower, in tribute to the firefighters who died that day.

“I remember the images of the lines of firefighters streaming into the towers and when the first one fell, knowing many were dead,” said Fire Chief James Tutko. “It was surreal.”

In Melrose, flags flew at half-staff to honor the victims, including Ray Rocha, a Melrose High School graduate who worked as a bond trader in New York.

Flags will remain at half-staff today to honor Army Specialist Jordan Shay, a 22-year-old from Amesbury killed in Iraq Sept. 3.

About 50 residents, and dozens of town officials, police officers, and firefighters solemnly gathered at Cushing Memorial Park in Framingham for an annual service at a site dedicated to the 17 people with ties to the town who died in the attacks.

Framingham residents Evelyn and Gerry Turcotte have attended every year to pay tribute to their niece, Linda George, one of seven Framingham TJX employees who died aboard American Airlines Flight 11. The two recalled celebrating with their 27-year-old niece two days before her death at her bridal shower. George was engaged and a month away from her wedding.

“Every time the memorial comes, it’s a reenactment of that day,” Gerry said. But, added Evelyn, “We live with it every single day.”

At the Public Garden ceremony, victims’ friends and relatives gathered shortly after 7 a.m., gently placing single roses and bouquets at the base of the stone memorial.

Jeff Fair stood alone by his niece’s name, Leah E. Oliver. He kissed his fingers, then ran them over her name. He crossed himself in prayer and inhaled deeply. He repeated the ritual, then walked quickly away.

A 62-year-old from Dorchester, Fair comes to the memorial every week. But Sept. 11 is always harder, always sharpens the pain. “It brings it all back,” Fair said. “It just hits you. All over again.”

Oliver was 24 when she died. She had just served as maid of honor at a wedding and was excited to start her career in Manhattan.

At the memorial, Peter Mayer of Boston rested his hand on his stepdaughter’s shoulder, wiping tears from his eyes as a church bell rang in the distance. They traced their fingers over the name of Lieutenant Manuel Del Valle Jr. FDNY, and lingered for several minutes with their thoughts.

“I was thinking of that long, long night” when she didn’t know whether Del Valle had survived, said his sister, Grace Nolly Del Valle, 44.

Del Valle, a Brookline native, made it to the 50th floor of the Tower One, she said, and saved many lives.

Off to the side, Joe Casey cried softly, tears mingling with falling rain. The eight years since he lost his sister-in-law, Neilie Anne Heffernan Casey, who was on American Airlines Flight 11, had “collapsed in a moment,” at once painfully near and sadly distant.

A 45-year-old from Beacon Hill, Casey visits the memorial often, and usually thinks of all the good times. But on Sept. 11, the memories sting.

Many then walked through the park to the State House, where a short time later Murray remembered those who fought, and still fight, in the wars waged following Sept. 11.

“We say to them and to their families, that you have our support and our respect,” he said. “Because we know that there is right and wrong, good and evil in this world, and it falls to good-hearted and strong people of all walks of life, of all faiths, who love freedom and cherish peace, to stand up in the face of terror and tyranny, and say you will not win.”

Later, in a touching ceremony inside the State House, the late Marie J. Conley, a Boston school crossing guard killed by an oncoming car in October, was awarded the Madeline “Amy” Sweeney Award for Civilian Bravery. It is named for a 35-year-old flight attendant on board Flight 11 who conveyed critical information about the hijackers.

Murray described how Conley saved a 10-year-old from walking into the path of a car just seconds before it struck her. “In that moment, she displayed the protective instinct of a mother,” he said, “and the courage of a hero.”

Sweeney’s niece, Kayla Perkins, remembered her “Aunt Amy” as “one of those shining spirits” who treasured every moment. She said she was proud of her two cousins for how they coped with their mother’s death. She knew their mother was, too.

Correspondents Travis Andersen, Michaela Stanelun, Brian Benson, and Matt Rocheleau contributed to this report. Peter Schworm can be reached at schworm@globe.com. ■

© Copyright 2009 Globe Newspaper Company.

[Home](#) | [Today's Globe](#) | [News](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [A&E](#) | [Things to Do](#) | [Travel](#) | [Cars](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Local Search](#)

[CONTACT BOSTON.COM](#) | [Help](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Work here](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Mobile](#) | [RSS feeds](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Make Boston.com your homepage](#)

[CONTACT THE BOSTON GLOBE](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Manage your subscription](#) | [Advertise](#) | [The Boston Globe Extras](#) | [The Boston Globe Store](#) | © NY Times Co.