



New monument unveiled at the Healing Field

By John Daley

September 10th, 2011 @ 8:15pm

SANDY -- The 9/11 anniversary is a poignant one in Utah as well. For the past decade, many of us come to the Utah Healing Field in Sandy. The nearly 3,000 flags represent every person who died that day. For every one there's a story, attached to a card. Saturday, a sculpture was added to the memorial.

Some who visited the flags today came for their first time. Others come every year--and say the pain may fade, but it's still there.

Michael Sanchez, from Taylorsville, is in the field of flags from Flight 93, where passengers fought off a terrorist aiming to crash the jet in the nation's Capitol.

"I had just come on to the field and reading that and that was exactly flight 93 and Wanda Green was one of the stewardesses that worked there," said Michael Sanchez, of Taylorsville.

Sanchez remembers the day well. A brick mason, he was working on a project at Salt Lake International Airport, which went into lockdown when the planes hit, not reopening for three days.

"In the evening, I was at the airport. you could hear the total silence of it," he said. "You usually get all of the engines and everything. The only thing you could hear on the whole tarmac was the flag pole ropes clinging against the pole, so all that silence, we had to work with."

It's just a good reminder that each one of these people that are represented here today. There are still so many people who love them and miss them terribly.

-- Leslie Murray

Leslie Murray comes here every year.

"I come out here every year because I was just so glad that (my husband) came home, but so many people didn't come home," she said. "So it's just a good reminder that each one of these people that are represented here today. There are still so many people who love them and miss them terribly."

Today, she stops at the flag of a 23-year-old Pentagon worker. She also remembers her then-husband Richard Schroader, who was working in New York that day and survived, though he passed was three years later.

"Maybe it's just all of the images again being on TV and everything," Murray said. "It's kind of all come back and the feelings of that as we waited on our couch to hear that he was OK. And life does go on and you that after 10 years --but at the same time you realize that it doesn't."

As a new bronze monument is unveiled, the day clearly has powerful meaning, particularly for those in uniform, like Sam Hale, who was motivated, in part, by 9/11 to become a firefighter.

"It's pretty emotional reading these about each individual person," he said. "It's not just a big number of all these people that died. It's individuals that were impacted. It was people's families and that means a lot to me just to see how many people gave their lives that day."

The Healing Field, those who come today, helps with just that --the healing.

"It creates more of a personal identification with them, and when you touch the flag also, it's just a way of shaking their hand, putting your hand on their shoulder, or something like that. There's a connection to it," Sanchez said.

The Hope Rising --To Lift A Nation, is a 9-foot bronze, showing the three firemen who raised the American flag at Ground Zero, soon after the 9/11 attacks. The sculpture is based on an iconic photo taken by a newspaper photographer from New Jersey. Utah sculptor Stan Watts chose that moment for his artwork--as a symbol of home on a day we lost so many, but stood as one.