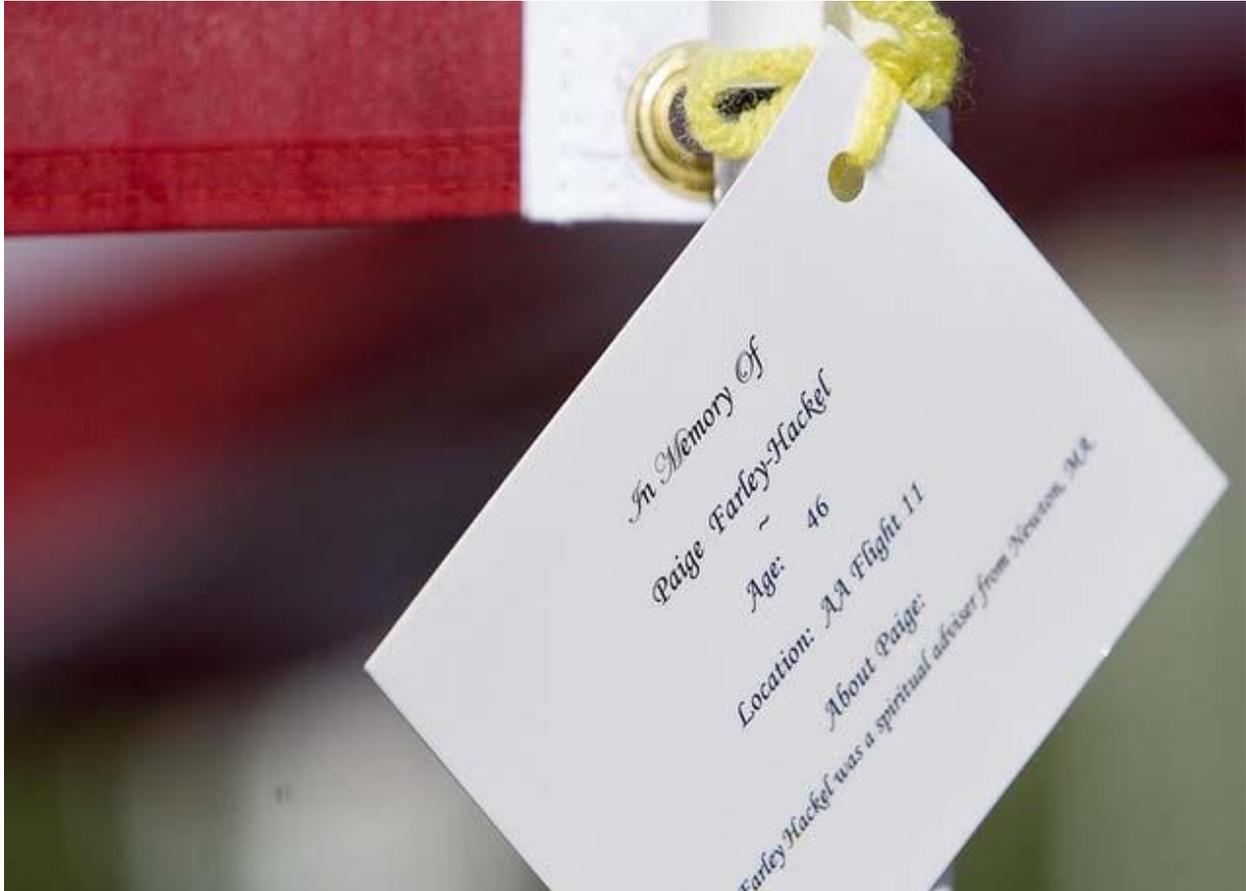


Salt Lake Tribune



(Djamila Grossman | The Salt Lake Tribune) A note with the name of a victim is attached to a flag at the Healing Field in memory of the victims of the 9/11 attacks, in Sandy, Utah, on Sunday, Sept. 11, 2011.

Sandy's Healing Field of flags recalls those lost on 9/11

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Sandy • It takes a long time to walk through the field of flags, each about four strides apart from another, neatly aligned on a long patch of green grass.

Along the sobering walk on Sunday, the wind whipped up and the flags slapped people's faces — as if to slow them down and get their attention. With a gentle brush, visitors stopped to inspect the laminated name tags attached to each of the more than 3,000 poles.

Joseph Holland, a 32-year-old whose son was born Sept. 1, 2001, died 10 years ago Sunday.

Boyd Gatton, a 38-year-old who moved to the United States in 1992 from Bermuda, died in the World Trade Center a decade ago as well.

Visitor Deanna Hansen, 19, of West Jordan, stopped to read the name tag on a flag. This one was James Kelly, who died in New York on Sept. 11.

"I think of his family mostly," she said softly. "I wonder what they went through and are going through."

Hansen was one of thousands who walked through the Healing Fields Sunday to remember the terrorist attacks on the United States. There, people watched soldiers honored for giving their lives in Iraq or Afghanistan as well as the first responders, firefighters, police and emergency personnel that died in rescue attempts at the Pentagon, the World Trade Center and aboard the planes that became the terrorists' weapons.

There were tears as bagpipes played "Amazing Grace" while families laid flowers at the base of a rifle and helmet commemorating military personnel who died.

Ron Wagstaff, wearing a red shirt with the name "Matt" stenciled on it, said his 34-year-old son died in a Blackhawk helicopter in the mountains of Afghanistan in 2010. The dark sunglasses could not hide tears that tracked down his cheek.

"I hope we're safer," Wagstaff said. "I hope their lives were given for something. Each of them — all they wanted to do — was fight for this country."

The Healing Fields are a national movement that seeks to offer tributes, education and remembrance. According to the Colonial Flag Foundation, which runs the Healing Fields, Sandy was the first in the nation to have a Healing Field. The city's field will be on display through Tuesday.

Those who listened to the names of the fallen being read aloud — along with the sharp clang of a bell after each — reflected on the past and where the nation is 10 years later.

Dave Sauer, 58, a former Marine who was in the Utah National Guard when the attacks occurred, brought his family to the Healing Fields and hoped it would make an impression on his 11-year-old son, Ben.

Sauer said he remembered feeling "shocked and angry" when he saw the attacks unfold on television. His son looked up at him.

"You forgot sad," the 11-year-old said softly.

Sauer rubbed his son's head and nodded.

About 100 flags away, Deanna Hammond studied the name of Edward Lichtschein closely.

"You don't know what 3,000 looks like until you get here," she said, looking over the vast field of red, white and blue.

Hammond, 62, said she and her husband went to New York shortly after the attacks to serve as Red Cross volunteers. To this day, her husband, Bruce Hammond, still has nightmares about the stories they heard across the street from the twisted steel and concrete carnage of the twin towers.

Both said they hoped that the reflection on the 10th anniversary would extend beyond the day's events and for another decade to come.

"We need to be selfless and not so selfish," she said. "That's how we get better."

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