

Newton 9-11 Memorial Essay -- James Dandrea

911. The number called when trouble arises. 9/11. The worst terrorist attack in American history, devastating and scaring much of the American public, killing almost three thousand people in the tragedies. Whether the date was intentional or not, 9/11 is remembered as a day of somber and loss for all of America, ripples felt throughout the country and across the world. These ripples continue through today, in remembrance of those who lost their lives, like the 8 Newton residents who passed away in the tragedy.

The four planes used in the attack—American Airlines Flight 11, United Airlines Flight 175, American Airlines Flight 77, and United Airlines Flight 93—were hijacked by Al Qaeda terrorists, and crashed into the North and South towers of World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, assumed to be intended for the White House. On all four flights, all passengers were killed on impact. Many more died in the buildings and in the collapse of the towers. A true tragedy among tragedies.

The Newton 9/11 Memorial has been an important piece of Newton for as long as I remember. Living so close to it, I've passed by it weekly and visited it with family over the years, giving respect to those who lost their lives that day. The memorial itself is well designed, the roman numerals for 9/11 beautifully carved for the memorial, the smooth stone standing out among the contrasting colors of the red brick leading up to the gray stone. Donors to the memorial are engraved on the red bricks, showing the many who cared and felt the overwhelming sadness for those lost. The stones leading up to the memorial read a short story of the attacks, leading to the names of those killed lying upon the memorial, engraved in stone, to be forever remembered. It's important to stay in remembrance for the eight people of Newton killed 22 years ago, as a community so strongly affected by it.

Several police and firefighters came to speak at the annual commemoration, which resonated strongly with me because it is a well narrated story for what they lived for, how they will be remembered, and for their memory to live in honor of them. Their speeches made me feel like I knew the deceased, and intertwined my feelings deeper into the tragedy. May comfort and peace be brought to the families of the deceased, and may those who died rest in peace.