

9-11 Thirteen Years Later Community Comment Sept. 11, 2014 Mike Goldsby

Chances are you remember exactly what you were doing 13 years ago today. My wife and I were getting ready for work and our daughter called us from San Francisco. She told us to turn on our television. The United States was under attack.

The first image of a plane hitting the Twin Towers was unreal. I knew what I was seeing but couldn't believe it. News reports of other planes crashing made the situation even more unreal.

We had visited New York just the year before and I still have images of my happy family on top of the World Trade Center on a sunny day.

They estimate that fifteen thousand people were in the Twin Towers at the time of the attack. Almost 3,000 died, in New York City, the Pentagon and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. These casualty numbers are slightly higher than the attack on Pearl Harbor. Most of the casualties in the 9-11 attacks were civilians, representing 90 different countries. But there were also first responders; 343 firefighters, 60 police officers, and 2 were paramedics. They were killed in the line of duty as they tried to rescue civilians from the towers that collapsed.

And, we cannot forget the military service members that have been killed in action defending our freedom.

What is the proper way to observe this day?

Humboldt Bay Fire and the Eureka Police Department organized a joint tribute to honor those who were lost, the heroes, the families left behind, and the survivors of the events of that fateful day with a bell ceremony at Noon at Humboldt Bay Fire Station #1. The public is encouraged to attend.

What is next? I don't remember paying much attention to al-Qaeda prior to 9-11. Justice was served to the leaders of Al-Qaeda. The group was severely weakened but news reports indicate it fractured into a number of much smaller offshoots in multiple locations in the Muslim world.

And now a new threat, ISIS or ISIL, is rising up. It is estimated they have up to 4,000 fighters in Iraq. I know little about them except they promote violence against people who do not agree with their religious interpretations. And that is enough information for me.

The graphic videos of beheading prisoners show what kind of people they are. I believe the religions of the world can co-exist, but this violence cannot be tolerated regardless of religious affiliation.

But, what do we do about it? It is a chronic problem in the Middle East. It did not happen in just the last four years. Our political system may seem slow to respond, but we will respond, through this administration and the next.

This is Mike Goldsby for Community Comment