



Remembering 9/11 on the 20th Anniversary



On 11 September 2001, the Nation watched in horror as we were plunged into a conflict that would affect the trajectory of our Country forever. In the days following the attack, the United States and the world attempted to make sense of the variety of emotions from shock to sadness to fear, anger and uncertainty of what the future might hold for us as a Nation. For some, the attacks created a new calling to military service; for others, the calling would be to service as DA civilians, both to serve our Country in a time of need.

Here at Rock Island Arsenal, experiences varied greatly. Ms. Cindy Beserra was serving a Staff Action Control Officer at the Operations Support Command (OSC) and remembers the dramatic shift from peacetime to Delta level operations. Some in the Command had been sent home when heightened security measures were put in place. She remembered the weird feeling of coming to work earlier than her usual time to start work when it was “totally dark and so very few here were at work, duties were so very different! No cleaning crew – you

did all that yourself and had to use buddies to throw the trash out...” She continued describing the feeling of being “terribly leery of people.....and I found myself wondering how the heck could this have happened? How could life ever be the same? The stress levels were high.”

In the years prior to the 11 September 2001 attacks, the Arsenal had been an open post. Mr. Mark Kane, who was working at the Army Corps of Engineers at the Arsenal, recalled how it was common occurrence for “Quad Cities people to use the installation as a shortcut between Moline and Davenport and vice versa, so much so that I recall a release that was sent to area media asking the Quad Cities to not cross the Arsenal during peak times due to traffic backups.” That all changed; the legacy of the attacks remain today with the ID checks and visitor passes to gain access to the Arsenal. Mr. Kane remembers, after hearing of the first plane hitting the Towers, being concerned for family members due to recent work in the World Trade Center-and watching the second plane hit, then hearing a reporter at

the Pentagon state ‘that he didn’t want to alarm anyone, but he felt the Pentagon shake as if something had hit it...’ “It wasn’t long after the Pentagon was hit that our supervisor directed us to leave, that only those people with a Delta clearance would be allowed to come on to the installation.” It was not for several days that he was allowed to return to work at the Clock Tower building.

Mr. George Eaton had recently retired as a Lieutenant Colonel from OSC and was working as a consultant in Building 350 when the attacks took place. He remembered that “someone stuck their head in my office and told me that a plane had just hit one of the Twin Towers. I followed that person down to the operations center and watched the TVs seeing the second plane hit. Then

the news came in that the Pentagon was hit. At that point, the operations center was secured and they realized I should not be there. About an hour after that, I was asked to go home as the installation was now at Delta and closed.”

In the aftermath of the attacks Ms. Beserra fondly remembers the feeling of how much the Country had come together. She recalled feeling “very proud of that.” Ever since the attacks, on the day commemorating those lost she always ensures that she participates by making it “my personal effort to walk and attend the events every year. We really never can forget, frankly I struggle with forgive.”



9/11/2001, NEVER FORGET



THE ASC HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Volume 11, Issue 12

September 2021

Presented to you by your friendly ASC History Office. Feel free to call or stop by our office for any of your history needs.

Kevin Braafladt, Command Historian
Mark Struve, Assistant Historian

kevin.d.braafladt.civ@mail.mil
mark.j.struve.civ@mail.mil