REMEMBERING 9.11
In this special edition, we look at the 15 years that have passed since September 11, 2001.

EDITOR’S FOREWARD

It was a terrifying moment. The earth stood still as first one plane, and then a second crashed into the Twin Towers above New York City’s skyline on that fateful day.

Word came moments later that a third plane crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. A fourth plane went down in the fields of Pennsylvania after a group of heroic passengers attempted to take back the plane from hijackers.

Reality began to sneak in, 15 years ago. The United States was under attack.

Fifteen years later, our nation is still recovering from the tragic events that claimed almost 3,000 lives. Many of the people we knew lost family members, or knew the first responders who died during the aftermath of the attack in their attempt to rescue survivors.

Now, as communities across America rally to recognize the 15th anniversary of 9/11, Ridgecrest prepares in its own way. For several years, the Ridgecrest Exchange Club has put on the Field of Remembrance, where flags are placed at Freedom Park behind City Hall, 100 W. California Ave.

For nine years, the service organization has planned and beautifully executed the Parade of 1,000 Flags, where a sea of American flags are carried by volunteers from all walks down our city’s streets, and in partnership with the Sailors and servicemembers from Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake.

Its grand marshal in 2015 was our own Congressman, House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy. This year, on Sept. 10, the Exchange Club selected Scott O’Neil, retired executive director of Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division at China Lake and Point Mugu.

People still remember where they were, remember the impact it had on the nation. Many residents shared their thoughts and are included as vignettes in this special edition. Others reflect on where our nation has gone, and remind us to be Americans.

Like the residents of our valley have shown, we as a people rallied around the U.S. as it declared war on terrorism and sought to punish those responsible for the terrorist attacks.

The world we knew is radically different than from the ones some of us grew up in before 9/11 occurred. We enhanced our security, enacted laws that would both ensure greater protection and create some controversy. This country went to war twice, against Afghanistan and the Taliban in 2001, and against Iraq in 2003.

Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al-Qaeda, was finally killed after an exhaustive manhunt in May 2011.

As the world shook and recovered from the tragic events, it rebuilt itself. The World Trade Center is being rebuilt, once again transforming the New York skyline and filling in the gaping hole that was created by the terrorist attacks.

Here in the Indian Wells Valley, we honor the military personnel who died during the war on terrorism that followed. Banners fly on our city’s lamp posts with the faces servicemembers who are natives or have ties to the Indian Wells Valley. Our schools continue to build off educational opportunities offered by NAWCWD.

We continue to support our first responders, who spend every day watching and protecting our community.

As we commence to remember on the 15th Anniversary of 9/11, we at the Daily Independent want to thank those who serve, our first responders. We also will never forget the tragic event that occurred on that day in 2001, or the fact that we emerged stronger than ever as a nation and as a community.
NEW YORK (AP) — Fifteen years after the Sept. 11th attacks, Lower Manhattan has been reborn. The revitalization of the city’s downtown, powered by $30 billion in government and private investment, includes not just the reconstruction of the World Trade Center site, but also two new malls filled with upscale retailers, thousands of new hotel rooms and dozens of eateries ranging from a new Eataly to a French food hall, Le District.

The statistics alone are stunning. There are 29 hotels in the neighborhood, compared to six before 9/11. More than 60,000 people live downtown, nearly triple the number in 2000. And last year, the area hosted a record 14 million visitors, according to the Alliance for Downtown New York.

And while there’s plenty to do downtown for free, including seeing the 9/11 memorial park, visitors have also shown a willingness to pay relatively steep prices for certain attractions. The 9/11 museum, which charges $24, has drawn 6.67 million visitors since its May 2014 opening. The observatory atop One World Trade Center, which charges $34, has drawn 3 million people in the 15 months since it opened. In comparison, the Statue of Liberty gets about 4 million visitors a year.

“I don’t think anyone would have expected that we would have rebounded so robustly, so quickly,” said Jessica Lappin, president of the Alliance for Downtown New York. “There’s the physical transformation at the site itself, but there’s also the neighborhood. There’s an energy here. People could have given up after 9/11 and nobody would have blamed them. Instead there has been a tenacity, a dedication that is inspiring.”

The Alliance for Downtown New York was founded before 9/11, in 1995, when the “neighborhood was on its heels,” Lappin recalled. “The vacancy rate was going through the roof.” At the time, downtown was a strictly 9-to-5 area, keyed to the workday rhythms of Wall Street and City Hall, deserted at night and on weekends. Revitalization efforts were just getting underway “when 9/11 hit and changed everything.”

But as government funding for disaster recovery began to pour in, private investment followed, spurring a massive rebuilding that continues to this day. For blocks surrounding One World Trade, half-built towers and cranes still clutter the sky, barricades and scaffolding line the streets, and the whine and clatter of jackhammers fill the air. Construction workers in hardhats are as ubiquitous as tourists. The recession hampered efforts to bring businesses back, but Lappin says private sector employment — 266,000 workers — is finally nearing pre-9/11 numbers. Conde Nast and Time Inc. have relocated downtown. Group M, one of the world’s biggest advertising firms, will move into Three World Trade Center when it’s complete.

So far, three towers have been built with plans for more.

The neighborhood is also becoming a shopping destination. Brookfield Place opened last year with luxury retailers like Gucci and Diane von Furstenberg. It also houses Le District, a French food hall with a creperie, cafe, bar and more, as well as Hudson Eats, with outposts of popular local eateries like Mighty Quinn’s BBQ and Num Pang’s Cambodian sandwiches.

A second shopping center, Westfield, opened in August inside the Oculus, a striking white structure designed by famed architect Santiago Calatrava. The curves of the Oculus’ two ribbed wings are silhouetted by One World Trade rising behind it. Inside the Oculus, retailers range from Apple to Kate Spade to The Art of Shaving. The complex connects to Four World Trade, where the new Eataly NYC Downtown offers a bounty of bread, cheese, coffee, produce, pasta and more. Below ground a massive transit center houses subways and a New Jersey PATH train station.

Elsewhere in Lower Manhattan, a Tom Colicchio restaurant is planned for the just-opened Beekman Hotel; the soon-to-open Four Seasons hotel will host a Wolfgang Puck restaurant, and the storied Nobu restaurant will move downtown from Tribeca. Other downtown attractions include Alexander Hamilton’s tomb in the graveyard of Trinity Church, the National Museum of the American Indian and the SeaGlass Carousel, which opened last year near where boats leave for the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

But near the top of many visitors’ New York itineraries these days is a pilgrimage to the place where planes turned the twin towers into smoking piles of twisted steel and rubble. The tranquil park formally known as the National September 11 Memorial features tree-lined walkways and reflecting pools in the footprints of the twin towers. Bronze parapets around the pools bear the names of the nearly 3,000 dead.

On Monday, park visitors included three siblings from Barcelona, Arantxa, Meus and Pau Saloni, on their first trip to New York. “It’s really sad to see all the names, but it’s nice to remember them,” said Meus.

Also visiting Monday were Su-Ting Fu and his family, in town from suburban Westchester. “We lived in New York City when 9/11 happened,” he said. “But we hadn’t come to see this until today. It’s nice to see everything they’ve done to memorialize it, but I also love the greenery, and how it feels very much like a living type of memorial.”

Lappin said the neighborhood’s rebirth is a fitting tribute to the 9/11 tragedy. “We honor those who were lost, but we also celebrate life and move forward.”
IN MEMORY OF THOSE WE LOST
IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO HAVE REMINDED US WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AMERICANS
9/11
We Remember

“Let it be told to the future world, (that) when nothing but hope and virtue could survive, the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet and to repulse it. Say not that thousands are gone, turn out your tens of thousands; throw not the burden of the day upon Providence, but ‘show your faith by your works,” that God may bless you.”

- Thomas Paine

Message from the Mayor: The IWV Remembers

Today is the 15th Anniversary of 9-11, the words 9-11 mean something to all of us, and in the years since, for the younger people in our community, it may have become not a distant memory but a historical fact.

We are different in the Indian Wells Valley, many find it not a memory but a fact of our lives. It is a time to honor those who by job, tourism or whatever reason were caught up this horrific tragedy.

For those who were there by happenstance, we mourn your loss. Our gratitude and thanks also belong to the first responders who by choice offered their services and their lives to save others, rescue the living and recover the deceased.

In the Indian Wells Valley, it is personal to us. Many organizations, volunteers, non-profits, individuals, schools and governmental entities all make it possible - the Parade of 1000 Flags, the Veteran Stand Down, the Military Banners Program, Remembering Our Fallen Heroes, all the Veterans’ Service Organizations and so many, many more.

We raise our families up with pride in our Country, our Military and our Community - that is who we are. Are we all the same? That is Freedom. To be different, yet respectful. Call it freedom. It may be liberty. It is what this nation was founded upon. It’s what has defined us as Americans. It’s what almost everyone yearns for. It makes life worth living, which means it’s worth fighting, protecting and dying for.

Fighting and protecting - that is what our Military does everyday! That is what our Police and Fire Fighters - all First Responders do everyday.

Our flag is that symbol - we will carry it with pride in the parade - our symbol of whom we all are - Together!

Peggy Breeden is the Mayor of the City of Ridgecrest.

HONORING AND THANKING ALL WHO HAVE SERVED

Maturango Museum
100 E. Las Flores
760-375-6900
Honoring Our First Responders and The Community Service Members That Made Our County Great
Law Enforcement in the post 9/11 era. How have things changed?

By Jessica Weston
City Editor
jweston@ridgecrestca.com

The Daily Independent sat down with Ridgecrest Chief of Police Ron Strand recently to discuss the effect 9/11 and terrorism have had on law enforcement at the city level.

Q: Are we more or less safe than we were 15 years ago?
A: From a local perspective I think people are aware of terrorism than they were 15 years ago. I think it's closer to home, also because of recent incidents we have had in our own country in Florida and San Bernardino.

The proximity of Ridgecrest to NAWC and NAWS at China Lake brings its own set of benefits and challenges.

The big thing is that a big percentage of our population works on the base, the warfighter supporting the defense effort. In some senses we are a little more vigilant than other communities, but I also think because we do have a very safe community that's not always the thing that is on the forefront of our mind when it comes to home.

Q: Has local awareness of terrorism increased since 9/11?
A: I think security tightened up on the base considerably. But as for the community, although we're mindful of it, I still think we're still handling the same things we were 15 years ago, and that is managing the crime within our community.

Q: How has public safety changed? Do you do things differently as a result of 9/11?
A: At the street level? Probably not. But I think there's more communication between federal, state and local governments than there was before. I think there's a little bit more sharing of information.

Q: Does RPD have any safety advice for the upcoming 9/11 anniversary?
A: It is usually the federal government that comes out with that advice.

Q: What about the upcoming Parade of 1,000 Flags? Do you handle security just like that is a normal event?
A: Obviously, we always have a large amount of public safety present because they [parade participants] are on the roadway and we are closing down the roadway. There will be a substantial law enforcement presence there anyway.

Q: Do we believe that that would be the threat of a terrorist attack? The likelihood is no.
A: We do have a significant number of officers there because of the fact that we are providing traffic control at the time, [but] there is nothing that we have been told to indicate this is going to create any sort of significant event.

Q: Should people report suspicious activity they observe?

SEE PUBLIC SAFETY, PAGE 7
A: Yes, they should always report suspicious activity and let us address it. If it is within the city of Ridgecrest they should tell us. If it is on the base they should tell China Lake PD or NCIS. If it's in the county, call the sheriff’s department. Give us a call, let us check it out. A lot of times it turns out to be nothing but in that rare case it may turn out to be something significant then we can at least address it.

The 911 emergency line should only be used for actual emergencies. For suspicious behavior that seems less urgent, people should call the police business number at 760-499-5000.

If it's not an emergency dial the business line; it's something that you just have a hunch or this just doesn't look right but it's not a threat. You will get the police department in a timely manner, but we try to discourage 911 except for true emergencies.

Q: God forbid, but what do you advise for people who encounter an active shooter situation?

A: Three things, you either shelter in place, flee or in some cases you fight. It just depends. They have found that if you have somebody in a room with several people, sometimes if you have to, if there's enough people you can actually attack or disarm or overwhelm the person.

They talk about throwing objects, books, cups, whatever, just to get them off guard so people can escape or have the opportunity to attack them and get them to the ground. You have to make that decision.

If you are in a room that can be secured and there is someone shooting in the hallway, stay where you are and secure the room. If you have to fight to defend your life then fight to defend your life.

Q: Would the armored vehicle come into play if there was a terrorist situation locally?

A: Sure.

Q: How is RPD equipped to deal with such situations?

A: We train in active shooter situations three or four times a year. That is part of our training regimen.

Strand said RPD also assists with active shooter training at CCCC, BHS and local banks.

Q: In general, what advice do you have for people concerned about public safety post-9/11?

A: We always need to be reminded that we need to be vigilant. But we also need to be reminded that our country is made up of a variety of different people that have different backgrounds, different religions, and we still need to be mindful that we need to be respectful of that also.
As I reflect 15 years after one of the days in history that will be instilled in my mind forever I must say I feel incredible sadness. My sadness is not so much for those we lost, we have had plenty of time to honor, grieve and recognize their sacrifices. My sadness is for those of us who remain; literally moments after we realized as a nation we were attacked we came together like no other period in my lifetime. We were not black, white, brown, Hispanic, Asian, Muslim we were simply Americans united to serve one another and reevaluate what was great about this nation.

In the time since others have tried with every ounce of their being to sanitize what happened and erase our memories but even worse destroy our unity. Many think that was the original goal but in a true American miracle the opposite happened, WE UNITED! Unfortunately the attacks since then have far outweighed the damage of that day, we as a nation have never been more apart. We have turned against each other, courage has become compromise, strength has become aggression and prudence has become racist.

Fifteen years ago we were one, today we are many seeking only individual agenda’s, tradition and history damned and honest evaluation discredited.

To quote Edwin Burke “the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”

God Bless America!

Chip Holloway: A reflective analysis on what happened
A Special Thanks to All of our First Responders & Their Families

WE WILL NEVER FORGET

September 11, 2001

The day that changed us forever.

A firefighter performs the “Last Bell” ceremony during the Sept. 11, 2012 candlelight vigil at Freedom Park.

MISSION BANK
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760-371-9868
723 N. China Lake Blvd., Ridgecrest
It’s not often a piece of metal can bring a person to tears. But some objects hold more memory than others. At the Bakersfield 9/11 Memorial, there is a six and a half ton steel girder. Dusted with rust and packed with chunks of concrete, this piece of metal and rock was part of the twin towers. It fell to the ground that day 15 years ago and now stands as a testament to those we lost and a symbol of our country’s resolve.

In 15 years, our country has gotten stronger and our vision has become clearer. There is evil in the world. There are people who cannot accept the peaceful lives of innocents. America wants peace. We always have and always will because we recognize the horrors of war. But we have never and will never choose peace at the expense of freedom because peace without freedom is meaningless.

Unfortunately, the evil of terrorism has deep roots. Despite great efforts and sacrifices from our service-members their families, and our nation as a whole, the fight continues. But when we think back on 9/11, when we see the debris, when we remember the names and faces of those we lost, and when we look up at new towers rising in honor of the fallen, we know that America is strong, our values are worth fighting for, and we will never give in to fear or terror.

Radical Islamic terrorists declared war on us 15 years ago. They continue to persecute that war against us and against other peace-loving people across the world. 9/11 should serve always as a remembrance of our fellow Americans and first responders that tragically lost their lives that day, and also a clarion call that our nation must always remain vigilant in defending ourselves, our families, and our homeland so that this evil fails in visiting our shores again.

Congressman Kevin McCarthy (R-Bakersfield) represents California’s 23rd Congressional District and is House Majority Leader.

KEVIN MCCARTHY

Our country will continue to honor the sacrifices of our heroes, continue to heal, and continue to fight for our freedom and safety.

“We ask God to guide our nation in our continuing fight against terrorism and to protect the military men and women, law enforcement officers, and first responders who serve as our vanguards in defending our country.”

Sen. Jean Fuller (R-Bakersfield) represents California’s 16th state senate district and is senate Republican leader. A video of this address can be found on the Daily Independent’s Facebook page, www.facebook.com/thedailyindependent.

JEAN FULLER

Assemblywoman Shannon Grove remembers 9/11

It is hard to believe it has been 15 years since the 9-11 terrorist attacks. Many of us have vivid memories of that day; where we were; when we first found out; and how we reacted when we heard and watched the cowardly acts of evil. The events of September 11, 2001 changed our country and the lives of millions. Parents, spouses, and children of the victims had to carry on without their loved ones. The wounded had to gather the strength to rebuild their lives with the help of their communities. But for many young men and women, the events of 9/11 motivated them to act on their love of country and their sense of justice by joining the military.

9/11 woke up a generation of Americans to the reality of evil, just like the actions of the murderous tyrants of World War II woke up our grandparents’ generation. They realized that real love of country is more than a feeling; it’s an emotion that motivates people to stand and defend that which they love. Remembering 9/11 reminds us that evil must be faced soberly, with courageous actions, and with moral confidence. To accommodate or ignore people who commit horrific acts of butchery will only strengthen their power.

Let’s use the 15th anniversary to recommit ourselves to support our men and women in uniform who defend us from Islamic terrorists and tyranny around the world. Let’s also recommit ourselves to standing up for justice, for goodness, and for protecting the defenseless. And let’s devote ourselves to serving our neighbors, caring for our community, and adhering to our national motto: In God We Trust.

Assemblywoman Shannon Grove represents the citizens of California’s 34th Assembly District, covering a majority of Kern County.

SHANNON GROVE

We must fight back in the war on terror

Fifteen years ago, our country was shaken by the worst terror attack in our nation’s history. We will never forget the lives lost at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

We can all remember where we were when we first heard the news, who we called and the emotions that we were feeling. I had been in New York City the weekend before and could not believe my eyes as I watched in horror the images on television.

It was a stark reminder of the evil that exists in the world. But in the midst of our country’s darkest time, we witnessed acts of heroism from first responders, neighbors and friends as they joined together to help one another. We were united on the values that we in Kern County are so familiar with – faith, family and patriotism.

Our men and women in our Armed Forces answered the call to defend our freedoms. Words cannot express how grateful we are to those who serve at China Lake and military installations around the world to protect us from the dangers in our world. Still today, the dangers of terrorism are all too real and we continue to keep our military personnel and their families in our thoughts and prayers.

So on this September 11, while remembering those who lost their lives on that tragic day, let us reflect on the need to uphold the values we treasure as a country and defend the rights we cherish.

We will never forget what happened on September 11 and let us remember that we as Americans will always rise to the occasion. Together, as a county and a country, we are strong and resilient.

Vince Fong is a candidate for the 34th Assembly District.

VINCE FONG

Senator Fuller Honors Heroes and Remembers Victims of the September 11th Terror Attacks

SACRAMENTO – Senator Jean Fuller (R-Bakersfield) released the following statement on the 15th anniversary of the September 11th terror attacks:

“Fifteen years ago, we woke up to a nightmare. Terrorists attacked U.S. soil and left a trail of devastation -- including the deaths of nearly 3,000 people.

“The terrorists attacks shook the United States while also hitting home for me in Kern County.

“At the time, I was superintendent of one of the largest K-8 school districts in California. Once I heard about the horrific attacks, I was stunned.

“My mind was consumed with thoughts about my 30,000 students and their safety. What if there were similar attacks nearby? I flew into action and started my safety plan for my students and staff. But even in the business, my heart ached for the brave first responders risking their lives and the victims of those impacted by the acts of terrorism.

“As we commemorate the 15th anniversary of September 11th, we continue to pray for those whose lives were lost and for their families.

“We will never forget where we were on that day: the horrific images of the World Trade Center and Pentagon, first responders’ sacrifices, people searching for loved ones, and the bravery of passengers on United Airlines Flight 93.

“Amercia will continue to honor the sacrifices of our heroes, continue to heal, and continue to fight for our freedom and safety.

“We ask God to guide our nation in our continuing fight against terrorism and to protect the military men and women, law enforcement officers, and first responders who serve as our vanguards in defending our country.”

Sen. Jean Fuller (R-Bakersfield) represents California’s 16th state senate district and is senate Republican leader. A video of this address can be found on the Daily Independent’s Facebook page, www.facebook.com/thedailyindependent.

JEAN FULLER

MESSENGES FROM OUR LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEADERS
What 9/11 Means to Me

Like most Americans, I will never forget where I was that morning. I had just finished a briefing in Maryland and was getting ready to drive to Washington, DC when I heard the news. And, like most Americans, I was shocked, saddened, and angered all at once. I didn’t truly appreciate the full impact of the event, but in the days and weeks that followed and as more information became available, it became obvious that a new world threat had emerged and life would never be the same.

Without question, that morning was a defining moment for our nation. We were defined, not by the tragedy, but by our response. Our country pulled together in a way that could not be understood by those who would commit such a terrible act. When the terrorists boarded those planes, they decided to take the lives of their fellow man for no other reason than the fact that they were different. We are a people that believe in tolerance, in compassion, and in self-determination, and the evil and hatred within their hearts could not tolerate it.

What they failed to understand is that America is built upon an appreciation for the differences that we all share as Americans. We respect each other’s differences, we actually celebrate our diversity! There are countless cultures, religions, and ideologies throughout our country. The members of these groups live together, work together, and help one another because though we have our differences, we have far more similarities. We have compassion for one another. We hold the belief that we can learn from new ideas. Those that hated us for our differences could not have understood the way every man, woman, and child would pull together in support of one another, regardless of race, gender, or ideology. They could not understand the heroism of our first responders, many who laid down their lives for complete strangers without hesita- tion. They could not understand the way our communities would selflessly pull together in support of one another. But we did... and that was the defining moment for America.

Winston Churchill once said, “You have enemies? Good, that means you’ve stood up for something, sometime in your life.” That may be truer here in the United States than anywhere else. America has its share of enemies without a doubt, maybe more than most other countries in the world. But I truly believe that the reason is because America, more than most countries in the world, has stood for something and will continue to stand for something. America stands for the principles of freedom, liberty and unleashed human potential like no other nation before or since its founding. That is part of the reason I have attempted to do my part to serve this Country. From serving in the United States Navy to my present role as a Kern County Supervisor, I believe that our National and our principles are worth defending.

It has been mentioned that this year is the first year that incoming high school freshman will learn about this tragedy as a historical event that has occurred before they were born. For this reason and many more, it’s more important than ever to remember the events of that day, and to recommit ourselves to those principles that we proudly uphold, regardless of who would try to tear us down for it. Let them learn that we are diverse and proud of it.

We are more than our differences, we are Americans.

Mick Gleason is Chairman of the Kern County Board of Supervisors, representing Ridgecrest and the First District. He is Captain, U.S. Navy (retired) and past Commanding Officer, Naval Air Warfare Center China Lake.

15 years later

Most of us remember where we were and what we were doing on Sept. 11, 2001, when the terrifying images began to emerge on our TV screens. It was an event that seared itself into the national conscience. What struck me in the days and weeks that followed, however, in sharp contrast to the unimaginable acts of evil, was the humanity it revealed in the American people.

This nation rallied together in our time of need and uncertainty. It was such a powerful example of just how great this country is. Where we called home, or what we did for a living did not distinguish us. We all called ourselves Americans.

Fifteen years later, our men and women in the military remain deployed around the world, engaging our adversaries, protecting our allies, and sacrificing every day to ensure that you and I continue to enjoy the freedoms that are foundational to our American way of life. There are also those who serve closer to home, keeping our neighborhoods, communities, and borders safe. National Guard, fire fighters, law enforcement officials, and other first responders who were so central to our nation’s response during and after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, continue to put their lives in the line every day to protect and preserve our way of life. They, too, sacrifice for our national ideals, and so it is important to honor and give gratitude to all those who wear the uniform, serving our communities and our country, both at home and abroad.

Although we will never forget the events of Sept. 11, 2001, we must also consider...
Remembering 9/11

The anniversary of 9/11, also known as Patriot Day falls on a Sunday this year, but that won’t stop some local schools from having some sort of remembrance of the date.

Every year the Ridgecrest Charter School’s PTO sponsors a “Hero’s Day” to celebrate all first responders in honor of their service in remembrance of 9/11. This year the event will be on Friday Sept. 9 at 8:30 a.m. (The school also takes part in the Parade of 1,000 flags.)

“We’ve invited local police, firefighters, paramedics and they will be doing a demonstration for children with police cars, firetrucks and ambulances,” said Charter School Asst. Director Miriam Hogg.

“They will get explanation in their classrooms and then they’ll learn more with the demonstrations with the officials that will be here.”

The event is serious as befits the occasion, but the kids can also have fun. “It helped my son learn not to be scared of the police and fire departments. They get to see what they do,” said Charter School PTO secretary Jennifer Leonard. “It builds friendship between them.”

The whole thing wraps up with a luncheon, during which kids get to chat with the first responders.

“We’re really looking forward to honoring all those who serve,” Hogg said. “Especially being in a military town, our kids look forward to any opportunity that they can support and honor military families.”

Immanuel Christian School marches as a school in the Parade of 1,000 Flags. “I think so far we have 30 signed up,” said principal Lisa Waddill. “We do it each year, pretty much since the beginning.”

Understanding of the significance of the event varies by age range, she said. “For younger ones right now, we are just giving them the opportunity to celebrate and honor our veterans.

“We look at it from the aspect of teaching them citizenship. One of our pillars at the school is citizenship and that ties in.”

Those too young to understand the significance of the 9/11 terrorist attacks are taught the significance of the American flag. “It rep-
SCHOOLS
Continued from

resents our country and they are showing pride in our country and those that serve and protect.”

Faller Elementary School celebrates “Patriot’s Day” every year, according to principal Melissa Christman.

Students are encouraged to wear red, white and blue that day, they stand during the national anthem and school lessons reflect the importance of the event. Christman said even the younger students can tell something significant is going on. “I think when the students see each other dressed in red, white, and blue it signifies to them that it is an important day,” she said.

The school also always has a group of parents and students participate in the Parade of 1,000 Flags she said.

Inyokern Elementary School marks the occasion with a Flag Ceremony every year. This year it will be on Sep. 9 at 8:30 a.m., according to principal Beverly Ewbank.

“The idea is to help the students appreciate the sacrifice of the first responders who stood in the gap when others fled,” Ewbank said.

Murray Middle School will also have a ceremony on their front lawn Sep. 9 at 7:30 a.m., according to principal Kirsti Smith. Smith said as the only school located on the Navy base, Murray is particularly interested in honoring the contributions of our armed forces.

Smith said there is a “brief ceremony, flag salute, national anthem sung by our choir and played by our band.” She said the students would be told a “little story” explaining the significance.

“None of my kids were born when this happened, but we do still think it’s important since we are on the base,” she said.

Gateway Elementary will be recognizing Patriot Day after the fact, according to principal Lisa Decker.

“We are going to actually have an observation of that on Sept. 12,” she said. Students are encouraged to wear red, white and blue and the day starts off at the school flag pole with a poem commemorating the day. “We kind of kick off our day doing that.”

The event will also be commemorated during an awards assembly later in the day. The school always has a group participating in the Parade of 1,000 Flags every year, she said.

Like others she said care is taken with discussing the topic with the younger students. “They weren’t born yet,” she said. “We have to be careful what we talk about, we talk about what a patriot is.”

Some students have some awareness of the historic significance of the date. “None of them were alive yet, but they might have siblings or parents that remember.”

Students from Immanuel Christian School participate in the 2015 Parade of 1,000 Flags.

PHOTO COURTESY OF IMMANUEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

PROUDLY HONORING THOSE THAT GAVE ALL AND THOSE WHO CONTINUE TO SERVE

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO TO PROTECT OUR GREAT NATION

PHOTO COURTESY OF Immanuel Christian School

Students from Immanuel Christian School participate in the 2015 Parade of 1,000 Flags.

PHOTO COURTESY OF IMMANUEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

113 E Sydnor Ave
Ridgecrest, CA 93555
(760) 446-1630

Hampton Inn
104 East Sydnor Ave.
Ridgecrest, CA 93555
(760) 446-1968
I was living in Fullerton on September 11, 2001. I was planning a wedding and my fiance was a new high school teacher. He woke me up with a phone call early that morning. The only phone was a landline, so as I stumbled to answer it all I could think was his car had broken down or there was some sort of personal emergency. So when he told me it was about something on TV, I was relieved.

“No, go turn it on,” he said. “Someone flew an airplane into the World Trade Center.”

I was not used to getting up so early and I just wanted to hang up and go back to bed. “People are jumping out of the building,” he said.

That got my attention. I turned on the TV just in time to see the towers collapse.

My first reaction was to realize how much growing up in China Lake and Ridgecrest has shaped me. I have worked with people who worked in the Pentagon and I could imagine their shock and horror. Maybe someone they knew was involved. How scared everyone must be.

I kept thinking about my parents in Ridgecrest and the people on the base. I called my dad and he said my mom couldn’t talk, she was getting ready to take a flight out of Inyokern on business travel.

“No, she’s not,” I said. My dad didn’t believe me that I could possibly know such a thing. They had not turned the TV on.

I wrote a long entry in my diary, talked to my fiance and my sister and watched TV all day. I felt my patriotic lineage and family background of civil service and was very proud of my parents for what they had chosen to dedicate their lives to.

I kind of expected people in Orange County to have a lesser reaction to the event, but honestly they seemed just as upset as people here. It was a hot day and every door in the apartment complex was open, with the news blaring. I remember people hugging each other for no reason.

Down the hall lived a young kid named Amir, who resembled someone from one of the countries that some people looked down on in the immediate wake of the attacks. Our landlord was a paternal sort and held a vigil that Friday for all the residents. When we stood in a semi-circle that night holding candles, little Amir was first in line.

I remember that most of all.

Jessica Weston is the city editor for the Daily Independent. She can be reached at jweston@ridgecrestca.com
15 years after Sept. 11: How the unity we forged broke apart

BY JENNIFER PELTZ
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — For a time, it felt like the attack that shattered America had also brought it together.

After Sept. 11, signs of newfound unity seemed to well up everywhere, from the homes where American flags appeared virtually overnight to the Capitol steps where lawmakers pushed aside party lines to sing "God Bless America" together.

That cohesion feels vanishingly distant as the 15th anniversary of the attacks arrives Sunday. Gallup’s 15-year-old poll of Americans’ national pride hit its lowest-ever point this year. In a country that now seems carved up by door-slaming disputes over race, immigration, national security, policing and politics, people impelled by the spirit of common purpose after Sept. 11 rue how much it has slipped away.

Jon Hile figured he could help the ground zero cleanup because he worked in industrial air pollution control. So he traveled from Louisville, Kentucky, to volunteer, and it is not exaggerating to say the experience changed his life. He came home and became a firefighter.

"Hile, who now runs a risk management firm, remembers it as a time of communal kindness, when "everybody understood how quickly things could change ... and how quickly you could feel vulnerable."

A decade and a half later, he sees a nation where economic stress has pushed many people to look out for themselves. Where people stick to their comfort zones.

"I wish that we truly remembered," he says, "like we said we’d never forget."

Terrorism barely registered among Americans’ top worries in early September 2001, but amid economic concerns, a Gallup poll around then found only 43 percent of Americans were satisfied with how things were going.

Then, in under two hours on Sept. 11, the nation lost nearly 3,000 people, two of its tallest buildings and its sense of impregnable. But out of the shock, fear and sorrow rose a feeling of regaining some things, too — a shared identity, a heartfelt commitment to the nation indivisible.

Stores ran out of flags. Americans from coast to coast cupped candle flames and prayed at vigils, gave blood and billions of dollars, cheered firefighters and police. Military recruits cited the attacks as they signed up.

Americans agreed: A Newsweek poll found 79 percent felt 9/11 would make the country stronger and more unified.

"I really saw people stand up for America. ... And I was very proud of that," recalls Maria Medrano-Nehls, a retired state library agency worker in Lincoln, Nebraska. Her foster daughter and niece, Army National Guard Master Sgt. Linda Tarango-Griess, was killed by a roadside bomb in Iraq in 2004.

Now, Medrano-Nehls thinks weariness on the part of other Americans is "shocking." The 1 percenters should not be "getting away with murder," she says.

"If everyone feels they’re getting their fair share," he adds, "it fosters better feelings toward one another."

For all the signs of kinship after Sept. 11, the first retribution attack came just four days later, authorities said.

Balbir Singh Sodhi was shot dead while placing flowers on a memorial at his Mesa, Arizona, gas station. Prosecutors said the gunman mistook Sodhi, an Indian Sikh immigrant, for an Arab Muslim.

Seeing hundreds of people gather in solidarity on the night of his brother’s death showed me "the greatness of unity," says Rana Singh Sodhi, of Gilbert, Arizona. But in the last two years, he’s felt a "change toward hatred again." He worries politicians are stirring animosity toward immigrants and minorities.

So does Imam Abdur-Rahim Ali.

After 9/11, he invited first responders for tea and coffee at the Northeast Denver Islamic Center to show appreciation and emphasize that Muslims "are regular Americans." Now, Ali, who is African-American, believes Muslims and people of color are being demonized with "incendiary and divisive" remarks.

"We can’t act like racism hasn’t been a part of all this," he says.

Can the United States feel united again?

Some Americans fear it will take another catastrophe, if even that can shift the climate. Others are looking to political leaders to set a more collaborative tone, or to Americans themselves to make an effort to understand and respect one another.

When Sonia Shah thinks about the push and pull of American unity since the attacks that killed her father, Jayesh, at the World Trade Center, she pictures a rock hitting a pond.

The innermost ripple, that’s the tight circle of support that came together around the people most directly affected by tragedy. Outside it, bigger and more diffuse, are bands of debate over policies and politics in the wake of 9/11.

"We usually see the outer rings of the arguments," says the Baylor University senior.

"But I think there always is a current of unity that goes underneath things."
Recalling 9/11 and its local reaction

Sept. 11, 2001 started out like any other day.

I got up and started to get ready for another work day at the paper, and then I turned on the television.

To say what I saw on the TV was horrific would be an understatement. I saw two airline jets crash into the Twin Towers at the World Trade Center in New York City. It was something I never thought I would see.

That is when I knew America was under attack. For the next two days, the eyes of the news media were focused on the attack. There were no commercials, and the American people put aside their differences and came together as one.

Not since the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor did the people unite. It was inspiring to see the people, regardless of race, creed, color, ethnicity or political persuasion come together in a show of unity.

What followed was even more inspiring. The China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, which closed its gates to all except key personnel the day of the attack, opened for business as usual the next day.

There were observances held at Freedom Park and some local schools. I had the opportunity to attend and cover some of these events. Ridgecrest, was always known for its patriotism, became even more patriotic.

Having grown up in New York, I have memories of the Twin Towers. I was a teenager when construction began. I remember getting off the ferry and walking past the construction site.

It really saddened me to see them come down in this manner.

John V. Ciani is a retired education and public safety reporter for the Daily Independent and a contributing columnist.

New York, N.Y. (Sept. 15, 2001) -- A New York City fireman calls for 10 more rescue workers to make their way into the rubble of the World Trade Center. U.S. Navy Photo by Journalist 1st Class Preston Keres
Where I was: IWV residents recall 9/11 attacks

Bob Gould, Ridgecrest PAC volunteer and many other offices
I was onboard a ship in the Baltic Sea, somewhere between Denmark and Stockholm, Sweden. It was a major item on BBC world news, every night. [My reaction was] shock, sympathy. Just wondering how bad it was going to get. Every night it was worse and worse.

Little Deer Durvin, 34th Assembly District Woman of the Year 2014, many other offices
I was an Ambassador at the Chamber of Commerce breakfast. Bill Farris came in and told us. Everyone was in shock. They dismissed the meeting so everyone could go home and be with their families. I went home to be with my husband and my daughter and we watched it on tv. We couldn't believe it.

Dorothy Saitz, Ridgecrest resident, retired NAWC civil service
I was absolutely stunned sitting in front of the TV watching the buildings. I didn't know who had done it. I was absolutely stunned, especially when the buildings fell down. At the end of the day I had a sense of sadness and foreboding.

Beverly Ewbank, Principal, Inyokern Elementary School
We were getting ready to go to school. My sister called. She was supposed to be at the Pentagon that day, but her meeting was cancelled. She said "turn on the TV." At first she didn't know where her son was. [He was OK.] We tried to explain as much as possible to the kids [at Faller Elementary], but all I can remember is that first day was so hard.

Ridgecrest Police Chief Ron Strand
I remember exactly where I was. I was working graveyard. I dropped my kids off at St. Ann school, came home, turned on the TV set and said, 'you've got to be kidding me.' At about the time they said a plane had gone into the building and it wasn't too long later that another one went through. All of a sudden, everything kind of changed.

The thought initially was that more people had lost their lives. It was just by a miracle that it was less than 3,000 people that were killed. It could have been a whole lot more. That was due to a lot of heroic work by the fire department, police department. Those guys gave their lives. They ran toward things...
instead of away from things. They went in and did what they had to. And because of that a lot of people’s lives were saved. On the other end a lot of firemen and police officers lost their lives trying to protect the community that they were serving at the time.

Odessa Newman-Staples, President of Ridgecrest Democratic Club of the High Desert, many other offices

That day I was late for work. I had the TV on and I was drinking coffee and the coffee was hot. [When I heard the news] it spilled. I dropped the cup and burned myself. It’s hard to remember, I still get chills thinking about it.

Leah Saitz, former resident, Ridgecrest native

I was in Vegas with my friend Andrea, at the Luxor. I got out of the shower and Andrea was freaking out. I watched the footage of both towers getting hit and thought it must be a tragic accident-wrong. It took me seven hours to get back to Orange County. Lots of traffic. Bad day listening to the radio.

Andy Stanford, author and Ridgecrest resident

I was in Texas conducting a firearms training class and thought, “The world just changed permanently and not for the better.” The subsequent U.S. wars of aggression, sporadic acts of terrorism on American soil and the loss of civil liberties due to the so-called “Patriot Act” only confirm my original reaction.

Peter Brown, IWV Water District Board of Directors

Well, first when I heard about it I didn’t think it was real. And then I thought it was anomaly, it was one of those things. Because planes have run into buildings before. When the second plane hit, it was horrible. I watched the TV for three days straight. And I was glued to it and it was scary. But I think we did a good job of rallying after it. We put ourselves down all the time, but . . . we had a problem in Lake Isabella [fire] and our whole town goes up there. We have to focus on what’s positive.

Elsa Hennings, President, Ridgecrest Charter School

I remember at the Charter School the students having their heads bowed in a moment of silence on that day. And we were in the process of picking a school mascot and they picked the Eagle. That really made it hit home.

Ginny D.

“When it happened I was teaching HS band and Mr. Austin & I did not know what was happening, starting so early in the AM. After finding out we were able to bring a TV into the room to watch the news coverage” It was a day never to forget.

Kaleen N.

I was in 8th grade on base and remember being sent home and then being bussed for the rest of the year due to the events of that day.
Remembering 9/11
Daily Independent

The 46th minute of the 8th hour of the 11th day ... terror rocked our nation. Honor all those lost, those who rushed in and those who had loved ones torn from their families. Vote accordingly to end terrorism.

Deana F.
My kids were at college in San Diego at the time and I remember being afraid for them on how they would feel being away from home. I did not want them to worry.

Mike F.
It was surreal just watching the news from 5:30 AM on. I could not believe it was really happening.

Jerry H.
I was on base at the time with my two baby boys and remember getting a call from my uncle, he said quick watch what is happening on TV. I was glad to have them with me.

Kevin C.
I was in Bakersfield at the time, and watched the news as the second plane hit the tower. I really wondered who was behind this event as the story was being told.

Fred M.
I got a call from a friend and turned on the news. I decided to take the day off and watch the coverage to see why and what was happening.

Mark B.
I was in an area with no TV and my wife called and relayed the information, it was unbelievable. It touched close to our family, a friend was on travel from the pentagon and was lucky not to be in his office, but a friend of another acquaintance was not and was lost at the pentagon location.

Jenifer K.
It was a Tuesday, I remember watch Tom Brokaw covering the event when it all was happening. It was sad to learn that an entire company of investment brokers were killed that day.

Mark M.
I was in a breakfast meeting with a few other business members, and a TV was on with the sound down, when someone said what is happening! Then a few employees of the restaurant came in and turned the sound up as we all stayed and watched in disbelief.

Rob Roche.
I was active duty with Weapons Test Squadron (now VX-31) China lake. We were on morning FOD walkdown when the first plane hit the World Trade Center. IIRC the base got locked down, everyone was sent home. I remember going home, walking in the door and turning the TV on just in time to see the second plane hit.

Ken Newton
I was in Ridgecrest and worked on the base. As I did most mornings, I sat down in front of the TV to watch a little news before going to work. The first tower had already been hit, and was on-screen, smoking. I don't remember which channel or network it was, but they
Never Forget

In Memory of 9-11

760-375-3100
I was at the point in my life when you added “a half” to your age and wore those two words like a badge of honor. So, on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, I was 10 ½, with a mix of childhood curiosity and aberrant maturity.

I was at home, beginning the morning as I usually did on off-track days: lying on the floor, channel-surfing. In Los Angeles, because of the high population, the school year was divided in three tracks: A, B, C. I was on B track, which meant that I had about a six-week break where I had a packet of homework to do.

Therefore, unlike many kids my age, I was actually not in a classroom.

Anyway, as I handled my usual routine of channel surfing, I noticed that the same thing was popping up on many channels I changed to. (Keep in mind, my family had DIRECTV, so outside of channel surfing itself being completely entertaining to a 10 ½-year-old, just imagine the many channels with this image.)

The image: two buildings that looked to be on fire.

I went to my mom’s room -- she was watching a newscast -- and asked her what was happening. She told me something about New York, and I immediately dismissed it. We live in Los Angeles, why does what’s going on with some tall buildings in New York have to prevent me from watching cartoons? I just wanted to perform my morning routine and go on with one of my many days off.

(Obviously, I wasn’t a news junkie back then.)

It wasn’t until the day went on and the details became more clear that I realized the magnitude of the situation. People who disliked this country decided to attack it, and they succeeded. And it affected a lot of people; perhaps even the whole nation.

We restarted school in mid-October, and from what I remember, my teacher was having moments of cautious reflection. There’s only so much you can tell a group of 10 year olds, while at the same time, it’s a teaching experience. One that is happening in real-time, not from a textbook.
Parade of 1,000 Flags signifies unity, remembrance

For the ninth year in a row Ridgecrest’s streets will turn into a river of red, white and blue as more than 1,000 people march in the Parade of 1,000 Flags.

The event, which starts at 9 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 10, commemorates the 2,996 people who died in the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. and those who died on board all four planes.

The Ridgecrest Exchange Club has coordinated the signature event.

The 3/4-mile parade route begins at the Sierra Lanes parking lot, 634 S. China Lake Blvd., will march north up the street, west on to West California Avenue toward City Hall and Freedom Park where flag bearers will plant the flags.

Staging for the parade begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. on the north side of the Sierra Lanes parking lot.

According to the Exchange Club, parade participants will include dignitaries from Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, the city, Kern County, law enforcement personnel, firefighters, military service-members and the Burroughs High School Marching Band.

This year’s grand marshal will be Scott O’Neil, retired executive director of Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division at China Lake and Point Mugu. Last year’s grand marshal was House Majority Leader Congressman Kevin McCarthy.

“It started as a club event, but it has turned into a Ridgecrest event,” stated Exchange President Timothy Neipp in a news release about the event. “People just come out of the woodwork to volunteer and come up with their own ideas.”

Once the parade marchers reach Freedom Park, they will plant the flags, which will form the Remembrance Fields, and will stand until they are retired Sunday, Sept. 18.

According to parade coordinator Pat Farris, more than 1,000 people will march this year, like it has in past years.

“It just turns out to be a spectacular sight it makes our hearts swell to see our community at its very best,” Farris said.

On Sunday, Sept. 11 at 7:30 p.m., the community will come together for the annual candlelight vigil, where each person will be provided a candle and participate in a ceremony.
Remembering 9/11

Celebrating the resilience of our nation

What I remember: A changed world, and reassurance after

BY RODNEY CONNORS
CIRCULATION MANAGER

It's the year after I graduated high school, I'm in the shower getting ready for a long day at Cerro Coso. In 2001, I was in college, adjunct faculty, and had two small children and a wife. I hear a frantic cry and my wife tells me I have to look at the news. She never took interest in the news before so I figured this must be important. I never expected to witness a moment so powerful. It seemed as though the world could cease to exist, time stood still, and our feeling of safety as Americans temporarily was shattered.

Not only was it clear many lives were being lost but it was happening live, witnessed by the eyes of a nation. The feeling of hopelessness over took me, all I could do was pray and see what unfolded. It was then, as the moments full magnitude hit me, that another plane struck. At that point the rest is an emotional blur of tears, and fears. I couldn't help escape the vivid thoughts of what it must've been like for the first responders and victims of this attack. These fears had for a time infiltrated my dreams.

Stories of heroism and bravery began to strike back at fear and we as a nation began the process of regaining our footing, and getting back up almost immediately. Terrorism failed as will always be the case. American's as a whole came closer and a dormant nation woke up.

Fifteen years later, we are left with a little more pride in our country. A knowledge of the potential threats of the world. But most of all a feeling of reassurance that at least we know as a country when we are put to the test I feel we will come together. My hope is we learned that we may as well love each other. When we come together against a common threat your my brother or my sister. When we are at peace such will still be the case.

Rodney Connors is the Daily Independent Circulation Manager.
Editorial: Our first responders deserving of thanks, admiration for their work

Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, Texas (TNS)

Every year about this time, we are reminded about our nation’s first responders, mostly because of the events of Sept. 11, 2001, more commonly referred to as simply 9/11. First responders are those people who work in law enforcement (police, sheriff’s deputies, DPS troopers, etc.), firefighters, ambulance drivers, EMTs and paramedics. They are called first responders because they are the first to arrive at the scene of some tragic event.

Ever since 9/11, the role of those first responders has made the public more aware of those hazardous jobs, and the public’s appreciation has grown.

Businesses, especially restaurants, offer special deals about this time of year in an effort to thank the first responders for their service.

We applaud those who make the effort to thank our first responders, but we point out that these people provide a very necessary public service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

It takes a special type of person to take on such duties because of the carnage they see.

Some scenes of tragedy can be quite gruesome, which most people would have a difficult time coping with.

But our first responders answer call after call and perform their duties in a professional manner, and they do it efficiently when circumstances allow it.

The emotional and mental strain from witnessing such scenes over and over again would be difficult for anyone to cope with. It’s not all that different from what our soldiers witness in the world’s war zones. Post-traumatic stress disorder is a major byproduct of a military career, but it is also a part of the world of first responders.

Police, or law enforcement, are typically the first on the scene of some tragic event, whether it be a vehicle accident or killing. They are the first to see the carnage. They have to assess the situation, call in for fire or EMS responders if nobody else has already done so, attempt to restore calm at the scene to the best of their abilities and interview witnesses if they are any.

That doesn’t even include making arrests if the situation warrants it. And, it doesn’t end there. If a death is involved and no family members are at or near the scene, it’s the duty of police to locate and inform people of a relative’s passing.

After the police make the call that EMS and/or the fire department is needed, personnel from those public services arrive on the scene to take over the care of the victims. While the police are the first to witness the potential gruesomeness of an incident, it is usually the EMS or firefighters who must actually get into the actual physical work of caring for the injured or deceased.

Undoubtedly, it’s that part of the job that can take an emotional toll on the responders. It is probably even more traumatic if a child is one of the victims.

Is it any wonder that some first responders suffer job burnout from witnessing such events? Thankfully, first responders do have support groups and/or therapy to help them cope with all that.

Not everyone is cut out to be a first responder, but we are thankful for and appreciate those who are. We should all take the time to let first responders know how much their work is needed and appreciated.
My Thoughts: Ridgecrest patriotic as ever

Being a Navy town, Ridgecrest has a long history of patriotism. Every year local civic, fraternal and veterans’ organizations as well as schools and churches honor the United States with events and observances.

The Fourth of July, Memorial Day and Veterans’ Day are revered holidays with veterans and local residents.

Since 1976, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has presented “Our Country Tis of Thee” to local audiences every Fourth of July. Five- to 12-year-old children perform the musical tribute to the nation covering important events in our nation’s history such as the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the westward expansion and the Civil War.

The church also holds an early morning Fourth of July flag-raising ceremony.

The Fourth of July celebration also features the Ridgecrest Lions Club’s fireworks show at the Desert Empire Fairgrounds. Under the chairmanship of Lion Steve Morgan, the show has grown into an extravaganza featuring more than $20,000 in fireworks.

Local organizations gather at the Desert Memorial Park for a Memorial Day service. The event features a keynote speaker. Participating organizations lay wreaths, and a local Boy Scout plays “Taps” to conclude the service. Scouts also place flags on the graves of veterans.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Ship 4084 also host a Veterans’ Day observance which features a keynote speaker.

The Ridgecrest and Trona Elks lodges also hold Flag Day observances. Local Boy Scouts perform the cremation of worn out or unserviceable flags at the Ridgecrest Lodge.

Local schools such as Pierce and Gateway elementary schools also honor veterans.

Students also learn about patriotism during the school year.

The Panamint Springs Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution visit all the local schools and teach kindergarten students The Pledge of Allegiance. After they recite the pledge, each student is given a certificate and an American flag.

Local Boy Scouts also place the flags along Blandy Avenue near the China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station Administration Building on federal holidays.

Since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Ridgecrest Charter School has hosted a Hero’s Day luncheon in which volunteers serve local first responders such as Ridgecrest Police officers, Kern County Firefighters, Kern County Sheriff’s deputies and Liberty Ambulance paramedics lunch, and students get to interact with them.

John V. Ciani is a retired education and public safety reporter for the Daily Independent and a contributing columnist.
Remembering the Victims and Honoring the Heroes

9-11

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The Parade of 1,000 Flags in 2008 rallied signs of hope in Ridgecrest residents.
We will never forget what happened on the morning of September 11, 2001. On this fifteen year anniversary of that tragic day, let us renew our commitment to God and country, remembering those heroes who lost their lives and those who gave their lives to save others.

We are forever grateful to those brave patriots who are defending our country and preserving our freedom. We thank them for their service and we will never forget those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for all of us. God bless the USA.

Congressman
Kevin McCarthy
23rd District
Burroughs Band marches on, 2012 Parade of 1,000 Flags

September 11, 2001

In Our Hearts
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Those who survived
Those who saved
And Our United Country

Remembering all who were lost
Honoring all who helped

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Daily Independent

Remembering 9/11 – 29

DAILY INDEPENDENT FILE PHOTO
The Burroughs High School marching band performs as it participates in the 2012 Parade of 1,000 Flags. The band will again assume its role in the Saturday, Sept. 10 Parade of 1,000 Flags.
REMEMBERING THE ONES WE LOST
THANKING THE ONES WHO RESPONDED
AND HONORING THE ONES WHO ARE CONSTANTLY THERE TO PROTECT US

Mick Gleason coordinates a team of marchers during the Parade of 1,000 Flags in 2012 prior to his election as First District Supervisor for Kern County. Below, firefighters prepare for the “Last Bell” ceremony at the Sept. 11, 2012 candlelight vigil.
Alli Garcia stands for a photo while holding her at Freedom Park during the 2015 Parade of 1,000 Flags.

Ridgecrest residents take a moment of silence during the Sept. 11, 2015 candlelight vigil at Freedom Park.

To all who sacrificed so much. We will never forget.

VINCE FONG
34th Assembly District

Paid for by Vince Fong for Assembly 2016
ON THIS NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE & REMEMBRANCE, and the anniversary of the September 11th Attacks, our thoughts are once again with those who lost loved ones on that tragic morning.

WE DECLARE THAT WE HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN THOSE individuals who lost their lives on September 11, 2001 and we honor the heroes that came together to serve others in such a remarkable way.