

## UNIT 8: BUILDING NATIONAL MEMORIALS

SEPTEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>

personal stories  
of transformation

**JIM LAYCHAK** lost his brother Dave at the Pentagon on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Jim realized the importance of creating a memorial at the Pentagon. He was invited to be one of the family members who would help develop plans. In May 2003, he became President of the Pentagon Memorial Fund. The Pentagon families' statement expressed the desire for "a memorial that would make people think, but not tell them what to think." The Memorial opened on September 11, 2008.

**GORDON FELT** lost his brother Edward, a passenger on United Flight 93, on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Ed was a highly accomplished computer engineer who loved to solve problems. Gordon became involved with the Families of Flight 93 organization in December 2002 when the President signed legislation to create a national memorial near Shanksville, to be operated by the National Park Service. Gordon believes that people visiting the Memorial will be inspired by the setting and the design to remember that even in our darkest days we can move forward with hope.

*"A common  
field one day.  
A field of honor  
forever."*



# UNIT 8: BUILDING NATIONAL MEMORIALS

SEPTEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>

*personal stories  
of transformation*

## TOPICS THIS STORY CONNECTS TO:

- Building a memorial that acknowledges the attacks on the nation and commemorates the individual victims
- Family members sharing their personal grief with the nation
- Commemorating the crew and passengers of Flight 93 as participants in a collective action that changed the course of history

## DEFINITIONS

**Family member** refers to a person who lost a family member on September 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Non-profit organization** is an organization that uses its profits solely to continue the pursuit of its mission and goals. Most **non-profit organizations** engage in community, cultural or artistic work.

A **memorial** is an object, structure, location or concept designed to **commemorate**, or honor, the memory of a person, place or event.

# UNIT 8: BUILDING NATIONAL MEMORIALS

SEPTEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>

personal stories  
of transformation

## BACK STORY BIOGRAPHY

**Jim Laychak** lost his brother Dave at the Pentagon on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Dave was a civilian working as a budget analyst for the Department of the Army. He had only recently moved from a Department of Defense office in Arizona into an office in the Pentagon located where the plane hit the building. He was 40 years old and married, with 2 young children. After his brother was killed, Jim attended some of the briefing sessions held for families by General Van Alstyne. While listening to the discussions at these meetings, Jim realized the importance of creating a memorial to remember what happened at the Pentagon on September 11<sup>th</sup> and he wrote suggestions about this to Pentagon staff. A few weeks later, he was invited to be one of the family members who would help in the process of building a memorial. At first he was on the committee to select the design from 1,100 entries that were submitted from around the world. Since Jim had a background in business, he took a leading role to seek funding to build the memorial. In May 2003, he became President of the Pentagon Memorial Fund. The memorial opened on September 11, 2008. It sits adjacent to the rebuilt section of the Pentagon that collapsed on 9/11. The Memorial is open 24 hours a day. The committee hoped that visitors will talk about those who died and the events of that day. The family statement expressed the desire for “a memorial that would make people think, but not tell them what to think.”

**Gordon Felt** lost his brother Edward, a passenger on United Flight 93, on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Ed was a highly accomplished computer engineer who loved to solve problems and was married with 2 young children. Gordon became involved with the Families of Flight 93 organization in December 2002 when the President signed legislation to create a national memorial near Shanksville, to be operated by the National Park Service (NPS). The Flight 93 National Memorial is being developed by a partnership that includes family members, community groups, national leaders and federal agencies. When visitors began arriving at the field near Shanksville to see the “sacred ground” where the plane went down, members of the local community began staffing the site so they could tell visitors the story of what happened. Gordon believes that people visiting the memorial will be inspired by the landscape setting and the design to remember that even in our darkest days, we can move forward with hope. The preamble of the memorial’s mission statement is “A common field one day. A field of honor forever.”



### I. WATCH PART 1.

### II. WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

When Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, family members of victims and Pentagon employees sought a memorial. United Flight 93 crashed in an empty field in Pennsylvania. Who would take responsibility for initiating a memorial there?

### III. WATCH PART 2 TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE MEMORIAL IN PENNSYLVANIA.

# UNIT 8: BUILDING NATIONAL MEMORIALS

SEPTEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>

personal stories  
of transformation

## IV. CONNECT AND REFLECT ACTIVITY

**1. Fact:** At 9:37 A.M., as Pentagon employees in Washington, D.C. watched the attacks in New York City, they were shocked as hijacked American Airlines Flight 77 was deliberately flown into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. The 59 passengers on board the aircraft and 125 military and civilian personnel working inside the Pentagon were killed.

**Personal Experience Question:** Jim Laychak and Gordon Felt, both of whom lost their brothers on September 11<sup>th</sup>, recognized that their families were experiencing a personal loss, but that the whole nation experienced 9/11 as a collective loss. How do their actions reflect this dual loss?

**2. Fact:** After a delayed departure, United Airlines Flight 93 took off at 8:42 A.M. from Newark, New Jersey en route to San Francisco, California. Around 9:28 A.M. hijackers in first class attacked, gaining control of the plane and turning towards Washington, D.C. Using cell phones and airplane phones, passengers and crew members learned of what was happening in New York and the Pentagon and decided to rush the cockpit of the plane and overtake the terrorists. As the passengers and crew struggled with the terrorists for control of the plane, Flight 93 crashed in an open field in Somerset County, Pennsylvania at 10:03 A.M., killing the 40 passengers and crew members on board.

**Personal Experience Question:** What were the passengers and crew trying to prevent by overtaking the terrorists? Why were their actions heroic?

**3. Fact:** Dedicated on September 11, 2008, the Pentagon Memorial consists of 184 memorial units that are individually engraved with the name of a victim and arranged according to the age of the victim from youngest to oldest. The Flight 93 National Memorial near Shanksville, which will open with a dedication on September 11, 2011, will later add other elements including a visitor center, Forty Memorial Groves of Trees, and a Tower of Voices with 40 wind chimes.

**Personal Experience Question:** What symbols are built into the designs of these two memorials? How does the design of a memorial affect the experience of visitors? What types of rituals can you envision developing in each memorial?

**4. Fact:** Staff at the Pentagon and the Army Corps of Engineers took the first steps in deciding to build the memorial at the Pentagon and invited family members of victims to join the process. Near Shanksville, people from five groups — the National Park Service, the Families of Flight 93, the Flight 93 Advisory Commission, the Flight 93 Memorial Task Force and the National Park Foundation — with members from the local community, national leaders and family members, are working together to plan and create the memorial.

**Personal Experience Question:** What were the roles and responsibilities of different groups in the building of these memorials? Does your community have a memorial to an event in history? Who helped to plan and dedicate it? How does the community acknowledge the memorial's presence?

**5. Fact:** Both the Pentagon Memorial and the Flight 93 National Memorial acknowledge the importance of remembering the victims as individuals. Jim Laychak said that at the Pentagon, "It's an individual memorial, it's a collective memorial, and it tells the story of what happened that day." Gordon Felt said "We want to remember the collective efforts of people that day, but we don't want to forget the individuals in that process.... There were heroes all over our country that day and we don't want people to lose sight of who those heroes were."

**Personal Experience Question:** Is it easier to understand history if you think about the personalities of the individual people who participated in that history? How do you think family members have influenced the creation of the 9/11 memorials around the country? Why do personal stories help us to connect with events?

# UNIT 8: BUILDING NATIONAL MEMORIALS

SEPTEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>

personal stories  
of transformation



## V. SPECIFIC RESEARCH RESOURCES

- **“We Have Some Planes,” *The 9/11 Commission Report***  
The first chapter of *The 9/11 Commission Report*, “Inside the Four Flights,” “Improvising a Homeland Defense,” and “National Crisis Management.” [http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report\\_Ch1.pdf](http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report_Ch1.pdf)
- **Flight 93 National Memorial**  
National Park Service website for the Flight 93 National Memorial in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.  
[www.nps.gov/flni](http://www.nps.gov/flni)
- **Pentagon Memorial Fund**  
The website of the Pentagon Memorial Fund, the organization that was the driving force behind the Pentagon Memorial. The site includes photographs, an interactive map of the memorial and individual biographies for each of the 184 victims.  
[www.pentagonmemorial.net](http://www.pentagonmemorial.net)
- ***Among the Heroes*, Jere Longman, HarperCollins, 2002.**  
A *New York Times* reporter writes about the passengers and crew who fought the terrorists.

## VI. CLASSROOM & SERVICE PROJECTS

Share your projects with the Tribute Center, and we will put them online for other teachers and students to learn about. Send your project descriptions to [education@tributewtc.org](mailto:education@tributewtc.org)

### 1. RESEARCHING PUBLIC MEMORIALS

How are memorials funded in other countries? Research two memorials, one in the United States and one in your community. Find out who planned the memorial’s location and its design. Who contributed money towards the building of the memorial? Who visits the memorial? What knowledge and understanding do visitors get from visiting the memorial?

### 2. MEMORY, HISTORY AND MEMORIALS

*Facing History and Ourselves* provides inspirational thoughts about how and why people create memorials to commemorate historic and important events. This website will help you to design a memorial to an event or significant person. <http://www2.facinghistory.org/Campus/memorials.nsf/home?openframeset>