

In Remembrance

9/11/2001

September 11, 2001 was day we won't forget, a defining time in our nation's history, and the first of its kind for the generations who hadn't been exposed to such feelings of terror nor national vulnerability before that day. This blog post is a day late, but I spent some time yesterday reflecting on the sacrifices made and the lives forever changed on that September day in 2001. Alan Jackson wrote a poignant song about September 11, 2001 that asks, "Where were you when the world stopped turning that September day?", and I think that everyone remembers where they were and what they were doing when they learned that the United States was attacked nine years ago. I remember receiving emails from my friend who was serving in the Air Force at the time:

To All My Friends and Family:

I just wanted everyone to know that I'm okay. We are not going anywhere. Our jets are on standby, but that's it. Also, Jerry made it home okay, for those of you that were worried. I love you all, and I miss you.

Love,

Kel

Hi Everyone,

Things are still going as well as can be expected. We are currently

working 12 hour shifts, 7 days a week. Please, I'm asking everyone,

do not call me during the day, because most of you know that's when

I sleep. I'm working 7:00pm to 7:00am. If you absolutely need to get in touch with me,

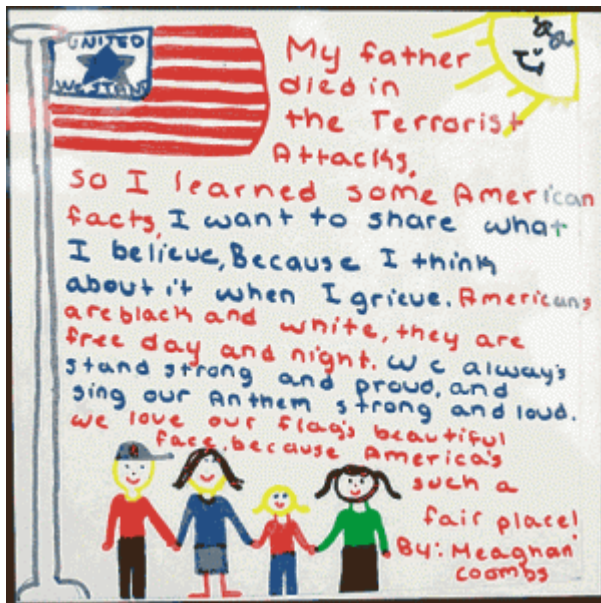
you can call me at home between 5:30pm and 6:00pm, or in an emergency I can be reached at work. (Mom and Dad you

can call me anytime, even at work if you want) Also I check my e-mail a few times a night, so I will respond to everyone as quickly as possible. If you have any questions, feel free to ask, but I only have limited info at this time. For everyone wondering, we currently have 1/3 of our jets standing by with a full load of fuel and equiped with armed missles. If anything else happens, the jets will take off and patrol from South Carolina to the Southern tip of Florida (the Keys) They will shoot down anything that comes within that area. They will give the planes one warning and if they don't turn back, our jets will shoot them down without hesitation. We are very tired and will be even more worn down by the time this is all over. Working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week will do that to you. Again, if anyone has any questions, please e-mail me. I love you and miss you all.
Love, Kel

Her emails illustrate the widespread uncertainty coursing throughout the nation at that time as well as the need to keep close contact with friends and family.

One of the most moving experiences I've had was visiting the 9/11 museum in New York city a few years ago. It was a somber experience, and there was scarcely a dry eye left amongst those who came to learn, reflect, and pay tribute to the

victims of 9/11. The victims, their families, and those who were affected in other ways by the infamous September 11, 2001 were in my thoughts and prayers yesterday, as well as they are today, and I've included the following video if you'd like to reflect as well. God bless America.



The Bus Driver Did WHAT?!?

I read a news item a few weeks ago about Shawn Brim, a bus driver in Washington who stopped his bus, got off and adjusted his side-view mirrors, and then proceeded to punch a nearby McGruff the Crime Dog in the face! What was he thinking? He thought it would be funny, he said. Understandably, everyone failed to see the humor in punching a children's hero in front of a crowd of horrified kids, and the bus driver was arrested.

On the other side of the coin and the world, there was another bus driver whose actions can only be described as heroic. Seems Brim has something to learn from Meher Mohammad Khalil:

LAHORE, Pakistan (CNN) – His job was to drive the bus. But Meher Mohammad Khalil is now being hailed as a lifesaver. When gunmen jumped out of bushes and began spraying bullets at the bus carrying the Sri Lankan cricket team Tuesday, Khalil quickly sized up his options and got everyone to safety.

"First I thought there were some firecrackers going off. Then,

when I saw the elite force cars in front of me taking fire, I immediately lost my voice,” Khalil told CNN on Wednesday.

“At that time, the other elite car that was with us gave me cover, and then, when I saw he was giving me cover, my courage and my patience returned. I decided to take the vehicle from there, and one way or another, even if I had to drive over someone, I would take this bus and escape.”

Khalil returned to the scene of the attack in the Pakistani city of Lahore on Wednesday to honor those who were killed and to place flowers in their memory.

One of the dead was Zafar Khan, a friend and fellow bus driver who had been in a vehicle behind Khalil.

“My eyes filled with tears that these were people that I was eating with and who died in doing their duty.”

Khalil had been part of a convoy heading to Gaddafi Stadium, where the Sri Lankan cricket team was to continue a match against Pakistan.

Six police officers were killed, in addition to Khalil’s friend Khan who was driving a bus with the match umpires.

The Sri Lankan cricketers praised Khalil’s quick thinking and action, saying he saved their lives. Six team members were injured by broken glass and shrapnel.

Team captain Mahela Jayawardene wrote on his Web site of Khalil: “He probably saved our lives, showing remarkable bravery in the face of direct gunfire to keep the bus moving.”

Crowds mobbed Khalil as he paid his respects at the place where his life changed in an instant.

“He is a hero, a real hero, a real man of the people,” a man in the crowd said.

Private donors in Lahore have rewarded Khalil with 300,000

rupees (more than \$3,000) – a small fortune for a Pakistani bus driver.

Today, Khalil says all he can feel is pain of the loss of life. And he called on the attackers to recognize that their victims are humans just like them, with mothers and sisters.

“For God’s sake, please stop this terrorism and let this nation breathe a sigh of relief,” he said.

9/11/01

We all know what that date represents. Well, most of us do. As I mentioned a couple of posts ago I worked with ELL students today. One student actually didn’t know about what happened seven years ago as he just came to this country less than a year ago. I suspect there were others as well. Needless to say, he had a little trouble answering the journal question, “What happened on September 11, 2001?”

Believe it or not, I have been subbing for a few years but this is the first year that the school I was at had a big thing going for September 11. The morning started with the entire school crowding around the flagpole. No, it wasn’t a “see you at the pole” event, though I would wish it would get these kinds of crowds. If more kids were followers of Jesus there would be so much less trouble at our schools. Back to the topic, the principal called out everyone to observe the all-too-recent holiday remembering what happened those seven years ago. There was the flag raising of course, a speech by the principal, and some students read poems they wrote. The principal made himself heard, but they really needed some amplification for the kids- I wasn’t able to understand, or in some cases even hear a single poem.

After that, everyone went in and first period started (late). The 9/11 theme continued with the aforementioned journal question, and then we saw an interactive CDR0M. Apparently the Chicago Tribune gave away these CDs back in 2002 commemorating the one-year anniversary. It provided archival footage of ten days of the Tribune headlines following the destruction with some commentary and a Flash intro to start. I was hoping to provide a download link for this, but I guess after six years it's either off the map or I didn't look hard enough. Actually, I did find a torrent (peer-to-peer download) with the title (*When Evil Struck America*) but there didn't appear to be any seeds, meaning it couldn't be downloaded. I'll check Usenet in a bit, but I'm not holding my breath. To the students' credit, they really were engaged and asking questions. A few periods later I was helping in the 7th grade social studies classroom, and the teacher did his own presentation on 9/11. He chose some really thought-provoking pictures, including one building closeup where people could be seen to the side falling because they had jumped from the towers, perhaps hoping for a better outcome than death by fire or smoke inhalation.

These were the only periods I had dealing with this topic, but it seemed like half the day. The rest of the day had typical lessons. I either taught, helped out, or led a review. I could say more on that, but I think I will leave this post focusing more on 9/11. Until tomorrow.

EDIT: I may not be able to give you the Tribune CD, but the History Channel has it's own interactive media: [102 Minutes that Changed America](#)



(Not my picture. For more pictures like this, [CLICK HERE](#))