On September 11, 2001, nineteen terrorists hijacked four planes and killed 2,974 people at the World Trade Center in New York City, at the Pentagon outside Washington, DC, and in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. As these horrific events unfolded, people from all over the world came to help; together they mourned the innocent lives lost, honored the first responders and all those who risked their lives to save others, and recognized the thousands of people who survived. September 11 stands as a defining moment in history, an event that continues to impact individuals and local, national, and international communities.

The National September 11 Memorial & Museum, now being built at the World Trade Center site in New York City, is dedicated to the remembrance of September 11 and the previous attack at the World Trade Center on February 26, 1993. The Memorial & Museum will be a place where people can come to remember those who were lost and contemplate the awe-inspiring compassion that followed. Through authentic objects and firsthand accounts, the Memorial & Museum will be a place for reflection and will serve as a central repository for the stories of September 11. The Memorial & Museum will remind us that in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, it was our common humanity and our ability to transcend differences that brought us together.
Preserving the History of September 11, 2001

“We entered Stairway B [of the North Tower]...As we were going up, the people in the building were coming down....I heard this very, very loud noise above me...Then the wind, a very, very fierce wind...started lifting me up off the ground...I crouched down...I tried to crawl into my fire helmet...just to protect myself...It went dark and then the next thing was total silence...Then the strangest thing happened...a beam of sunlight came right in on us...A 110-story building above us and I’m looking up at the sun!”

—First-person account by Lt. Mickey Kross, who survived the collapse of the North Tower. You can hear all of Lt. Kross’s story, and other stories of the day, at www.national911memorial.org.

Just days after returning from his honeymoon, Hazem Gamal was on his way to work at the World Trade Center when the hijacked United Airlines Flight 175 struck the South Tower where his office was located. As the South Tower collapsed, Hazem evacuated to safety walking through the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. At the same time, his wife, Liz, walked home through Central Park, anxiously awaiting news of Hazem’s fate. Months later, he was contacted by Ray Coleman, a recovery worker who had found a bundle of letters, including wedding RSVPs, that had survived the devastation. This “survivor” mail, along with Coleman’s moving letter to Hazem, are now preserved in the Museum’s permanent collections. Hazem and Liz Gamal tell their story in an interview at www.national911memorial.org.

Volunteers by the thousands came from around the world to respond to the attacks of September 11. They came to New York City, to Shanksville, PA, and to the Pentagon outside Washington, DC. They put out fires, searched through wreckage, assisted survivors, and provided food and comfort to rescue workers. In turn, community residents came out in force to express their thanks—in words and in tributes—to volunteer and professional rescue workers.

“The collections we preserve provide a palpable and immediate connection to the stories we are privileged to tell, and to the people behind those stories.”

Alice M. Greenwald, Director, National September 11 Memorial Museum
New York artists Mindy Kombert and Sherry Kronenfeld suspended their usual work for two years to create a monumental expression of caring and sacrifice. Paying tribute to the victims of the September 11 attacks, this 20-foot-high by 27-foot-wide American flag incorporates photographic portraits of the victims on cloth. Rescue personnel are featured in the flag’s field of blue; civilians comprise the stripes of white and red.

“The Thursday after September 11th was the first day back at school after the attacks for New York City students, and the first day I can remember having a clear thought since the disaster,” recounted Lauren VanHaaften-Schick, a student at the Bronx High School of Science. “I wanted to do—felt compelled to do—something that would bring a smile to someone’s face, or at least my own. Then an idea hit me; a simple design…that I could draw on a T-shirt and wear to school the next day. That night I did just that…I received such an overwhelmingly positive response that I felt I had to do something more.” In the weeks that followed, Lauren sold hundreds of her T-shirts to raise $5,361 for the United Way.

This Lady Liberty replica stood outside a firehouse on Eighth Avenue and West 48 Street in New York City during the months following the terrorist attacks. Mourners and passersby covered her with uniform patches, miniature American flags, condolence notes, souvenir postcards, and other keepsakes and tokens of remembrance.
Like the historic events at Valley Forge, Gettysburg, and Pearl Harbor, the attacks of 9/11 marked a turning point in history—a moment when people understood that the world had changed dramatically, even if they could not grasp the full meaning of that change.

The creation of the National September 11 Memorial & Museum is a response to more than the terrorist attacks themselves. Collectively, we are building a symbol that will honor the fallen of 9/11, tell the story of the day and its aftermath, and explore the ongoing impact of this historic event on America and the global community. Visitors will bear witness to the shared memories of September 11 and become part of the effort to document the history for future generations.

What You Can Do

- **Come to the tour** and explore the events of September 11 and plans for the National Memorial & Museum.
- **Add your name to a steel beam** that will be used in the construction of the Memorial & Museum.
- **Learn more** about the Museum’s exhibits through the online multimedia gallery, explore the collections and photographs, and listen to firsthand accounts from the Museum’s expanding library of recorded testimonies.
- **Spread the word** by telling others about the importance of creating a museum that will tell the story of September 11, 2001.
- **Share your story** and become part of the historical record.
- **Visit [www.national911memorial.org](http://www.national911memorial.org)** and show your support.