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AmVets Post 42 conducts Sept. 11 memorial program



AmVets Post 42 Commander Jim Hess (left) stands at the podium as AmVets Post 42 Chaplain Kary Colson (center) and Chiefland Fire Rescue Capt. Cal Morgan stand by to participate in the Patriot Day Program on Sunday (Sept. 11).

Story, Photos and Video By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 12, 2016 @ 9:37 a.m.

CHIEFLAND – Among the veterans' organizations presenting programs in memory of the Americans who were killed during the Sept. 11, 2001 set of attacks by terrorists was AmVets Post 42 of Chiefland.

The Patriot Day program late Saturday afternoon (Sept. 11), was part of a longer period of remembrance by the AmVets group in Chiefland that included a supper and later, a candlelight vigil as well.



CFR Capt. Cal Morgan speaks as AmVets Post 42 Commander Jim Hess stands behind him.

Chiefland Fire Rescue Capt. Cal Morgan and CFR Firefighter-EMT Ryan Martin were among the honored guests at the program.

Capt. Morgan spoke during the program. Firefighter Martin watched his colleague, as both men were ready to respond, too, in the event of a call for their service at any minute.

Morgan said this marks a very somber day that must never be forgotten. He shared with the

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audience part of his long professional career as a firefighter, which included when he was working in Marion County at Station 19 on that day 15 years ago.

Later Morgan served as a contract firefighter working overseas protecting the military when those soldiers were on bases. Morgan worked in the Bahamas, Alaska, and during his last four years as a contractor, he worked in Afghanistan.

Morgan worked as a contract firefighter for the military in Kabul. Then, he worked out of Jalilabad on the Pakistan border.

Morgan's final two years as a contract firefighter was at Bagram Air Field, the main hub for northern Afghanistan.

Morgan was part of a team there that protected not only the members of the American military, but civilians and troops from all over the world, as well as the detainees who were in the prison at Parwan.

The Detention Facility In Parwan, also called the Bagram Theater Internment Facility, was formerly known as the Bagram Collection Point.

Morgan shared that he remembers another somber occasion, when he saw a helicopter landing at Bagram Air Field and all of the servicemen around the helicopter came to attention.

"They were taking the servicemen who had passed (away) in the battlefield to the morgue," Morgan said.

There were 343 firefighters who died when they ran into the World Trade Center 15 years ago, Morgan said.

"And from that point," he said, "we did what we had to do to save who we could. And then the military took our flag to those who brought the battle to our doorstep. Now we're taking it to their doorstep."

Morgan said he says prayers for the veterans of the past, present and future as he mentioned some of his family members who have served in the United States military.

Morgan entered the fire service at the age of 14, he said. Morgan said that while he did not serve in the military, he gives his service through his profession as a firefighter.

"I just want to say 'Thank you' for inviting us," Morgan said as he concluded his comments. "And that we remember those who are no longer with us, those that are, and those that are currently in the military away from us – doing what they are supposed to do. Thank you."



Members of the Honor Guard from VFW Post 5625 of Chiefland are Jacob Wynn, the fire commander who is standing facing the three riflemen; VFW Post 5625 Commander Roy Grimes who operates the bugle for Taps (off camera) away from the firing team; VFW Post 5625 Sr. Vice Auxiliary Dennis McIntire; VFW Post 5625 Adjutant Kary Colson and VFW Post 5625 member Joe Elko.

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The late afternoon program included other similar powerful and thoughtful messages as the men and women of AmVets Post 42, the Sons of AmVets Squadron 42, the Riders of AmVets 42 and the AmVets 42 Auxiliary of Chiefland all worked together to memorialize innocent victims, and the first responders and others who gave their lives trying to save people on Sept. 11, 2001.

AmVets Post 42 Commander Jim Hess served as emcee for the 9-11 Program at the post north of Chiefland and south of Fanning Springs on the west side of U.S. Highway 19.

The memorial program opened with some of the Riders making an entrance.

Stephen "Preacher Man" Poore, a Post 42 member, drafted the program that was presented primarily from a podium, although the riders and Honor Guard were mobile and a distance off as they rode and fire shotguns respectively to pay tribute to the people who worked to rescue victims at the former twin towers.

AmVets 42 Chaplain Kary Colson opened the program with a prayer.

Colson is also the adjutant for this post, as well as being the adjutant at the VFW, where he serves on the Honor Guard too. He was among the riflemen in the VFW Honor Guard too.

The prayer by Poore and presented by Colson thanked God for bringing the people together to honor and remember the individuals who lost their lives and those who will continue to die at the hands of terrorists.

The prayer notes that those souls who have passed away are from bodies that no longer suffer.

"We ask that You bless us, and those family and friends of the fallen," Colson said as he read Poore's prayer, "and grant us comfort, and help us to celebrate the lives of those we so miss."

The prayer asked God to protect the troops as they seek to defeat terrorism. And the people praying asked God to bring home the Prisoners Of War and soldiers Missing In Action.

After Commander Hess led everyone in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, he spoke about the terrorists' attack from 15 years ago.

While this sneak attack 15 years ago was not launched against the United States by a sovereign country, Commander Hess mentioned it was an offensive action taken against America that affected people to a degree like when the Japanese government made its sneak attack against Pearl Harbor on a Sunday -- Dec. 7, 1941.

Hess read the account of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

This day was when four coordinated terrorist attacks by the Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda were launched against the United States.

Four passenger airliners were hijacked by 19 al-Qaeda terrorists.

Two of the planes, American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175, were crashed into the North and South towers of the World Trade Center complex in New York City.

Within an hour and 42 minutes, both 110-story towers collapsed, with debris and the resulting fires causing partial or complete collapse of all other buildings in the World Trade Center complex, including the 47-story 7 World Trade Center tower.

There was significant damage to 10 other large surrounding structures.

A third plane, American Airlines Flight 77, was crashed into the Pentagon (the headquarters of the United States Department of Defense) in Virginia, leading to a partial collapse of the building's western side.

The fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93, initially was steered toward Washington, D.C., but crashed into a field in Stonycreek Township near Shanksville, Penn., after its passengers tried to overcome the hijackers.

It was the deadliest incident for firefighters and law enforcement officers in the history of the United States, with 343 and 72 killed respectively.

"We take this time to reflect and pray for all those who perished," Commander Hess said.

Among the important messages of the day was to never forget the events on that day.

The program also sought to honor the innocent victims, as well as the police officers and

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firefighters who died in the line of duty as they performed their jobs of trying to save lives.

There was a moment of silence as a bell was sounded for the sets of tower occupants, airliner passengers, Pentagon workers, firefighters and police officers who died.

That part of the service reflected, as a bell was rang in memory of each set:

- * 8:46 a.m. – Flight 11 crashes into the North Tower – 87 perished.
- * 9:04 a.m. – Flight 175 crashes into the South Tower – 60 perished.
- * 9:37 a.m. – Flight 77 crashes into the west wall of The Pentagon – 59 perished.
- * Working in The Pentagon – 125 perished.
- * Flight 97 crashes near Stoneycreek, Penn. – 40 perished.
- * Collapse of the North Tower and South Tower – 2,606 perished.
- * New York City firefighters and paramedics go to help victims – 343 perished.
- * New York City Police officers go to help victims – 23 perished.
- * Port Authority Police officers go to help victims – 37 perished.

“May they rest in peace,” Commander Hess said as he concluded that part of the day of memorial events at AmVets Post 42.

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John G. Hancock (left) accepts a life membership certificate to AmVets Post 42 from Commander Jim Hess. This presentation was made a little bit after the memorial service that served to help people remember the events of Sept. 11, 2001.