

FLETC staff and students were impacted in various ways by the events of Sept. 11, 2001. In their own words, they tell their stories:

9/11 First Hand Response

Joel A Kirch, a term instructor with the Enforcement Operations Division and retired chief inspector with the U.S. Marshals, served on the U.S. Marshals' Critical Incident Response Team and was deployed to New York shortly after the towers fell.

"I arrived in New York City late on the 11th, and it is difficult to describe what I saw as I drove toward the site. I stopped a few blocks away and walked into Ground



Zero, which was difficult to navigate without the towers as landmarks.

"What I remember most about that first trip to the site, was the front landing gear of one of the planes lying in the street. I had been a police officer for 22 years and yet it is impossible to describe the horror and carnage we witnessed at Ground Zero," Joel said.

"The sights, sounds and smells will be with me forever. More importantly and what stays with me, was the spirit and efforts by the first responders and the way we were treated each day as we came off the 'pile.' People were lined up on the street cheering us every night. Food and clothing stations were everywhere, and we were handed small American Flags by civilians, who wanted us to know they

cared. It was a part of New York City I had never seen before. In the words of Browning's *Prospice* 'for sudden the worst turns the best to the brave.'

"What I tell my friends is the only thing worse than being there would have been not being there, and not allowed to respond."



9/11 Inspires Patriotism

Jay Gregorius, assistant director of the Training Research and Innovation Directorate, was stationed at the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Training Academy in Quantico, Virginia, in September 2011. After 9/11, he served as a liaison to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and worked to ensure intelligence gathering, criminal investigations and resources were coordinated between the DEA, FBI and other law enforcement agencies.

"I assisted in the formation and deployment of teams of government employees who for weeks spent their days with FBI Evidence Recovery Teams searching piles of rubble from the Pentagon looking for evidence and personal effects. On one particular day, one of our teams found the yolk (steering column) from American Airlines, Flight 77, plane that struck the Pentagon, and I found a woman's diamond engagement ring. It was a day I will never forget."



Jay's son, Randy, who was nine years old when 9/11 occurred, immediately began talking about the military and exploring how he could serve his country.

"From that day forward, he wanted to attend the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis . . . his sense of patriotism eclipsed even my own," Jay

said. "Every day in every way (school, sports, and community) for the next nine years, he worked towards his goal, earning an appointment to the United States Naval Academy in May 2010.

"Since September 11, 2001, I have gained a tremendous sense of appreciation and admiration for our men and women serving in the military," Jay said. "Having a son now serving in the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC), and who has been deployed in a war zone; and a father-in-law who served nearly 30 years in the USMC, including several tours in Vietnam, deepens the respect I have for our military and families who have loved ones in harm's way, or who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

"Since my arrival at FLETC, I have come to realize we have a significant number of veterans working here, from the Vietnam era to the more recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many of those vets work in the Training Research and Innovation Directorate. We owe every active duty, reserve, retired or separated member of our military and their families our sincere thanks and deepest gratitude."

9/11 Leads to FLETC position

Richard L. Gaaney, an instructor with the Driver and Marine Division, came to work at FLETC as a result of 9/11.

“On the morning of September 11, I was standing at my desk as the police chief of Randleman, North Carolina, watching the first images from television of the first tower burning, shortly after it was hit, when my telephone rang,” said Richard.

“It was a friend and former task force co-worker from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, who was calling to tell me to ‘turn the TV on – it’s hit the fan in NYC!’

“We both then witnessed the second plane come in and hit the second tower. As we talked about the events, and their impact on our country, he asked me an important question.... ‘have you ever thought about coming here (FLETC) to work, because we’re going to need help fast.’ His encouragement caused me to apply for a job announcement at FLETC, and it’s what brought me here to work.”

9/11 Inspires Behavioral Science Studies

A FLETC-Glynco student attending the Criminal Investigator Training Program (CITP) was a high school sophomore on September 11, 2001. Living in Oberlin, Ohio, her school was surrounded by cornfields, and New York City was far from her reality. As a teacher came into her classroom to alert the students of the news of the ongoing attacks on our nation, the television was turned on and the entire room was in complete shock and disbelief.

“The events of that day led me to choose a different path than I had originally intended. I felt the need to figure out *why* someone would want to do this to our country, and what might be going through the minds of people who were directly affected.

“I chose to study criminal behavioral psychology, so that I could help answer those questions and figure out the different ways people think which leads to their actions,” said the student.

9/11 Leads to Law Enforcement Career

Another CITP student was attending the University of Tennessee at Martin on that historical day. He was sitting in an international relations class when the teacher notified the students about what was happening in New York City. The entire class watched the second tower fall 'live' on television. The nature of the international relations course he was taking changed after the events of 9/11.

"What I remember most was the sense of patriotism was unanimous in our class. Everyone drew together, which enhanced my desire to serve our nation.

"The events of 9/11 influenced me to study criminal justice with a specialization in homeland security. Those studies eventually led to my desire to become a law enforcement officer. I didn't want to sit back anymore," the student stated.