

# Tribute to our Heroes



*911 flight suit, USAF Lt. Colonel Don Long, with  
"11 SEP" Insignia*

By Elden Fowler

The billowing smoke and the horrifying scenes of the collapse of the World Trade Center's Twin Towers on September 11, 2001 are indelibly etched into the mind of every American who anguished over the senseless loss of life perpetrated by an enemy whose motives and methods seemed beyond our comprehension.

Our minds were made numb as additional reports began to reach us of the Pentagon in flames and the devastating news that another aircraft, which was destined to become a missile piloted by mad men, had been taken over by the passengers and had plummeted to the ground, killing all aboard, thus thwarting an attack on the White House or the Capitol.

Throughout the whole ordeal, we were uplifted by the courage of so many, whether in the air, or on the ground. We hoisted our flags in defiant pride and a show of togetherness, and we prayed as we grieved for the souls that had been taken from us. Nearly 3000 had lost their lives.

The realization grew that we were now at war and we instinctively knew America was forever changed by the tragedies of September 11th. The day and the attacks quickly became known as 911.

The events of that fateful day are now memorialized across the country. The courage of the firefighters, police officers, and other emergency responders, along with the average citizens,

who gave their lives or who now live physically and mentally wounded as the result of trying to save others, is legend. They became our heroes.

The horrific events of September 11 soon spawned two wars. The Iraq war and the war in Afghanistan quickly filled the headlines.

There are new heroes from these wars, but like all wars, sadly, there are those that are taken from us. All of our troops, those that fight at this very moment, the wounded, and those that have paid the ultimate sacrifice, should be honored and included in our remembrances of 911. They, after all, have brought the fight and our revenge to the enemy and we must always pay tribute to the valor and courage of our servicemen and women.

In Yuba County, the Museum of the Forgotten Warriors houses a haunting display which represents the lives lost in America's latest wars. Unnamed dog tags, hanging from chains and left to freely twist in the breeze provide a beautiful representation of those, that have fallen in Iraq and Afghanistan. As the wind blows, the tags act as chimes and the sunlight sends reflections dancing in all directions. Visitors often stand in quiet reverence as if the souls of the departed are nearby.

The museum also houses other displays from these conflicts. The most recent addition is the autographed flight suit worn by Air Force Lt. Colonel Don Long on that fateful day. Long flew a tanker mission which was responsible for refueling the fighter aircraft that had been sent aloft to protect our cities from further attack. The suit carries the Sept 2011 "Attitude Patch".

As part of the September 11 remembrances, take the time to visit the Museum and honor our troops for their service and sacrifice.

The Museum is located at 5865 "A" Road, off of North Beale Road, 1/2 mile west of Beale Air Force Base. It will be open on Sunday, September 11, from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm.

The Museum's founder, director, and curator is Dann Speer. For further information call (530) 742-3090 or visit [www.museumoftheforgottenwarriors.org](http://www.museumoftheforgottenwarriors.org)