

Okaloosa County News Release

May 10, 2016

Contact: Kathy Newby, 651-7515, knewby@co.okaloosa.fl.us
Airports Director Tracy Stage, 651-7160

The 9/11 International Memorial Flag Arrives at VPS Friday *United We Stand: United We Sew Operation Never Forget*

A 9/11 International Memorial Flag for the victims of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the United States of America, arrives at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach (FWB) Airport on Friday, May 13, 2016. This historic flag exhibit will arrive on American Airlines Flight 5065, at approximately 5:34 p.m., from Charlotte, North Carolina **and will be ceremoniously presented to community leaders and airport personnel.**

Monday, May 16, 2016, the public is invited to the “unveiling” of the 9/11 International Memorial Flag at 1:00 p.m. in the lobby of the Destin-FWB Airport. “This is quite an honor for Eglin, the Destin-FWB Airport, as well as our visitors and residents, to have this flag on exhibit until it goes to its final resting place in September at the 9/11 Museum in New York City,” stated Chairman Kelly Windes, Okaloosa County Commission.

“We encourage emergency responders, police, deputies, firemen and our military to come out for this moving tribute to this flag and our nation,” said Airports Director Tracy Stage. Parking will be validated (free) for the Monday, 1:00 p.m. event.

United We Stand, United We SEW is a community project where volunteers of Bucks County, PA and Hunterdon County, NJ came together to sew a Memorial Flag. Members of the communities participating in this project included senior citizens, students, scouts, churches and volunteers. The 9/11 International Memorial Flag took over 5 months to complete.

About the 9/11 International Memorial Flag: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bccXg1Ebg2Q>

- Flag is comprised of over 2,983 miniature 4"x6" American flags, representing each victim from the World Trade Center, Pentagon, Virginia and Flight #93, which have been sewn into one Huge Memorial Flag.
- Flag is 22 ft. x 32 ft. (w)
- Flag also contains flags representing the service organizations that participated in the recovery and rescue efforts, and nation flags from all the countries that also lost citizens.
- In the center of the Memorial Flags are "THE PRAYING HANDS" as a message of hope and salvation for all.

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The Memorial Flag was presented to New York City at a ceremony on the USS Intrepid, on March 11, 2002. Since that time over 6,000,000 people have viewed the 9/11 International Memorial Flag, as it traveled from the west coast to east coast, to these sites and more:

- Medical examiner's site near GROUND ZERO
- The Pentagon
- Pennsylvania State Capitol building, Shanksville, PA. (Note, United Airlines Flight #93, steered toward Washington, D.C., crashed in a field near Shanksville.)
- St. George Ferry Terminal on Staten Island
- Peterson Automotive Museum in Los Angeles
- Hotel Pennsylvania in NYC at the 9/11/2002 Anniversary
- Fire Fighters Memorial Ceremony FDNY on 10/12/2002
- Curtis Center in Philadelphia
- USS New Jersey on the Delaware River in Camden, NJ
- Camp Shelby Joint Training Center in MS
- Willow Grove Naval Air Station, 177th Fighter Wing in Egg Harbor, NJ
- Liberty State Park, Jersey City, NJ
- 2014 Bloomsburg State Fair, PA
- Canada
- Overseas, to include Al-Faw Palace - Camp Victory, Iraq

“The purpose of this flag is **Never to Forget** our Veterans, to support our troops in the war against terrorism and to show the victim's families that "WE care and we will **NEVER FORGET**," exclaimed Thomas McBrien, whose idea and recruitment efforts made the Honor Flag a reality.

“This special flag honors the victims’ families and reminds all people of the world how much we Americans care for one another and value human life,” stated Representative Craig T. Staats, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg.

“It is appropriate that our joint use airport was selected to exhibit the 9/11 International Memorial Flag, where it can be viewed among the other tributes to our military in and around VPS. Okaloosa County is home to the men and women who have fought terrorism since the tragic events on that fateful day in 2001,” said Vice-Chairwoman Carolyn Ketchel, Okaloosa County Commission.

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