

## University of Dayton September 11<sup>th</sup> Never Forget Event - 2011

### *Comments of Police Chief Richard S. Biehl*

On the morning of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, President George W. Bush was seated in a school classroom at Emma E. Booker Elementary School in Sarasota, Florida. At 9:05 am, White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card whispered to him: "A second plane hit the second tower. America is under attack." Within the next hour, hijacked American Airlines 77 was flown into the Pentagon and United Airlines Flight 93 crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, as passengers valiantly fought to overtake the terrorists who had taken control of the plane.

In total, nearly 3000 individuals perished in the terrorists' attacks on Sept 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The deceased included:

- 71 law enforcement officers, the majority from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department which lost 37 officers including Fred Morrone, Superintendent of Police, and the New York Police Department which lost 23 law enforcement personnel.
- Also killed were 343 firefighters and paramedic personnel from the NYFD including First Deputy Commissioner William M. Feehan and Chief of Department Peter Ganci, and
- At the Pentagon, 125 civilian and military personnel were killed, including Army Deputy Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Timothy Maude.

The 9/11 Commission Report, states that,

*"...Despite weaknesses in preparations for disaster, failure to achieve unified incident command, and inadequate communications among responding agencies, all but approximately one hundred of the thousands of civilians who worked below the impact zone escaped, often with help from the emergency responders..."*

It is through the heroism, selfless action, and sacrifice of emergency responders and ordinary citizens that untold lives were saved.

The 911 terrorists' attacks were not only an attack on America; they were an attack on the world community. The victims included members of more than 90 countries across the globe.

On the fifth year anniversary of the 911 attacks, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that the attacks "cut us all to the core, for they were an attack on humanity itself..." On that same day, Warren Tichenor, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, stated that, "The fight against terrorism is a fight for values and principles that are universal... (*adding that*) Much more unites us as citizens of the world than divides us. All major religions teach that life is precious, and that taking innocent life....is wrong..."

One of the painful realizations of these tragic events was that national intelligence resources need to be coordinated and concentrated in efforts to prevent terrorists' attacks. Since that time, local law enforcement has proudly and diligently embraced a significant role in this prevention effort.

Lastly, I want to commend you for holding this 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Memorial Event in recognition of the tragic loss of lives on 9/11. Terrorism succeeds, even in the absence of completed acts, when citizens, out of fear, surrender their freedom and joyful participation in cultural and community life. Your participation in this event celebrates the gift of freedom earned through the sacrifice of thousands upon thousands of Americans throughout the history of our democracy, and in doing so ensures that their sacrifice is not in vain.