

About.com Urban Legends



Some Eyewitness Accounts

[Email](#)
[Print](#)

Flight 77 Crash at the Pentagon, Sept. 11, 2001

"On a Metro train to National Airport, Allen Cleveland looked out the window to see a jet heading down toward the Pentagon. 'I thought, "There's no landing strip on that side of the subway tracks,"' he said. Before he could process that thought, he saw 'a huge mushroom cloud. The lady next to me was in absolute hysterics.'"

- "[Our Plane Is Being Hijacked.](#)" *Washington Post*, 12 Sep 2001

"I was supposed to have been going to the Pentagon Tuesday morning at about 11:00am (EDT) and was getting ready, and thank goodness I wasn't going to be going until later. It was so shocking, I was listening to the news on what had happened in New York, and just happened to look out the window because I heard a low flying plane and then I saw it hit the Pentagon. It happened so fast... it was in the air one moment and in the building the next..."

- "[U.S. Under Attack: Your Eyewitness Accounts.](#)" BBC News, 14 Sep 2001

"As I approached the Pentagon, which was still not quite in view, listening on the radio to the first reports about the World Trade Center disaster in New York, a jetliner, apparently at full throttle and not more than a couple of hundred yards above the ground, screamed overhead. ... Seconds before the Pentagon came into view a huge black cloud of smoke rose above the road ahead. I came around the bend and there was the Pentagon billowing smoke, flames and debris, blackened on one side and with a gaping hole where the airplane had hit it."

- "Eyewitness at the Pentagon." *Human Events*, 17 Sep 2001

"Frank Probst, an information management specialist for the Pentagon Renovation Program, left his office trailer near the Pentagon's south parking lot at 9:36 a.m. Sept. 11. Walking north beside Route 27, he suddenly saw a commercial airliner crest the hilltop Navy Annex. American Airlines Flight 77 reached him so fast and flew so low that Probst dropped to the ground, fearing he'd lose his head to its right engine."

- "[A Defiant Recovery.](#)" *The Retired Officer Magazine*, January 2002

"USAToday.com Editor Joel Sucherman saw it all: an American Airlines jetliner fly left to right across his field of vision as he commuted to work Tuesday morning. It was highly unusual. The large plane was 20 feet off the ground and a mere 50 to 75 yards from his windshield. Two seconds later and before he could see if the landing gear was down or any of the horror-struck faces inside, the plane slammed into the west wall of the Pentagon 100 yards away. 'My first thought was he's not going to make it across the river to [Reagan] National Airport. But whoever was flying the plane made no attempt to change direction,' Sucherman said. 'It was coming in at a high rate of speed, but not at a steep angle—almost like a heat-seeking missile was locked onto its target and staying dead on course.'"

- "Journalist Witnesses Pentagon Crash." *eWeek.com*, 13 Sep 2001

"'I mean it was like a cruise missile with wings, went right there and slammed into the Pentagon,' eyewitness

Mike Walter said of the plane that hit the military complex. 'Huge explosion, great ball of fire, smoke started billowing out, and then it was just chaos on the highway as people either tried to move around the traffic and go down either forward or backwards,' he said."

- "[Witnesses and Leaders on Terrorist Attacks](#)." CNN, 11 Sep 2001

""(The plane) was flying fast and low and the Pentagon was the obvious target,' said Fred Gaskins, who was driving to his job as a national editor at *USA Today* near the Pentagon when the plane passed about 150 feet overhead. 'It was flying very smoothly and calmly, without any hint that anything was wrong.'"

- "[Bush Vows Retaliation for 'Evil Acts'](#)." *USA Today*, 11 Sep 2001

"Aydan Kizildrgli, an English language student who is a native of Turkey, saw the jetliner bank slightly then strike a western wall of the huge five-sided building that is the headquarters of the nation's military. 'There was a big boom,' he said. 'Everybody was in shock. I turned around to the car behind me and yelled "Did you see that?" Nobody could believe it.'"

- "[Bush Vows Retaliation for 'Evil Acts'](#)." *USA Today*, 11 Sep 2001

"I saw the tail of a large airliner. ... It plowed right into the Pentagon," said an Associated Press Radio reporter who witnessed the crash. 'There is billowing black smoke.'"

- "America's Morning of Terror." ChannelOne.com, 2001

"Omar Campo, a Salvadorean, was cutting the grass on the other side of the road when the plane flew over his head. 'It was a passenger plane. I think an American Airways plane,' Mr Campo said. 'I was cutting the grass and it came in screaming over my head. I felt the impact. The whole ground shook and the whole area was full of fire. I could never imagine I would see anything like that here.'"

- "[Pentagon Eyewitness Accounts](#)." *The Guardian*, 12 Sep 2001

"Afewerk Hagos, a computer programmer, was on his way to work but stuck in a traffic jam near the Pentagon when the plane flew over. 'There was a huge screaming noise and I got out of the car as the plane came over. Everybody was running away in different directions. It was tilting its wings up and down like it was trying to balance. It hit some lampposts on the way in.'"

- "[Pentagon Eyewitness Accounts](#)." *The Guardian*, 12 Sep 2001

"A pilot who saw the impact, Tim Timmerman, said it had been an American Airways 757. "'It added power on its way in,' he said. 'The nose hit, and the wings came forward and it went up in a fireball.'"

- "[Pentagon Eyewitness Accounts](#)." *The Guardian*, 12 Sep 2001

"Steve Eiden, a truck driver, had picked up his cargo that Tuesday morning in Williamsburg, Va., and was en route to New York City and witnessed the aftermath. ... He took the Highway 95 loop in the area of the Pentagon and thought it odd to see a plane in restricted airspace, thinking to himself it was odd that it was flying so low. 'You could almost see the people in the windows,' he said as he watched the plane disappear behind a line of trees, followed by a tall plume of black smoke. Then he saw the Pentagon on fire, and an announcement came over the radio that the Pentagon had been hit.'"

- "Sept. 11, the Day America Changed." *The Baxter Bulletin*, 2001

"Traffic is normally slow right around the Pentagon as the road winds and we line up to cross the 14th Street bridge heading into the District of Columbia. I don't know what made me look up, but I did and I saw a very low-flying American Airlines plane that seemed to be accelerating. My first thought was just 'No, no, no, no,' because it was obvious the plane was not heading to nearby Reagan National Airport. It was going to crash."

- "[September 11 Remembered.](#)" *University Week*, 4 Oct 2001

"Father Stephen McGraw was driving to a graveside service at Arlington National Cemetery the morning of Sept. 11, when he mistakenly took the Pentagon exit onto Washington Boulevard, putting him in a position to witness American Airlines Flight 77 crash into the Pentagon. 'I was in the left hand lane with my windows closed. I did not hear anything at all until the plane was just right above our cars.' McGraw estimates that the plane passed about 20 feet over his car, as he waited in the left hand lane of the road, on the side closest to the Pentagon. 'The plane clipped the top of a light pole just before it got to us, injuring a taxi driver, whose taxi was just a few feet away from my car. I saw it crash into the building,' he said. 'My only memories really were that it looked like a plane coming in for a landing. I mean in the sense that it was controlled and sort of straight. That was my impression,' he said. 'There was an explosion and a loud noise and I felt the impact. I remember seeing a fireball come out of two windows (of the Pentagon). I saw an explosion of fire billowing through those two windows.'"

- "[Pentagon Crash Eyewitness Comforted Victims.](#)" MDW News Service, 28 Sep 2001

"'I glanced up just at the point where the plane was going into the building,' said Carla Thompson, who works in an Arlington, Va., office building about 1,000 yards from the crash. 'I saw an indentation in the building and then it was just blown-up up—red, everything red,' she said. 'Everybody was just starting to go crazy. I was petrified.'"

- "Terrorists Attack New York, Pentagon." *Los Angeles Times*, 12 Sep 2001

"I witnessed the jet hit the Pentagon on September 11. From my office on the 19th floor of the USA TODAY building in Arlington, Va., I have a view of Arlington Cemetery, Crystal City, the Pentagon, National Airport and the Potomac River. ... Shortly after watching the second tragedy, I heard jet engines pass our building, which, being so close to the airport is very common. But I thought the airport was closed. I figured it was a plane coming in for landing. A few moments later, as I was looking down at my desk, the plane caught my eye. It didn't register at first. I thought to myself that I couldn't believe the pilot was flying so low. Then it dawned on me what was about to happen. I watched in horror as the plane flew at treetop level, banked slightly to the left, drug it's wing along the ground and slammed into the west wall of the Pentagon exploding into a giant orange fireball. Then black smoke. Then white smoke."

- [Steve Anderson](#), Director of Communications, *USA Today*

"Henry Ticknor, intern minister at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, Virginia, was driving to church that Tuesday morning when American Airlines Flight 77 came in fast and low over his car and struck the Pentagon. 'There was a puff of white smoke and then a huge billowing black cloud,' he said."

- "[Hell on Earth.](#)" *UU World*, Jan/Feb 2002

"Northern Virginia resident John O'Keefe was one of the commuters who witnessed the attack on the Pentagon. 'I was going up 395, up Washington Blvd., listening to the the news, to WTOP, and from my left side-I don't know whether I saw or heard it first- I saw a silver plane I immediately recognized it as an American Airlines jet,' said the 25-year-old O'Keefe, managing editor of Influence, an American Lawyer Media publication about lobbying. 'It came swooping in over the highway, over my left shoulder, straight across where my car was heading. I'd just heard them saying on the radio that National Airport was closing, and I thought, "That's not going to make it to National Airport." And then I realized where I was, and that it was going to hit the Pentagon. There was a burst of orange flame that shot out that I could see through the highway overpass. Then it was just black. Just black, thick smoke.'"

- "Terrorist 'Situation'." American Lawyer Media, 11 Sep 2001

<< [Commentary: 'Hunt the Boeing'](#)

Explore Urban Legends

By Category

- [Accidents & Mishaps](#)
- [Animals & Insects](#)
- [Celebrities](#)
- [Companies & Products](#)
- [Crime](#)
- [Food & Drink](#)
- [Funny](#)
- [Gross & Disgusting](#)
- [Health / Medical](#)
- [Horrors!](#)
- [Internet / Web Hoaxes](#)
- [Photo Fakery](#)
- [Politics & Government](#)
- [Sex & Scandal](#)
- [More Topics](#)

Must Reads

- [Newest Urban Legends](#)
- [The Top 25 at a Glance](#)
- [Urban Legends Slide Show](#)
- [Photo Quiz: Spot the Fakes!](#)
- [Submit a Hoax / Urban Legend](#)

Most Popular

[Urban Legends Photo Quiz: Spot the Fakes!](#)
[Sarah Palin Bikini Picture - Urban Legends POSTCARD or POSTCARD FROM HALLMARK Virus Hoax - Netlore Arch...](#)
[Is Barack Obama a Muslim? - Urban Legends](#)
[Amazing Tsunami Picture - Netlore Archive](#)



September 11, 2001

"Have faith that your friends, your families, your education and the glow from each of your individual hearts have prepared you well to burn brightly against the darkness of this world."

-- David Mills, SGA President, [A Time for Caring Service, Sept. 16](#)



Read Message Postings

Submitted By:	Rumiko Lane
Class Year:	2000
Date:	Mon Oct 1, 2001, 22:55:19
MESSAGE:	<p>the following is an e-mail that i'd sent to my friends on september 12, 2001: to all my friends--</p> <p>Some of you I work with each day. I realize that it has been too long since I've spoken to others of you, but I wanted to let you know that you all are in my thoughts, especially after what happened yesterday morning. For those of you who don't know, I moved to New York right after graduation last year and I have been working for TransPerfect Translations, Inc. ever since the beginning of July 2000. TransPerfect is located at Three Park Avenue, on the corner of Park and 34th. We have a perfect panoramic view of all of Manhattan from our 39th-floor office.</p> <p>Yesterday morning I thought we were watching a movie out of the office windows. My friend Jeff came to my desk and said *A plane just hit the World Trade Center!* Jeff jokes around all the time, so I wasn't about to take him seriously until I realized that he wasn't even smiling. We ran to the Hudson River conference room to see the first building with flames coming out of it. The glass looked as if it were dripping down the sides...almost as if it were icing on a cake. It was 9 am...we could smell the morning coffee brewing and the sky was absolutely cloud-free. We were just working. I can't imagine how it would have been had any of us been looking out our windows with a plane coming straight at us...</p> <p>I was just heading back to my desk when someone screamed *OH MY GOD a second plane just hit the second tower!!!!* At this point, people were screaming and crying; the phone lines were all busy and cell phones weren't working. I ran to my desk to call my friend who worked on the 25th floor of that first building. No answer. The next few hours were absolutely unforgettable.</p> <p>Since we are two blocks away from the Empire State Building, we left our building and a group of us stayed together. We walked over to the East River, but the ferry wasn't running. We heard that the only way out of Manhattan was to cross the 59th Street Bridge on foot. So we walked all the way, past the United Nations to the bridge. All the trucks were carrying people on their back bumpers and tailgates. Some of the people we were walking with were covered in ashes and soot. Crossing the bridge, we looked downtown and saw nothing but billows of smoke. We walked to Queens, and then I stayed at a friend's place on Roosevelt Island [an island in the East River between Manhattan and Queens].</p> <p>At any rate, I came home several hours ago for the first time since 6:30 am</p>

	<p>yesterday morning. I had no idea our lives were going to change so drastically. This afternoon I went to my friend's place in the Village on 12th and 2nd. I won't ever forget the smell of the ashes and dust downtown, and how empty the streets were. Her roommate works at St. Vincent's Hospital and admitted a fireman this morning who saw his coworker [another fireman] die when a jumping person landed on top of him and killed them both. Another friend of mine had debris hitting him as he was running away from his office on Water Street. This friend told me that a man surfed down the face of the building from the 80th floor and suffered only leg injuries...</p> <p>I hope that this message finds ALL of you and your loved ones safe and in peace. For those of you here in New York City with me, please call me if we have not yet gotten in touch. I'm still trying to call all of you. A tragedy as horrifying as this puts life into perspective, to say the least. The phrase "life is too short" carries new significance...</p> <p>Let's not forget the power of dreams and prayers. Please take care of yourselves and let me know that all of you are safe. Peace, love, and blessings to all of you</p> <p>--Rumiko Lane ('00)</p>
--	---

Submitted By:	Steve Anderson, sanderson@usatoday.com
Class Year:	1985
Date:	Tuesday Oct 2, 2001, 6:08:49
<p>MESSAGE:</p> <p>1st Hand Account <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>2nd Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Support/Encouragement <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The events of Sept. 11 have helped me put my life in perspective</p> <p>I witnessed the jet hit the Pentagon on September 11.</p> <p>From my office on the 19th floor of the USA TODAY building in Arlington, Va., I have a view of Arlington Cemetery, Crystal City, the Pentagon, National Airport and the Potomac River.</p> <p>Tuesday morning, September 11, started out to be like any other day. The air was crisp and the sky was clear. I arrived at my office at about 6:45 a.m. I noted US Air and Delta flights taking off from Reagan National Airport. I figured the weather must be clear up the coast as the shuttle flights were taking off on time.</p> <p>I made it through my morning regimen of reading five newspapers and scanning several websites. I was feeling pretty good about the fact that I had accomplished so much before the workday actually started.</p> <p>I turned my attention to e-mail and then checked the newswires to see what went on in the world overnight. At about 8:50 a.m. a bulletin came across the wire stating a plane had crashed in to the World Trade Center. I turned on the television in my office and about 10 of us watched the black smoke rising above the colossal structure. The first reports said a small plane hit the tower. We all thought it must have been the result of a pilot having a heart attack.</p> <p>The mood turned dark. As we watched the story it appeared that people were jumping out of windows in the burning building. We were collectively in a state of shock when we watched as a second plane slammed into the other tower of the World Trade Center.</p> <p>At that moment we all knew what had happened. Terrorists had struck hard in New York. We all felt vulnerable in our own "Twin Towers" that overlook Washington, D.C. We have had several bomb threats over the years, but we never dreamed that something like this would happen.</p> <p>Shortly after watching the second tragedy, I heard jet engines pass our building, which, being so close to the airport is very common. But I thought the airport was closed. I figured it was a plane coming in for landing. A few moments later, as I was looking down at my desk, the plane caught my eye.</p> <p>It didn't register at first. I thought to myself that I couldn't believe the pilot was flying so low. Then it dawned on me what was about to happen. I watched in horror as the plane flew at treetop level, banked slightly to the left, dug its wing along the ground and slammed into the west wall of the Pentagon exploding into a giant orange fireball. Then black smoke. Then white smoke.</p> <p>We didn't know what further plans the terrorists had. Were there more planes in the air? Were they headed toward us? We erred on the side of caution and told</p>

people they could leave. Nearly everyone did, including me. We went into emergency plan mode. The company staff tried to regroup in front of the two Jima memorial. But as soon as we got there MPs from Ft. Myer and Arlington Police came through screaming for us to clear the area because another plane was headed that way. We couldn't get back into the building, so we sent people home to work from there. Many of our intrepid journalists stayed in the building. A good number of them have covered wars in the past and have been deployed in combat zones. They don't scare easily. But for me, all I could think about was my wife and our daughter.

The scene around the office was nothing short of pandemonium. Streets were absolutely jammed with cars and people. Many acting crazy driving on the sidewalks and threatening people who were in their way. To make matters worse, a local radio station reported that a plane had hit the USA TODAY building. I called the station and told them they were incorrect. They didn't believe me and kept on reporting it. The station even sent the story up to the radio network, which in turn reported it nationwide. Reporters in California and elsewhere were calling me to confirm the number of dead at USA TODAY.

Outbound cells were jammed, but somehow my wife, an elementary school music teacher, called me on my cell phone and I told her I was OK and that I was going to try and get home. A few minutes after that, her school's principal distributed a note to the teachers that summed up what had happened and told teachers not to discuss it, not to turn on a TV or fire up an internet connection. The note also stated that a plane had hit the USA TODAY building. Fortunately, my wife knew better. Other than that, the school had set up a system of greeters at the main doors to assist parents in picking up their children. Many parents did just that and it was all dealt with in a very orderly fashion. There was fear that some of the kids may have had parents who work at the Pentagon. While many do work at the Pentagon, it turned out none were harmed in the attack.

It took me about 90 minutes to get my car out of the immediate vicinity of my office. I was able to take back roads to my home in Reston, where I was able to work from home for the rest of the day.

While monitoring coverage of the attack I learned American airlines Flight #77 was the plane that slammed into the Pentagon. I have taken that flight on numerous occasions on trips to Los Angeles. That hit me very close to home. I didn't sleep at all that night. I stayed up watching news reports and reading newswires. I slept about two hours each night for the next several nights.

At this point, our lives have returned as close to normal as they will get. It's difficult for me to sit at my desk and look at the gaping hole in the Pentagon, as I relive the tragedy over and over in my head each time I see the building.

But I escape into our little family. Our daughter is three years old and full of energy. We play in the yard, go to the park, paint, color, attend Mass and do all the things parents and children are supposed to do. It gives me comfort to know she is blissfully ignorant of the events that have transpired on September 11. It worries me that it won't always be this way. But I'm sure that's a fear all parents face to one degree or another.

Every day when I come to my office and look out my window I see the charred, gaping hole in the Pentagon and relive the tragedy over and over in my head. It's an image that will be burned into my memory for the rest of my life. Growing up in the Washington, D.C., area I think of all the people I have known who worked in the Pentagon, and the number of times I have been in the building. (And I think of the number of times I have been in the World Trade Center over the years.)

Fortunately, I didn't know anyone killed or missing in any of the attacks. But I know many of you do. My heart and prayers go out to all of you and to everyone everywhere who has been touched by this terrible tragedy. I pray that our leaders at all levels act judiciously and respond effectively.

Even in times of terrible tragedy there is opportunity. Perhaps the coalition that we are building will be able to isolate terrorists and bring them to answer for their actions...or at least remove their ability to carry out another major attack. It has already helped us to come together as one nation. Perhaps this will help us come together as one world.

All of this has given me a great appreciation for the many blessings that have been bestowed on me in my lifetime...as well as a better understanding of what I take for granted. It has helped me recognize my prejudices and given me a clearer understanding of family, love, commitment, dedication, faith and courage.

I think we have all seen how these events have brought out the best in us as a people. Perhaps we can focus on that as we move forward.

If you've read this entire missive, thank you. It's the first time I've written it all down and it has been quite cathartic for me.

-- Steve Anderson ('85), Director of Communications, USA TODAY

Submitted By:	Mike "Shifty" Shifflette, jmshi@bellsouth.net
Class Year:	1982
Date:	Tuesday Oct 9, 2001, 11:09:19
MESSAGE: 1st Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/> Support/Encouragement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Bruce E. Simmons was my first roommate in 1979 and 1980. He called himself "Sy." Sy met my parents here in Harrisonburg, and I traveled to NY to meet his family. We went to St. Louis by train, to a Capitals' hockey game, to the Big Apple for a trade show. He frequently hopped across the fence from White Hall to I-81 to hitchhike home. We moved from White into Gifford basement. Fred's Bakery, as we called ourselves for parties and intramural sports. We prepare for our 20-year reunion at JMU Homecoming '02.</p> <p>I, like all Americans, was appalled at the attack. I wondered about Sy; but I figured that New York was a big place. I got a call from Fred's Bakery. Sy is survived by a widow and three children.</p> <p>I last saw Sy in 1994; I was on a four-wheeling expedition, and we arranged to meet at a bar on a Sunday night. Very upbeat and much the same, except now he is stockbroker named Bruce. OK Bruce.</p> <p>Glad to have seen you one last time.</p> <p>-- Mike "Shifty" Shifflette, 1982</p>

Submitted By:	Jennifer Reed, bigapplejenny@hotmail.com
Class Year:	1995
Date:	Thursday, Oct 18, 2001 3:22:39
MESSAGE: 1st Hand Account <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2nd Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/> Support/Encouragement <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>First, I want to say thank you to the JMU Alumni Association for putting together this web site, and allowing people in the JMU family a forum to tell their story. As everyone has realized over the past month, talking is often the best medicine.</p> <p>September 11th was a horrible day for our nation. For those of us who live and work in New York, it was especially difficult. My company lost our offices at 1 World Financial Center, my coworkers saw people jumping and witnessed indescribable horrors. I walked 50 blocks through the Bronx to get home after the business trip that spared me from being less than 1 block away from the tragedy, and I have never been happier to see my street when I arrived home.</p> <p>I have a lot of friends that went to JMU here in the city - Lisa Cox, my roommate, Kristin Warheit, Ann Salamy, Michelle Lovoulo, and many others. We called each other, eager to hear voices and so happy to know that we were safe. Unfortunately, not all of us from JMU were safe, as evidenced by the missing lists, but I am so grateful for my friends here, and so happy they are part of my life.</p> <p>Harrisonburg is a wonderful place. I crave its solitude, its peace in these days of chaos. I long for rolling hills and green places, and the safe haven that is the JMU campus. And I have a request, for those of you that are still there - pray for us. Somehow, it seemed easier to pray at JMU, easier to close my eyes and breathe in fresh air, and concentrate on God all around in the natural beauty and the warm faces that make up daily life at JMU. There are challenging moments in college, for certain. There is pain and strife in every town. But, for some reason, God has blessed some places with more fresh air and less strife than others, and I believe Harrisonburg is one of them. If you are looking for something to do to help people, do this: walk outside, take a deep breath, look at the hills, and say a prayer for the people who walked on our campus before you, and for those who will walk there after you.</p> <p>God Bless - Jennifer Reed Class of 95</p>

Submitted By:	Jennifer Woods Joiner, jenwoods@att.net
Class Year:	1996
Date:	Friday, Oct 26, 2001 11:49:30
MESSAGE: 1st Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/> Support/Encouragement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>I grew up in NYC. I loved walking the streets and feeling the energy the city provided. I loved the sounds of cabs honking and the smell of "dirty water dogs" on the corner. This was life, excitement, and culture. Then Sept 11th came. I live in NJ now, but this area revolves around NYC. Everyone knows someone who either worked in the WTC or around it. My own father worked there for many years. As I watched in horror the events of that day, I must have counted off dozens of people I knew working in those buildings. It took hours to find that most of them were ok. I've lost a few friends... young, beautiful, smart, caring, incredible friends. My parents lost more. The city is different now; quieter, slower, and perhaps more friendly(?) We are proud, we are strong, we are New Yorkers. Those rescue workers are killing themselves night and day, barely stopping to eat, drink or rest- they won't stop until each and every brother of theirs is found. When the dust settles and the holidays approach, remember that blood, money, and prayers will always be needed. And KEEP FLYING THOSE FLAGS... NEVER FORGET!!</p>

Submitted By:	Christie Hardbarger, hardbarger@aol.com
Class Year:	1976
Date:	Monday, Oct 29, 2001 14:31:30
MESSAGE: 1st Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/> Support/Encouragement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>What is there to say? We are all affected by this tragedy and will never be the same. While I did not lose anyone in the tragedy, I think we all lost our last trace of innocence. My daughter Katie, a grad student at JMU, turned 21 on Sept. 11, 2001. What would have been a wonderful day of celebration turned into a mixed bag of sorrow and worry and fear. I felt sad that this special day for her had turned so ugly and yet, we felt guilty for mourning the loss of a birthday celebration when so many suffered loss that is too great for words. Our prayers are with all who lost friends and family.</p>

Submitted By:	Becky Huber, huberb@usa.redcross.org
Class Year:	1999
Date:	Wednesday, Oct 31, 2001 9:12:41
MESSAGE: 1st Hand Account <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2nd Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/> Support/Encouragement <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>As an employee of the Arlington Red Cross and a member of our local Disaster Action Team, I was one of thousands who witnessed the the tragedy first hand. Our small Chapter staff of 16 and our unbelievably inspirational volunteers were responsible for providing immediate mass care for the relief workers on the scene at the Pentagon, and developing a response plan to meet the unprecedented needs of the families affected. But my message to alumni is not about the tragedy, but about the overwhelming response. As one who worked 24 hours a day for the first few days, I was touched most of all by the love and support of the community around us. From strangers to JMU alum that I haven't heard from in years, we had willing volunteers lining up on our doorstep day and night. Friends with fears of needles rolled up their sleeves. And donors would come by with their financial support- money raised at schools, offices, lemonade stands, impromptu walk-a-thons around the National ! Mall, bar nights, and benefits.</p> <p>Thanks to the many JMU friends who supported our efforts (and me!) through the first few weeks- Your words of encouragement, financial support, and willingness</p>

to pitch-in meant so much. I continue to pray that all of you and your families are safe and well, and I hope that this horrific experience continues to strengthen our commitment to community and bring us closer to our neighbors.

Submitted By:	Ryan Leischner, ryan059@yahoo.com
Class Year:	1998
Date:	Saturday, January 12, 2002 9:34:36
MESSAGE: 1st Hand Account <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2nd Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/> Support/Encouragement <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>As a firefighter in Arlington County I was on the initial response to the Pentagon on Sept. 11. That morning I was at fire station 8 watching the tragedy unfold in New York. As we were watching TV our dispatch toned out all of the stations for a plane down at the Pentagon. For that entire day and many days after we were involved in the rescue and recovery efforts. The whole situation was almost unbelievable. I've never seen so much destruction and devastation up close, I can't even imagine what ground zero in New York looks like! What I really want to say here is thank you to the JMU community for their response to this tragedy. I played one part, but many other JMU students and alumni were also involved. JMU alumnus John Delaney is also a firefighter in Arlington, firefighter Kris Aspen has a daughter at JMU, and I know there are many others. I also want to express my greatest sympathy to all who lost loved ones or friends on Sept. 11.</p> <p>In memory of FDNY, never forget</p>

Submitted By:	Julia Filz, juliafilz@hotmail.com
Class Year:	2000
Date:	Friday, January 25, 2002 9:05:33
MESSAGE: 1st Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/> Support/Encouragement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>On a recent trip to New York, I took time to go down to the World Trade Center site. As I walked the along street up from the 16th Street Pier where I picked up the viewing tickets to the area where crowds still gather to place flowers and messages of support, I was struck by an incredible sense of pride. New Yorkers in this little spot in Manhattan were getting on with their lives, still sweeping up debris in many spots, but opening their hearts and welcoming the guests they once relied on to fill their businesses with open arms. I'm sure it hasn't been easy for them, but I realized that if they could do it, than I could as well. My thoughts and prayers go out to the victims and their families, especially those of our fellow alumni who perished, but I am so grateful that as a nation we are all coming together to help everyone deal in this difficult time. At JMU, they taught us that we are "All Together One" and every day, I am proud to see Americans everywhere adopt the same belief.</p>

Submitted By:	Jack Harvey, jack.harvey@amec.com
Class Year:	1975
Date:	Friday, March 15, 2002 12:26:55
MESSAGE: 1st Hand Account <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2nd Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/> Support/Encouragement <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>I work for the General contractor, AMEC Construction Management, Inc., who was renovating the Pentagon before September 11th, as the Safety Manager for the project. On sept. 11 I flew out on Reagan National Airport on the 6am shuttle to NY, to attend a corporate safety meeting. We were on Broadway near 40th st at 8:40am and could see the twin towers down the hill, when we entered the building. Ten minutes later we heard that the twin towers were hit and then the day started spiraling downhill. Later we heard about the Pentagon and then that there were 4 of our people missing(later they were accounted for). We then got out of the city On the 12th by train, after we got home and we heard that the train station had been closed due to a bomb threat 1/2 hour after we left. Arrived at the Pentagon at 6am on the 13th and have been at the Pentagon rebuilding the damage since then. Working around the clock 7 days week, it is amazing to see what kind of work can be done when everyone mixes pride and patriotism together to show the rest of world that you can knock us down but we will heal ourselves put things back together as good if not better than before. The goal of our project is to have people back at there desk looking out of there windows at</p>

	the world outside the Pentagon on September 11, 2002 at 9:38am.
Submitted By:	Mike Tucker, sakkher@hotmail.com
Class Year:	1999
Date:	Wednesday, April 17, 2002 04:26:29
MESSAGE: <input type="checkbox"/> 1st Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Hand Account <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support/Encouragement	<p>God bless and good luck to all JMU grads and all Americans, especially our fighting men and women who are in harm's way. I cannot find the words to express the grief and rage I felt seeing our nation attacked by terrorists. To all those who lost friends and loved ones on September 11, 2001, peace and prayers to you. We are in a long hard struggle and we will survive and we will win. I met Hamid Karzai's advisors here in Abu Dhabi, U.A.E., on February 11 and they were incredibly professional. Nothing in the press has conveyed the warmth and gravitas Karzai possesses. The speech he gave here, which was point-blank in its denunciation of radical Islam, was bold and beautiful. I am a long way from home but he made me feel right at home. As I write, British Royal Marine commandos are joining our soldiers and Special Forces in eastern Afghanistan. September 11: Never Again. Mike Tucker Abu Dhabi, UAE JMU: MA, English, '99</p>

Submitted By:	Jayne and Bill Shontell (Aunt & Uncle of Matt Horning '97)
Class Year:	
Date:	Tuesday, June 25, 2002 10:29:32
MESSAGE: <input type="checkbox"/> 1st Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Hand Account <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support/Encouragement	<p>Dear Friends:</p> <p>As many of you know, our nephew died on September 11 at the World Trade Center. Matthew, 26 years old, worked for Marsh & McLennen in data management. He was at work on the 95th floor when the first plane struck the tower. He never stood a chance. Needless to say, the past 10 months have been traumatic for our family. First there was the horror of the event. Then the uncertainty of knowing whether Matt was alive or dead, followed by our acceptance that he was gone. Then his parents were notified that a small remain of Matt's body was found and identified. (Matt weighed 9 pounds when he was born, over 150 lbs when he died. Less than 3 pounds have been found and identified.) The rest of Matt's remains are either scattered at Fresh Kills or a landfill dump in New Jersey, or pounded into the ground of what once was the World Trade Center site. What is to become of the remaining human body parts and the WTC site is now being decided. Below is a statement by our family that we are sharing with newspapers, government officials and friends.</p> <p>"On September 11, 2001, America was attacked at The World Trade Center. The sixteen acre site ravaged in this attack has become the cemetery of all those who died there. Literally, fragments of human remains cannot be removed and are imbedded in the walls and ground of that sight. In addition, the remains that were cremated by the intense fires of the attack cannot be separated and identified. These remains are now in a dump, Fresh Kills. The current plan is to merely cover these human remains with dirt and leave them at the dump.</p> <p>We believe that this entire 16 acre site is hallowed ground in much the same way that Gettysburg and Pearl Harbor are hallowed sites. The same respect should be given this site where America was attacked and where nearly 3000 people died. A respectful cemetery and memorial should occupy the entire space. NO commercial buildings should share this space. Secondly, the ash remains should be returned from Fresh Kills to the World Trade Center site where they can be joined with the fragments already there.</p> <p>This cemetery and memorial belong to all Americans as they show their respect for the lives lost and for the values they hold sacred. We do NOT want the land to be used by the privileged few who feel it is their economic right to build on this hallowed ground. The only appropriate use of the 16 acres remains what it has become, a cemetery, and what it should also contain, a memorial to the lives lost and to the survivors of the attack against The United States of America."</p> <p>You can help us by copying this statement and sending it to newspapers and government officials. To find out who your Senators and Representatives are and how to write or e-mail them go to: http://www.visi.com/juan/congress/. The New</p>

	<p>York Time can be sent reached at: letters@nytimes.com. Please consider forwarding this e-mail to your friends and families. Thank you for helping us.</p> <p>Faithfully, Jayne and Bill Shontell</p>
--	---

Submitted By:	Alison Franz, alimar@juno.com
Class Year:	
Date:	Thursday, July 11, 2002 14:36:45
<p>MESSAGE:</p> <p>1st Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>2nd Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Support/Encouragement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I can't believe that 10 months have passed since this tragedy. My thoughts and prayers go out to all of the victims and their families. Although I only spent a semester at JMU before transferring back to NJ, Matt became a good friend. Many of my memories of JMU include Matt, his friends, and my suitemates. Of all the memories, I can't think of one time when Matt wasn't smiling and having fun. He was a truly special person and I was blessed to know him.</p>

Submitted By:	Brian Poillon, brian.c.poillon@db.com
Class Year:	1999
Date:	Thursday, July 30, 2002 10:17:52
<p>MESSAGE:</p> <p>1st Hand Account <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>2nd Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Support/Encouragement <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>I started working at the World Trade Center almost a year before the 11th. It had been a very exciting year... my degree from JMU paying off in spades... going to work every day and looking out onto the courtyard in the middle of the former cluster of WTC. Mom had been nervous about my being there after what had happened over a decade before, but that's a Mom's job, right? I was proud to be there. That morning I was getting to work a little early, just coming up from the subway half a block away as the first plane hit. Everyone around me stood in shock, pointing and chattering. The building burning, trading papers from major financial firms starting to blow around half burned and stained from the smoke, an unrecognizable smell, and all around me the shocked and distant faces of so many people. I couldn't even acknowledge what I was seeing though it was less than a stones throw away. Reality hit hard as it became obvious that not all of what was falling from the building was the building itself. As I was still being pushed forward closer to the towers, now only across the street, the second plane hit. There was sudden panic; from where I stood I never saw the plane, but rather only the North and East sides of the building blowing out, fire spewing directly overhead, though many tens of stories up. Asked later how loud it was, I couldn't remember... but the shaking of the ground and the sight of fire and metal, some landing far too close for anyone's comfort, is still very much ingrained in my mind. I left that day for my apartment a block away from Union Square, which quickly became a shrine that afternoon as it was the nearest downtown park that wasn't blocked off by barricades. The next few weeks were a blur. I can't even begin to explain the process of trying to shake the memory of what surrounded me that morning. I think my great fortune not only to be alive, but to keep my job (despite being displaced until February) helped tremendously. In the months since, I've missed JMU more than I can say. I think it may be nostalgia for a time when I felt so safe, when I barely paid attention to what went on outside of the University. I've made some changes in my life, as I'm sure so many people have, opting not to put off those simple things I want to do. I got a puppy (a bulldog, of course) and have kept my friends and family closer than ever. I'm planning my first trip back to JMU this September 7th with my best friend (from the class of '97). I look forward to it more than words can say. I'm sure this far exceeds the 200 word limit for these messages, but I hope to at least let people know how much it meant to see that there was so much support coming from the school and it's students, faculty, and alums. Thank you all.</p>

Submitted By:	Bill Roche, billroche@hotmail.com
Class Year:	1996
Date:	Tue Sep 10 23:28:46 2002
MESSAGE:	This message is for Craig Blass's family and friends. We miss you buddy, we're all thinking of you and praying for you. I'm sure your still watching sports from up there so for this time of year I'll just say "Go Gints"
1st Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/>	-Bill Roche
2nd Hand Account <input type="checkbox"/>	
Support/Encouragement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

[Return to "September 11, 2001" main page](#)

ABOUT JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY | Last Modified: 1/18/05

Publisher: [Office of Alumni Relations](#) | For Information Contact: [Webmaster](#) | [Privacy Statement](#)

