

# OPINION

THE BATTALION

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## Remembering 9-11

### A new crop of heroes

For years I complained that nothing really significant had happened on my birthday. For my 21st, that wish unfortunately came true.

That morning, riding on the bus, I faintly heard the news on the radio. Straining to hear, my eyes widened and my stomach dropped when I heard what had happened. I raced to the SCC and every single news Web site was down, except for one that had a picture showing the second plane right before it stuck. That night we had a party — it was bittersweet.

It was very nice to see a new crop of heroes entering into mainstream. We no longer looked to athletes as our heroes, we turned to those individuals who risk their lives daily to serve and protect us, namely police officers and firefighters.

I was encouraged by our country coming together and looking to God for guidance. Patriotism was the lifeblood of the United States. However, I am discouraged at how quickly we turned our back on God. Patriotism is now just fashionably "cool."

It is amazing how far we have come, however, it is more amazing how much further we still need to go.

Colin Linerode  
Class of 2003

### Fire of patriotism

9-11 shocked everyone, but there are a few people who think America has forgotten the seriousness of this tragic day. That is definitely not the case.

I took a trip to New York with a choir this past year. When we went to Ground Zero, there were people everywhere. The number of presents and memorials that had been set up all along the site of the fallen towers was amazing. A light New York snow fell around us; the snow looking eerily similar to the ash that showered from the Twin Towers on that horrible day.

We all stood with our eyes closed. The first person to start crying was my girlfriend, Melissa. Everyone followed after that. I pulled Melissa close to me and wiped the tears from her eyes, all while she was muttering, "Those poor people, those poor, poor people." As I opened my eyes, I looked out on to the vast pit where the buildings once stood and then stared at the huge American flag hanging over it. The flag seemed to be guarding the site, much like the way so many American soldiers are now protecting our country.

9-11 ignited the fire of patriotism into America's then cold and uncaring hearts. We have once again become a nation united. This is the type of support that America needs to show to make sure that our families will be safe now and forever.

Stuart Ladner  
Class of 2007

### A New Yorker in Aggieland

I was an undergraduate at the University at Albany in New York in Fall 2001 on that horrible day. I was sound asleep in my warm bed when my roommate woke me up to tell me that a plane had crashed in New York City. At first, we all thought it was some bad accident, some sort

of traffic control mistake. That is, until we watched in helpless horror as the second plane hit the tower right before our eyes on live television.

I was dumbstruck. How could this be happening? The skyline I recognized as home was being forever changed.

The rest of the day was like a bad dream. All the cell phones were busy due to overwhelming traffic. People panicked as they tried desperately to contact friends and family living and working in the City.

I was proud to be a New Yorker that day. The feeling of support and unity felt on campus and throughout the state was overwhelming. But it wasn't until I moved to Texas last year to work at Texas A&M that I felt the real impact of the tragedy. Seeing the photographs of the "Standing for America" campaign touched me beyond words, as a New Yorker and as an American. I can sincerely say that I feel privileged and proud to be part of the Aggie Family.

Daphne Ruoff  
A&M Employee

### New sense of pride

I was at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio on an Air Force Junior R.O.T.C. field trip when I heard the news of the 9-11 attacks. The first thing I did was call my family in Pittsburgh to see if everyone was OK, because I was very unclear on where the plane in Pennsylvania had crashed. When I found out it had crashed in Somerset, not the actual city of Pittsburgh, I felt relief and I thanked God I had not lost any family members on this tragic day.

The one thing I did lose though was the arrogance that America was invincible to such horrors. In losing that arrogance, I gained a new sense of pride on how blessed I am to live in such a great nation and a determination to continue living the American way of life no matter who may threaten it.

Brian Bersani  
Class of 2006

### A sort of silent understanding

It was my first semester at Texas A&M, and a day that I know no one has forgotten. I was sitting in my political science class when our professor came in and said the World Trade Center had been struck by a plane, and that we should all go back home and watch the news. Since I lived on campus, I invited many off-campus students back to the dorm so they could see what had happened.

The hours after that were like a dream, or more like a nightmare. I witnessed the second crash live, and as I watched as the towers fell to the ground I felt like everything that I knew to be true had changed. Never in my life had I felt so helpless and vulnerable. All I wanted to do was to go home.

As we sat there for hours in front of the TV, I thought about my life, my family and my friends. Things were clearer, priorities were made and life as I knew it had changed, but perhaps for the better. That night, as I stood in Reed Arena for Breakaway, among thousands of Aggies, weeping for the losses and praying for guidance, I realized that we

were closer now than ever as a generation. The solemn nod from strangers gave me a sort of silent understanding that we all were together on this, and we would make it through.

Erin Price  
Class of 2005

### Praying for those who suffered

I had just left my dual credit history course at the local community college when I turned on the radio. I heard people talking about some sort of fire. As I reached forward to change it to an actual music station, I heard the DJ exclaim "Dear Lord, one of the World Trade Center buildings has just collapsed!"

I was in such shock that I almost totaled my car at the next stoplight. All thoughts of going to school forgotten, I drove home. No one was there, my parents at work, my brother at school ... like I should have been. I turned on the TV, and watched in horror as they played the same reel of video footage over and over again: the World Trade Center. One of the two towers is on fire, the black smoke pouring out of it in an unimaginable scale. A plane, Flight 175, entering from the right of the screen. It disappearing behind the other tower, the South Tower. Then a gigantic fireball erupts from the side we can see.

My mouth is dry. I can't even begin to imagine the horrifying scene those people are facing. I can't do anything, but I want to be the guy who punishes those responsible. All I can do is pray for those who have suffered, hope that the guilty are caught and support those men and women who form the thin blue, lime green, and camouflage line between us and those who would see us hurt.

James Ripps  
Class of 2006

### Encouragement and inspiration

I'd like to send a letter of encouragement and inspiration to those who read this article. We need not recall the travesty of the attacks on New York at this time but the unconquerable determination of our nation to rebuild, revive and press on.

Bear Orozco  
Class of 2005

### Smell of the dust

I'm from a suburb in New Jersey where many people commute to New York for work. I was asleep when my mom called and asked me to turn on the television. How many people did I know in the Trade Center? I later found out that about 150 people from my county lost their lives that day. My mother is a school bus driver and took students home that afternoon, not knowing which ones lost one or both of their parents. She had to wait for every student to enter their house in case no one was home to let them in. Tragically, some of those children did lose a parent in the attacks.

Cars were left abandoned in out town's park-and-ride. The smell of the dust cloud provided a grim realization of the tragedy for weeks afterward. To this day my town is still covered in red, white and blue.

Two years later the losses continue. I lost a high school friend in Operation Iraqi Freedom, which is a large part of the war against terror that spawned from 9-11. He was killed when he went to help a pregnant woman by a checkpoint in Iraq. That woman had explosives strapped to her.

9-11 means something different to us all. I, for one, take more pride in everything I do and am a much better person because of it. I pray for the strength to face tomorrow and for the lives of those on the battlefield. I can never forget what happened, and I will forever be thankful for the women and men fighting to rid the world of evil.

Shannon Galary  
Class of 2004

### United as Aggies

Sept. 11, 2001 was a date that all of us will remember. It was a day that changed all of our lives — and the very course of history. We watched in horror as our countrymen were massacred on live television. I'll always remember where I was, what class I was in and what I was wearing.

The year following the terrorist attacks was not measured from Jan. 1 to Jan. 1 — it was one measured from September to September. We waved the flag and stood proudly by our service men and women, public servants and government officials.

What a difference two years makes. The terrorists are winning, my fellow Aggies and Americans. Two years later we are squabbling about being politically correct. Our own university would not allow us to fly the flag from dorm windows. We criticized the government for pursuing military action against our enemies.

We stopped believing that dreams were worth something. Dreams and ambition — and American pride built the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and the airplanes that damaged and destroyed. No matter how much we struggle, nothing will ever stop American dreams from scraping the sky.

We are united as Aggies and as Americans, and to borrow a quote from Alfred Lord Tennyson's classic poem "Ulysses," "We are one equal temper of heroic hearts, made weak by time and fate, but strong in will, to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

Chris Ryan

### The day the world changed

Class of 2007

On Sept. 11, 2001, like a normal Tuesday morning, I was getting ready for class, when I received a phone call from my Mom. She told me to turn on CNN because a plane had just crashed into one of the World Trade Center Towers. I turned on CNN just in time to see the second plane hit. I remember thinking, "there was no way that was an accident" and becoming overwhelmingly frightened at the possibility that World War III had just begun. It was no longer a typical morning.

After a calming phone call from my father, I gathered myself together enough to go to class. While in class, we learned that a plane had hit the Pentagon and crashed in a field in Pennsylvania. Some left class to call relatives and friends. Others of us just tried to digest the news and comprehend what

## EDITORIAL

### A DAY OF INFAMY Active citizens are the key to stopping terrorism

It's hard to imagine that two years have passed since the atrocious attacks that robbed nearly 3,000 innocent Americans of their lives. No doubt for the families of the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks and the Flight 93 crash it has seemed like a lifetime.

All American citizens — no matter their race, religion or ethnicity — should always ask themselves how they can help fight terrorism and make a difference in the post-Sept. 11 world. The most important thing is to make sure our country keeps its focus on the ongoing fight against terrorism. Let's raise our collective voices and state clearly to the cowards who commit acts of terror that the slaughter of innocent men, women and children anywhere will not be tolerated.

Americans cannot forget the soldiers who are fighting and dying to protect the United States. Half of our active-duty Army is overseas along with a quarter of our reserves. No matter what one thinks of the justification for the war in Iraq, all Americans should agree that the brave men and women on the front lines of the war on terror deserve as much support as possible.

"Support the troops" is a popular saying, but Americans must translate this catch phrase into direct action by donating blood and sending messages and care packages to the troops.

The most important thing Americans can do, however, is to remain well-informed of the events and issues that directly affect the troops. The actions of officials must be scrutinized, and Americans must voice their concern if they believe the government is putting American troops in danger. Americans must also make it clear if they believe government is losing its focus on the war on terror to ensure that the day of infamy two years ago is not repeated.

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### Maroon Out shirt report inaccurate

We, the leadership of Class Councils, are extremely disappointed in the Sept. 10 article regarding the audit of the 2002 Maroon Out account, particularly after our efforts to fully inform you of the details of the audit. We feel that this article reflects poorly on the MSC and the hardworking students who volunteer their time for the tradition of Maroon Out. While we take full responsibility for the situation with the 2002 Maroon Out account, the information portrayed in your article was inaccurate. According to the audit report, the auditors were unable to determine if the loss was cash or inventory.

Nowhere in the audit report does it state that \$61,000 was lost. In addition, there is no evidence to indicate that any one person took the money, as your article implies. We expect a higher level of professionalism from The Battalion to report the facts. Our constituents deserve to know the truth.

Meredith Talley  
Senior Class President

Jeremy Crow  
2003 Maroon Out Director

Cindy Smith  
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was happening. In a way, World War III had begun and the world that I knew was no more. The feeling of security was gone, and fear had entered where there had been none. My memories of Sept. 11, 2001 will always be seared into my heart and mind. It was the day the world changed.

Brianne Porter  
Class of 2003

### Banding together

The anniversary of 9-11 is upon us for the second time. This time, it seems to have crept up without the terrible shock of the actual events, and without the worried fanfare of the first anniversary. But the anniversary of something still so recent, horrific and, truth be told, unfinished brings about a strange combination of emotions — grief for those who lost their lives, pride in our nation and in our troops, and a reminder that in only a second, everything can change.

I wasn't there and I didn't personally know anyone who died in the attacks. In fact, I was thousands of miles away in Texas. But that didn't make my

reaction any less strong or my inclination to help any less compelling. I remember watching the television set on that early morning, trying to grasp what played out like some big-budget Hollywood creation as it unfolded — I, like other Americans, kept my eyes glued to the television, my fingers flipping through the newspaper for days, searching for some solution, some explanation, some way to cope. And like so many others, I found no explanation, but I did find hope — hope in a nation banding together, hope in my neighbor and hope in tomorrow. I became inspired by the stories of rescue and by the millions who donated money, time and their very blood in a time of crisis.

So on this sad anniversary, I will find cause to celebrate. Remember on this day that the time to serve your fellow man is not only when crisis strikes, but every day. The best memorial for the victims of 9-11 cannot be created in stone or steel, but by donating blood, volunteering your time or appreciating each moment in this great land. God Bless America. God Bless Mankind.

Meredith Best  
Class of 2004