

Forcht Bank 9/11 ceremony honors those who serve, sacrifices made

BY CHRISTOPHER HARRIS
COMMONWEALTH JOURNAL

The impact of September 11, 2001 was felt not just on one day, 25 years ago, but has continued to echo down through the years to follow in countless ways.

That was the message at this year’s 9/11 Patriot Day Remembrance ceremony held by Forcht Bank on Friday at Oak Hill Baptist Church in Somerset, a message put forth by speaker Jon Roberts, Veteran Coordinator for Habitat of Humanity of Pulaski County, Ky., who talked about “the continuing cost of tragedy” not just for civilians who lost loved ones but emergency responders as well — even responders who lived on past that day.

“When we think about 9/11 ... we all saw the carnage and the tragedy the day of, and those that were lost, but I think sometimes maybe we have to remember that that is a cost that occurs daily with interest,” said Roberts. “So many lives were changed. So many lives were set upon a path. I know that mine was.”

Roberts was only a 17-year-old high schooler at the time but felt called to action; within six months, he’d enlisted in the U.S. Army to go and serve his country.

But many such individuals who do just that carry wounds with them — wounds to the psyche, to the soul — that never quite heal.

“We know that today, somewhere between 18 and 22 veterans are going to commit suicide,” Roberts, also a Lake Cumberland Military Suicide Prevention Coalition member. “There are so many causes, so many things that lead to that. So many of those veterans



American Legion Post 38’s Honor Guard performed a 21-gun salute and the playing of “Taps” at Friday’s Patriot Day Remembrance Event held by Forcht Bank at Oak Hill Baptist Church in Somerset.

are Global War on Terrorism veterans. ... There’s a continuing cost, whether it be the law enforcement or the firefighters in New York City who are dying of rare and aggressive forms of cancer. There are just so many ways that an event like that has totally shaped our lives.”

Being aware of those problems, and the need for veterans to receive the mental and physical health resources to help prevent it, is important to remember, just as the saying that goes along with any 9/11 ceremony is “never forget.” One of the ways Roberts’ life changed on that day 25 years ago was set him on a path not just to fight for his country, but to work on behalf of other veterans who need help in their lives after the service.

“Tragedy is also an opportunity, and when I look back at 9/11, I also look back at 9/12, and 9/13, and 9/14, and 9/15, and I’ll tell you, in those

days after (the terrorist attacks), as Americans, we were at our best,” said Roberts. “We chose to stand in the face of a tragedy and we chose to be resilient. We chose to open our arms to one another, and above all, we chose to rebuild, and I think that’s the lesson 9/11.”

He added, “When we say to remember 9/11, it’s not to remember the tragedy, but I think to remember the opportunity that in tragedy, that event does not define you ... as a person, it does not define you as a people, but what it does do is, it reveals you. It reveals who you are.”

Roberts urged those present not to spend time dwelling on things they can’t change and to instead put one’s efforts on those things they can, whether it’s working with a local organization like those he’s involved with or in any other productive way.

Nearly 3,000 people were killed in the events of 9/11, when terrorists hijacked and crashed planes into both World Trade Center towers in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington. A third plane, United Airlines Flight 93, was taken down near Shanksville, Pennsylvania after passengers on board fought back against the hijackers, preventing it from reaching its target.

The ceremony offered special invitation to active-duty military members, veterans, first responders, and public officials to come and take part, with the event having a particular focus on honoring those individuals who serve.

Chick-fil-A provided a free lunch for those in attendance, and everyone who got lunch also received a raffle ticket, eligible to win a prize donated by Cumberland Furniture Outlet. The American Legion Post 38

Honor Guard performed a 21-gun salute and the playing of “Taps,” Forcht Bank’s Gabrielle Ryan sang the National Anthem, David Skaggs of Oak Hill Baptist Church said the opening prayer, and first-graders from

Hopkins Elementary led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ben Robertson, Area Manager for Forcht Bank, noted that it’s the 15th year for this particularly remembrance ceremony — made all the more meaningful by the milestone mark that 9/11 itself has reached, a quarter of a century after those events — and that Forcht is “truly honored” to be able to make it possible.

“It started off as just a small idea ... and it’s grown to what it is today, and we’re really grateful to bring in partners ... that share the same mission, and the (Lake Cumberland Military Suicide Prevention Coalition) and Habitat for Humanity, to bring everybody here together to honor the first responders, the service members, the public servants, the veterans.

“Every year, we remember,” he added. “Most people in my generation, if you’re over 35 years old, remember exactly where they were and what happened on September 11, 2001.”



Habitat for Humanity of Pulaski County, Ky. Veteran Coordinator Jon Roberts spoke to those present at the 9/11 remembrance ceremony held Friday at Oak Hill Baptist Church, held by Forcht Bank.

GIFTS

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People who participate in packing shoeboxes are encouraged to buy quality gift items — no used items — to be placed in the boxes.

Those items can include school supplies such as pencils, crayons and notebooks; small clothing items like socks, gloves, scarves and hats; and small toys like stuffed animals, sports balls,

puzzles, coloring books, miniature cars, or a deck of cards; toothbrushes or small toiletry items; or even harmonicas and small musical items.

No electronic or battery operated items are permitted, nor are any food or liquid items, as those items can cause the boxes to be hung up in customs.

Recently, soap was put on that list as well, as some countries do not permit soap from entering.

Rita Ringner, co-coordi-

nator for the Lake Cumberland Area OCC team, said that this year’s goal for the region is to pack

20,200 boxes.

The local region also has a five-year goal of packing 100,000 boxes, she said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

461 Somerset KY LLC dba Midland Farms hereby declares its intention to apply for a NQ Retail Malt Beverage Package license no later than September 10, 2026. The licensed premises will be located at 815 Highway 461, Suite A, Somerset, KY 42503. The sole owner and president is Demetrios Haseotes 300 Refinery Road, Somerset, KY 42501. Any person, association, corporation, or body politic may protest the granting of the license by writing the Dept. of Alcoholic Beverage Control, 500 Mero St. 2NE33, Frankfort, KY 40601, within thirty (30) days of the date of legal publication.

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