

# The Legacy of Flight 93 Heroes led by Todd Beamer – first US counterterrorism attack on 9/11

by Jerry Gordon



20 years have passed when on September 11, 2001 (9/11) four airliners were skyjacked by 19 Al Qaeda jihadi perpetrators from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. The virtual flying fuel bombs were aimed at destroying four symbols of American and international capitalism -the World Trade Center, military power- The Pentagon and democracy – The US Capitol Building. Only the US Capitol Building was spared through the self-sacrificing heroism of passengers aboard one of the seized airliners, United Flight 93. The toll of casualties at this writing is more than 2,977 killed and more than 6,000 injured.

It increases to 3,557 when you include 582 deaths recorded so far caused by cancer from toxic exposures of New York's Fire Battalions, Transit, NYPD officers and EMS personnel during 9/11. The New York City Medical Examiner estimated recently that over 1,106 or 40 percent of remains from the World Tower victims have yet to be identified. Two were recently identified by the Medical Examiner's office.

On this 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary there will be commemorations at the Pentagon 9/11 Memorial, the US 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York , and the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

Al Qaeda jihadists seized four flights originating in Boston, Northern Virginia, and Newark airports on 9/11. American

Airlines Flight 11, United Airlines Flight 175 both bound for Los Angeles took off at 8:00 and 8:14 AM respectively from Boston's Logan Airport. American Flight 77 took off at 8:20 from Dulles International Airport bound for Indianapolis.

At 8:46 AM American Flight 11 hit the north tower of the World Trade Center, followed by United Flight 175 at 9:32 that plunged into the south tower of the World Trade Center. American Flight 77 was diverted and plunged into the West Side of the Pentagon at 9:37AM .

The south tower of the World Trade Center collapsed first at 9:59AM; the north tower at 10:58AM.

This was death from afar, fueled by Islamic hatred and the compulsion of extremist Sharia to commit continuous jihad against the kufirs- the unbelievers, who they accused of desecrating the holy lands of the Middle East. It is same hatred that enabled the Taliban in 2021 to overthrow a corrupt Afghan regime riven by ethnic tribal rivalries. The extremist medieval Sunni Pashtun ethnic tribes in Afghanistan harbored Al Qaeda mastermind, the late Osama Bin Laden and his deputies who undertook the murderous attacks on 9/11. The 2021 re-emergence of the Taliban and the geo-political catastrophe that befell Afghanistan was abetted by failed US military missions and nation development programs over four Presidencies that cost \$2 trillion in US funding, the lives of 2,400 US troops and injuries to more than 20, 400 others. This toll was capped by the tragic loss of 13 US service personnel hit by Islamic State – Khorasan suicide bombers during the chaotic humanitarian evacuation withdrawal that rescued more than 120,000 US citizens, green card holders, foreign nationals and tens of thousands vulnerable Afghans who had supported the US and ISAF programs.



Lisa Beamer with sons with picture of Todd Beamer, September 16, 2001

## The Flight 93 Legacy of 9/11

United Flight 93 took off 40 minutes late at 8:42 from Newark International Airport, bound for San Francisco. That delay was crucial as it enabled the heroic 43 passengers and crew to be informed about the fate of the other flights through a 14 – minute cell call between passenger Todd Beamer and Airphone operator agent Lisa Jefferson. Beamer was a 32-year-old salesman for Oracle Corporation who was headed to California to meet with an important client, a day following his and wife Lisa's arrival from an award trip to Italy. He was a natural athlete, graduate of Wheaton College in Illinois, who played baseball, soccer and captained the Basketball team. That athletic background created a common bond between Beamer and fellow passengers, Jeremy Glick, Mark Bingham, and Tom Burnett. They developed what became the famed *Let's Roll* plan voted on by the fellow passengers. Jefferson noted Beamer's stolid demeanor and his Christian beliefs in his prayer request at the conclusion of the call as noted in this *Wall Street Journal* [op ed](#), by Mene Ukuieberuwa, "Remember Todd Beamer of United 93", on his key role:

"His voice was devoid of any stress," Ms. Jefferson later said. "In fact, he sounded so tranquil it made me begin to doubt the authenticity and urgency of his call."

Before ending his call with Ms. Jefferson, Beamer asked, "Would you do one last thing for me?"

"Yes. What is it?" she answered.

"Would you pray with me?"

They said the Lord's Prayer together in full, and other passengers joined in. Beamer then recited Psalm 23, concluding, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." Immediately after, he turned to his co-conspirators and asked, "Are you guys ready? OK, let's roll."

The heroes of Flight 93 knew at the speed the jet was flying that they had less than 20 minutes before the skyjackers would plunge the air fuel bomb into the nation's Capital Building. By taking back control of Flight 93 and forcing the crash into a rural field in Shanksville in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Their actions may have forestalled a so-called "kamikaze" mission to take down the Boeing 757 Flight 93 on 9/11. Air National Guard Pilots Lt. Gen. Marc Sasseville and Maj. Heather Penney, thinking it might be their last mission. In a *CBS News* [report](#). "Their only choice was to ram the airplane flying low. Overcome by hope, they credit the heroes of 9/11 of saving their lives and many Americans. That the actions of the heroes of Flight 93 said the terrorists did not win."

Their sacrificial action was a "blessing" according to Todd Beamer's father, David in a recent 20<sup>th</sup> 9/11 Commemoration Friends of Flight 93 Speakers Series [discussion](#) with Friends President Donna Gibson. See our 2011 *New English Review* [interview](#) with David Beamer, "After 9/11 Denial is not a Strategy".

Beamer addressed the importance of the Flight 93 in this exchange with Gibson:

David Beamer: Some of the passengers became aware that the enemy was lying. They said, "Hey, this is a normal hijacking. Sit down and shut up. We're going back to Newark where our demands are going to be met." The passengers on Flight 93 determined, "Well, that was a lie." So, they got together, a very diverse group of people. They weren't all the same color, they weren't all the same ethnicity, they all didn't share a same world view. Nevertheless, they came together, decided, voted on what to do, and they launched a successful counterattack. The first one in the skies of our homeland, in this new war, and it was successful. Everybody died, but nobody on the ground did. We can all just think for a moment, if United Flight 93 had slammed into the Capitol Dome, that

would have made our enemy's mission a complete success. It did not happen. What a blessing for everyone that it did not. That dome on the Capitol building is still there. I, as well as the other family members on Flight 93, have heard over the years from those that were there that day, in the Capitol building. That they were safe and sound.

Donna Gibson: Right. I've heard Former Vice President Pence mention that on numerous occasions ,when I've heard him speak, that he was there that day, and he attributed that to the heroism of those 40 individuals. So, you are right. The other thing that I think I shared with you a few months ago, I was at the Memorial. There was a military mom with her children. I didn't know she was military at the time. I thought she was just a typical mother with her children. She was very engaged with making sure that her children understood the story. Afterwards, I pulled her aside and I said, "Can you tell me why this was so important to you?" And she said, "I signed up to protect our country, I'm in the military, those 40 people didn't. But when they were faced with the adversity, they fought back, they chose to act." I thought that was so powerful that she wanted her sons to know that story of what those 40 individuals did.

David Beamer and wife Margaret, usually keep to themselves on this day. However, not on this 20<sup>th</sup> Commemoration. They traveled to Federal Way in Washington State to witness the rededication of a high school in honor of his son, Todd on September 10, 2021. He explains in this excerpt of the Friends of Flight 93 interview why this is important for the generation born since 9/11:

David Beamer: There is a relatively new high school in Federal Way, Washington state. It is perhaps 25 or 30 miles south of Seattle. It was a brand-new high school, opened in 2003, and the young people and the people of that community, decided they were going to name it Todd Beamer High School. As

far as I know, Todd Beamer personally was never in Federal Way, Washington. He may have been in Seattle at some point on business. We were there many years ago. But with an invitation to come back, that will be special.

Here is a whole group of kids in high school that weren't around in 2001. This is an opportunity to share with them the story of what 43 people did that day. I have been with other young people, if they remember from time to time "Let's roll," which was a call to action. Those 40 people on Flight 93 not only did the right thing, but they did also it at the right time. Because if they had not, the jet speed of Flight 93 would have made it to that dome in our nation's capital in about another 15 or 20 minutes.

What I encourage young people to do is make "Let's roll" their call to action to do the right thing at the right time, covering everything in their daily activities

You don't have to wait till you're involved in a counterattack. You have decisions to make about what to say, what to do, how to treat other people, how to interact with your teammates and your teachers, your family. You know what the right thing to do is. So "let's roll". Do it like right now. That is a dose of what they're going to get from me on September the 10<sup>th</sup> in Federal Way, Washington.

The significance of David Beaver's message is not lost on colleague Donna Gibson , who points out in their discussion that 75 million Americans have been born since 9/11. That includes the late Todd Beamer's daughter Morgan, sister of his and wife Lisa's two boys, who are now in their early 20's.

David Beamer is asked by a colleague of Gibson about he considers the legacy of Flight 93.

Brooke: "What do you think is the most important part of the story for people to remember about Flight 93 and the 40

individuals on the plane?”

David Beamer: Remember the blessing of launching that counterattack and its victory. Remember that all these different people didn't know each other. Of course, there may have been guys who were traveling together they knew each other, but apart from that, probably nobody knew each other. But they united in that effort and did it successfully. That was against an enemy who had been precisely planning what they were going to do for years. These 40 people did something and won in minutes, not years”.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Beamer is asked for remembrance of his son Todd.

Brooke: “To get to know Todd better, could you tell us his favorite color, TV show? Did he have a favorite joke or a favorite sport?” They just wanted to know a little bit more to get to know him better.



David Beamer: I would say his favorite color was blue. Even though he played soccer, baseball, basketball, I think his favorite sport was baseball, followed by basketball and soccer. One of the cherished memories I have with Todd and Lisa was going to a Baltimore Orioles baseball game with their little boys. He got me a ticket, so I managed to join them. It happened to be Cal Ripken's birthday. It was just one of those things where we had a wonderful time. For those of you that have seen Lisa's book, *Let's Roll*, the picture on the album cover, which shows Todd walking with his two little guys, Lisa snapped that picture as we were leaving the stadium that day. It's just the things you remember. The last time I saw Todd was two weeks before 9/11. Fortunately, we did what we always did. He was getting the little boys stuffed into the mini-van getting ready to ride back on I-95 to New Jersey. We had a big hug. That is what we always did, had a big hug. “See

you, Beam. Drive carefully. I'll see you later." People shouldn't ever miss an opportunity to give a loved one a hug because you just never know.

[Watch](#) this You Tube Video of David Beamer's discussion at the 20<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of 9/11 with Friends of Flight 93 President Donna Gibson. Friends of Flight 93 is a non-profit group that works in cooperation with the National Park Service raising funds for the programs of the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

[Read](#) this transcript of the David Beamer discussion at the 20<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of 9/11 Speakers Series with Friends of Flight 93 President, prepared by *New English Review* , Senior Editor, Jerry Gordon.