

THE ROCKET

Rockcastle County High School

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Flags across the United States were lowered to half-mast Wednesday, September 12, as the nation entered a national week of mourning. (photo by Blake Arnold)

Battlefield America

BY COURTNEY ALEXANDER

It has been called the "second Pearl Harbor," yet the terrorist attacks of September 11th are a tragedy all their own. During one of the darkest days in American history, the very freedom America is known for came under attack. In an attempt to turn the American way of life into chaos, faceless cowards struck America in the worst way--killing thousands of innocent citizens.

Although here in Rockcastle County we are able to see the images on TV and our hearts go out to the families of the victims, few are directly affected by this calamity. Rockcastle Co. High School college history teacher Mr. Rodney Purcell understands firsthand the worry and grief many families felt after the September 11th attack. Mr. Purcell's son Alan works for the State Department in Washington, D.C. and travels close to the Pentagon each day.

According to Mr. Purcell, on that particular Tuesday morning his son traveled past the Pentagon approximately 30 minutes before the plane crashed into it. Once the commercial jet crashed, all members of the State Department, including Alan Purcell, were evacuated.

During this time of uncertainty, so many Americans are asking the questions: Why did someone do this to us, how did they hijack four of our planes, and how are we going to respond? Some feel immediate military retaliation is the answer, while most see the importance of diplomatic retaliation first. Citizens all over America realize war is most likely in our future, but in a situation such as this it's hard to assign blame. Government leaders are trying to do everything they can to reassure all Americans of their safety. Thus far, America's leaders are handling the situation with the utmost care and caution. Just remember, "the flag still stands for freedom, and they can't take that away."

"It's positive to see all Americans uniting together," commented Mr. Purcell. The pride in America and everything this country stands for is evident in "Old Glory" flying from numerous homes, businesses, and cars.

True character is seen during times of crisis such as this. Millions of dollars have been raised for relief efforts and thousands of pints of blood were donated to help victims, and hundreds of dollars have been donated by RCHS students. When other nations from around the world look to America they'll see a country united by tragedy, responding with love. If every American does their part, we'll make it through this time of grief. Donate money or blood if you can, light a candle, say a prayer, and most importantly trust the judgment of our leaders. America will prevail over this enemy--whoever that may be.

BY
THE
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6,333

People reported
missing in the World
Trade Center area as of
September 22

2,593

Estimated number of
foreign citizens from 65
different countries
missing or dead

47

Average life
expectancy of an
Afghan citizen

44

Age of suspected
terrorist ringleader
Osama bin Laden

statistics from Time.com