

Our Heroes

There are 40 people we owe an awful lot to - the 40 passengers and crew of United Airlines flight 93 who gave their lives for this country.

When I first heard about this part of the 9/11 tragedy, I like many people I've talked to about this, said simply "Well... they knew they were going to die anyway, so they did the only thing they could have done." In all probability, many of you reading this thought, and will continue to think, that same thing. Well - it's seems obvious doesn't it?

What I have now come to believe is much more than that simple equation. These people, our heroes, knew they had almost no hope of saving themselves by their actions. The real pilots of the plane were dead, one of the flight attendants clearly saw them carrying the bodies from the cockpit. If they somehow took back control of the plane, no one on board -except the terrorists – would realistically be able to fly it. The best they could hope for was not to be used to kill other innocent people. They knew this - and they still did their best to stop the inevitable - and they succeeded.

This was the ultimate test of human character and courage, and 40 civilians from all walks of life, age groups, and gender surpassed all possible expectations.

What they saved

The authorities are still not sure what the ultimate target was for this plan, most likely the White House or the Capital. Though we will never know if it could have hit one of those targets before being shot down, it is still quite clear what these heroes gave us.

- They did not put our Military in the position of having to decide to shoot down a commercial airliner;
- They probably saved many lives, because even if shot down, it would have most likely have taken place in a more populated area;
- They probably spared the American people the loss of a crucial American symbol, since I am one of those who think they would never have been able to shoot this plane down in time.
- They exemplified the American spirit;

Here is some of what took place:

Sometime shortly before 10 a.m., Tom Burnett called home one last time. "A group of us are going to do something," he told Deena. "I told him, 'No, Tom, just sit down and don't draw attention to yourself,' " she said. "Deena," he told her, "If they're going to crash the plane into the ground, we have to do something. We can't wait for the authorities. We have to do something now." The authorities, at that moment, had scrambled three F-16 fighter jets from Langley Air Force Base in Hampton, Va. The planes, armed with heat-seeking, Sidewinder missiles, were authorized to knock down any civilian aircraft that appeared headed toward a target on the ground. The fighter jets were 14 minutes out of range and closing in.

When he had finished talking with Lisa Jefferson, finished relaying his love for his family, finished praying the Psalm that asked for green pastures and still waters, Todd Beamer put down the phone, still connected with the outside world. "Are you guys ready? Let's roll," he said.

The measure of a hero

Did you know? When a soldier in combat is recommended for a Congressional Medal of Honor, the primary question that the CMOH investigators have to answer is 'Would anyone have thought any the less of this person for not having performed their heroic act?'

Epilog

Many memorials are planned and being created for these heroes. I truly hope those memorial are befitting the heroic deeds. I have contributed to the funds for some of those memorials, and I will be visiting as many of them as I can once they completed. It's just too bad one suggestion for the remains of the terrorist will not be followed. The suggestion was to cremate the bastards and setup a special pay-toilet in one of the restrooms at

the Pennsylvania memorial, which for a mere contribution of \$1000, you could see a few grains of terrorist ash flush down the toilet with your morning crap.

For those in the anti-rights category who believe that government authority will always be there to help them, this was a wake-up call. Think about it - these brave souls took it upon themselves to save part of our government. They were un-armed, so they did the best they could have possibly done under the circumstances.

Let's hope everyone can figure out the proper way to honor these heroes.

For more information:

<http://www.honorflight93.org>