



**PATRIOT DAY**

W E W I L L N E V E R F O R G E T

## The 9/11 Tribute in Light Will Be Dark in 2020

*As the world continues to grapple with COVID-19, we must never forget*

For 18 years, the Tribute in Light would beam over New York City on the evening of September 11<sup>th</sup> to mark the anniversary of that fateful day in 2001. But in 2020, another tragedy that no one saw coming – a global pandemic – has forced the cancellation of this year's Tribute in Light on the 19<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the attacks.

Further, the reading of the names of all 9/11 victims – a tradition carried out by surviving family members – will not take place this year. There will, however, be a moment of silence observed to correspond with the attacks, beginning at 8:46 a.m. EST, the precise moment the first plane struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center.

The reality is that 9/11 might seem like yesterday to many. Students in 2020's high school senior class were not yet born on September 11, 2001. To them 9/11 is history – just like Pearl Harbor.

Twenty years from now, history books might suggest that 9/11 touched our lives and our children's lives far longer and with more impact than Pearl Harbor ever did. Maybe even longer than World War II.

Yes, there were similarities between Pearl Harbor and 9/11. Both attacks came with little forewarning and no single provocation. Both attacks were against major U.S. structures. Both attacks killed thousands of Americans, on scales eerily similar: 2,403 on that

awful Sunday in 1941 and 2,605 (out of 2,977 victims) on that dreadful Tuesday in 2001. Both attacks led to long wars, with catastrophic death tolls.

Ask yourself: which event had a more significant effect on the United States? The attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 or the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in September 2001?

According to Gallup, 72% say 9/11. And those Americans 65 and older – with memories of both Pearl Harbor and the war that followed – also say 9/11 will have a greater impact on America too.

While there are chilling similarities between Pearl Harbor and 9/11, there are plenty of important differences too. Differences that need to be discussed with an open mind and within historical context. The fact is that each generation gives different meaning to the same historical events based on whatever issues they are currently concerned about.

So, please never forget the words of Sandy Dahl, wife of Flight 93 pilot Jason Dahl, when she said:

“If we learn nothing else from this tragedy, we learn that life is short and there is no time for hate.”