



Among the Heroes: United Flight 93 and the Passengers and Crew Who Fought Back

Jere Longman

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On the evening of September 14, as the sun set over the flag-draped county courthouse in Somerset, Pennsylvania, fifteen hundred mourners gathered together as Governor Tom Ridge presided over a memorial to the passengers and crew of United Flight 93. In the hushed twilight, amid the toiling of bells, a candle was lit for each victim, and the flames were used to light smaller candles held by townspeople attending the service.

The hijackers had failed in their mission, Ridge said. They had not destroyed our spirit. They had rekindled it. By fighting back against the terrorists, the passengers and crew had undoubtedly saved hundreds, if not thousands, of lives. "They sacrificed themselves for others -- the ultimate sacrifice. What appears to be a charred, smoldering hole in the ground," said the governor, "is truly and really a monument to heroism."

Of the four horrific hijackings on September 11, Flight 93, which crashed into a field outside Shanksville, Pennsylvania, resonates as one of epic resistance. A number of passengers phoned relatives and others on the ground to tell them of the hijacking and what they planned to do about it. Their battle to take back the plane brought consolation to countless confused and grief-stricken Americans. At a time when the United States appeared defenseless against an unfamiliar foe, the gallant passengers and crew of Flight 93 provided for many Americans a measure of victory in the midst of unthinkable defeat. Together, they seemingly accomplished what all the security guards and soldiers, military pilots and government officials, could not -- they thwarted the terrorists, sacrificing their own lives so that others might live.

The culmination of hundreds of interviews and months of investigation, *Among the Heroes* is the definitive story of the courageous men and women aboard Flight 93, and of the day that forever changed the way Americans view the world and themselves.

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