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# LARRY CRAIG

NEWS RELEASE

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## **Seven Years Later** **by Senator Larry Craig**

Seven years after the terrorists attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, on the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. and aboard the hijacked plane crashed by brave Americans in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, Americans are more vigilant and safer from future invasions.

It seems more like a generation ago when freedom-hating thugs used airplanes as weapons to kill Americans in an attack on our way of life. In the intervening years, we have created the Department of Homeland Security to protect the American people and our infrastructure, and we have strengthened our intelligence authority to prevent and disrupt terrorists. There is no doubt that America is safer today because of these legislative initiatives and actions.

The focus of this anniversary returned to remembering those we lost. I attended the dedication of the Pentagon Memorial, the first completed of three memorials that will honor our lost patriots. It is composed of 184 benches, each serving as an individual monument to every person who died that day on duty in the Pentagon or on hijacked Flight 77, which was used as a weapon to attack the Pentagon. The benches are surrounded by many trees that will grow tall to shelter those hallowed grounds.

On Thursday, September 11, I paid my respects at two of those benches which honor Idahoans – Naval Reserve Commander Ronald Vauk of Nampa and Brady Howell of Sugar City. They, like the other men and women who report to the Pentagon every day, were there seven years ago to preserve our freedom. I encourage all Idahoans who visit Washington to honor our brothers for their sacrifice.

As President Bush said during the dedication, “For future generations, this memorial will be a place of learning. The day will come when most Americans have no living memory of the events of September the 11th. When they visit this memorial, they will learn that the 21st century began with a great struggle between the forces of freedom and the forces of terror. They will learn that this generation of Americans met its duty – we did not tire, we did not falter, and we did not fail. They will learn that freedom prevailed because the desire for liberty lives in the heart of every man, woman, and child on Earth.”

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Seven years ago, we lost a part of our innocence about good and evil and learned about people in caves and places we'll never visit, who exist only to do us harm. The United States will never bow to these terrorists, and Americans will never be as assuming of their freedoms as we were on September 10, 2001.

We know we must always be vigilant and rise up to defend our way of life, and we will – never forgetting the souls of the 184 at the Pentagon and the almost 3,000 in New York City and aboard Flight 93 in Pennsylvania who perished.