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NPS 9/11 ceremony features CHDS speaker

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NPS 9/11 ceremony features CHDS speaker

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Students, faculty and staff gathered at Lake Del Monte on the Naval Postgraduate School campus Monday, September 12, to mark the 15th anniversary of the [September 11](#) attacks for a memorial ceremony that featured current Center for Homeland Defense and Security master's degree student Kevin Harrison as guest speaker.

About 200 people attended the ceremony hosted by Captain Kevin Bertelsen, Commanding Officer, Naval Support Activity Monterey.

The New York City Fire Department, where Harrison is a Battalion Chief, became synonymous with heroism in the wake of the 9/11 attacks as members charged the flaming Twin Towers and dug through rubble for searching for survivors, but Harrison contends the response was a collaborative effort.

"Because of the scope of the attacks, we were all involved," he said. "We were all there. It didn't matter if it was the Towers coming down in New York City, the plane crashing into the Pentagon or the plane crashing in rural Pennsylvania. We were all there."

The department lost 343 of its members, and the response was the first time in modern FDNY history that all firefighters were called in to duty on one day. Since then, FDNY has established the Center for Terrorism and Emergency Preparedness which is staffed by numerous CHDS grads and students, including Harrison.

The military, academia and other first-responder organizations were and continue to be critical partners for the department, he noted.

"I'll submit to you right now that the New York City Fire Department is one of the best prepared, equipped and trained homeland security assets in the country, but it was only possible because of each and every one of you," Harrison told the audience. "You were there with the knowledge, the experience, the equipment to help us. It was awe-inspiring to see the help we got."

Bertelsen said the attacks left lives forever changed. He lauded the Americans who responded and sacrificed in the wake of the assault as well as those who have fought in wars during the 15 years since.

"Today in the shadow salvaged from a piece of steel from underneath the World Trade Center, we remember those we lost on that day," Bertelsen said. "We celebrate our nation's strength and resilience and we draw inspiration from the ways in which survivors and victim's families continue to honor their legacy."

Following the remarks the pair laid a wreath at the NPS 9/11 memorial. The mangled metal of the memorial is steel salvaged from underneath World Trade Center.

In closing his remarks, Harrison thanked the audience and agencies present and promised to offer the same kind of assistance to other organizations that New York received.

"I would like to make a pledge both personally and for my agency, that in your time of need and in your dark hour, the New York City Fire Department will be there for you," Harrison said. "My hope is that we can maintain and demonstrate the high level of help and aid that you gave to us."



