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## September 11 Remembrance Event Planned

By Cathy Tyson

On Saturday, September 11th, the Lafayette Flag Brigade is hosting its annual Remembrance event on the El Curtola Boulevard Bridge over Highway 24 - featuring a New York Fire Department survivor who will share his experiences and artifacts along with cars, motorcycles, military vehicles and even a UH-1 Huey Helicopter from the Vietnam era. Everyone is welcome at the free event.

"The Lafayette Flag Brigade came together as a direct result of the events of 9/11. Individuals who had previously not known each other joined together under one flag and vowed to never forget," said Jim Minder, the group's co-founder. "The monthly events during the first year after 9/11 turned into a yearly Remembrance. Along with the annual Remembrance, our group became involved with other veterans' groups as they welcomed home soldiers from the wars overseas. This started in 2005. As a group, we presented the soldiers with our own commemorative 9/11 flag, the same flags that we fly over the El Curtola Bridge each year."

Minder and co-founder Bryan Welden have organized hundreds of Welcome Home events since then in cities all over the Bay Area. The returning soldiers are clearly touched by the outpouring of support from their community and fellow soldiers.

Organizers expect about 500 people will participate in this year's event, which runs from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a Candlelight Vigil starting at dusk - around 7:30 p.m. In addition to the 9/11 NYFD speaker, Brigadier General Dan Helix, Deputy Commander General, and a variety of groups from the Boy Scouts to the Scottish-American Military Society, singers, and bagpipe players will commemorate the day.

Blue Star Moms, a non-partisan, non-political organization of mothers who have or had children in the military, will be on hand to receive donations for care packages for the troops (such items as beef jerky and diaper wipes, please no chocolate.) They'll also have a table set up to fill out postcards for personal messages for the troops. To learn more about the Lafayette Flag Brigade, go to its website at [www.nevereverforget911.com](http://www.nevereverforget911.com).

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