

Greg Carter, PCC
National Patriotic Instructor

**Monthly Patriotic Instruction
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September is the month where everyone born before 2002 gets to recall where they were on the morning of September 11, 2001. You know how the story begins... I was at this place, doing this thing, when...

In my case, I had just finished working a night shift and was enjoying a very late birthday breakfast with my father at the Waffle Inn. Two elderly women walked in and said "something is wrong in New York." We were leaving at the time, and for Midwesterners, everything is wrong in New York. Still, the look of concern on their faces was telling, so I turned on the radio, and the whole ride home I heard scattered reports. I walked into my apartment just in time to see the second plane crash into the World Trade Center live on CNN.

I would venture to guess that everyone reading this monthly instruction has a similar story, and knows the flood of emotions that come with telling it. September 11 was a black day in American history. One thing Americans don't like is a sucker punch from a sneak. Because of it, we have been at war ever since. September 11 is also a day for one of America's best sets of values: hope and resilience.

Our country certainly didn't collapse, as the terrorists who planned the attacks predicted. Like every other time our country has been in trouble, we got back up from the mat, and September is a great month to celebrate that trait. September 1, 1864 was the day Sherman's forces captured Atlanta, one of many cities in the south that the Confederacy swore would never be taken. There was no question after that day that the end of the Civil War was near.

On the first Monday in September we celebrate Labor Day. In my hometown, this is the biggest holiday of the calendar year. If it were not for the greatness of American manufacturing and invention, we would not have this holiday.

On September 17, we celebrate Citizenship Day. We are one of very few countries in the world who welcome the diversity that comes with immigrants from far-away places. It is also the anniversary of the official signing of the U.S. Constitution, one of the most important documents in human history.

Finally, on the third Friday of the month, we celebrate National POW/MIA Recognition Day. I have been fortunate enough to meet two former POWs. I can say honestly they rank among the bravest people I have ever met.

Let's all take time out this month to remember these great American events and values as we also remember the lives lost and sacrifices made for these holidays to exist.