

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Calls On Residents To Take Back Islands From 'Local Terrorists' During 9/11 Commemoration

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Shenneth Canegata **September 12, 2019**



ST. CROIX – On Wednesday the American Legion District 10 and the Virgin Islands Office of Veterans Affairs came together in a moment of solidarity at the American Legion Headquarters in Hospital Grounds to participate in the national commemoration of those who lost their lives on September 9, 2001 in [the single deadliest attack on American soil](#) that killed almost three thousand people.

Eighteen years ago on [September 11, 2001, it is believed that Al-Qaeda](#) hijackers crashed two planes into the World Trade Center in New York City, the first one into the north tower at 8:46 a.m. and the second into the south tower at 9:03 a.m., each building ending in pile of rubble. Consequently, the Pentagon was also struck, and Americans

aboard a fourth plane foiled the terrorists' plans, sacrificing their lives by reportedly bringing the plane down in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

At 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, the American Legion and Veterans Affairs began the commemoration by joining cities across America, hosting a local "America Supports You Freedom Walk" that began at the Bassin Triangle, across from the Police Station and made its way down King Street on to the Myron G. Danielson American Legion Post Headquarters at #2 Hospital Grounds.



Among those who lost their lives on 9/11 were seven St. Croix residents: SSG Maudlyn A. White, Felix (Bobby) Calixte, Claudia S. Sutton, William Henry, Jr., Christian Maltby,

Chris M. Kirby, and John Holland.

Family members of the seven were in attendance and received yellow roses, words of comfort, and applause from those present to honor their loved ones. Several clergy present offered prayers and encouragement intermittently during the program.

Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) David C. Canegata III and Sgt. First Class (SFC) Floyd Everett Lake, who lost their lives during Operation Iraqi Freedom, a war that began as the United States [response to the terror attacks of 9/11](#), was also honored. LTC Canegata's widow, Shenneth Canegata, who attended the ceremony, was handed a yellow rose in remembrance of his ultimate sacrifice for his nation and his island home, St. Croix.

Representatives from the Virgin Islands Army National Guard, the V.I. Fire Service, the V.I. Police Department, the American Legion, the Virgin Islands Emergency Management Team, and Veterans Affairs joined Governor Albert Bryan to honor all the fallen, especially the seven Virgin Islanders who perished on that fateful day in 2001.

Mr. Bryan expressed that the day is a very solemn and somber one. He explained that as a young man his grandmother educated him on the events that took place at Pearl Harbor, but he never fully understood the importance of remembrance. "When you have lived through an event you can empathize," he said.

He spoke of the personal trauma he experienced as the planes hit the World Trade Center in New York City. "In my mind the world was over. This was World War III. It was a very traumatic time for us." The governor talked of the fear experienced as St. Croix residents watched fighter jets flying around Hovensa, the only oil refinery on the island.



The V.I. commander in chief denounced the frequent violent killings taking place in the territory and defined them as “local terrorist acts.” He then seized the opportunity to send a clear message that it was crucial that residents bond together as a community to fight the “war” taking place on V.I. soil.

Mr. Bryan said that, “We have over 100,000 residents in the V.I. and approximately 4,000-5,000 are incarcerated. “We are more than them. Why let them terrorize our community?” Mr. Bryan said. He urged family members, friends and residents that are aware of criminal activity being done by those close to them to turn them in and put an end to the violence.

He continued by noting that freedom is not only being free from terrorists abroad, but from terrorists within our own community in the V.I. and admonished listeners to, “Let us take our streets back.”

Moving forward, Mr. Bryan used his usual humorous banter to lighten the mood by expressing his dislike for September because of the bad memories presented during that month over the years: Hurricane Hugo, 9/11, and Hurricanes Maria and Irma. His expression, “My daughter’s birthday is in two weeks, but she is not a terrorist,” resulted in ripples of laughter throughout Legion Hall that brought a welcome breath of fresh air to the somber commemoration.



Colonel Kodjo S. Knox-Limbacker, Adjutant General of the V.I. National Guard, described the 9/11 terror attacks as “cowardly,” and shared that he finds himself at the “tip of the spear” of the United States unrelenting mission to combat terrorism. “Remember, remember, remember,” he encouraged, referring to the events of 9/11.

V.I. Fire Service representative, Antonio Stevens explained that when firefighters enter a building to out a fire they are preoccupied with the task at hand and rely on another firefighter assigned outside to sound the alarm -- three sharp blasts on an air horn -- that it was time to evacuate because of danger. “On 9/11 no one was focused on that blast,” he said. “If it was given, it was not heard, because firefighters were focused on saving as many lives as possible.” [New York City lost 343 firefighters](#) during the attack.

[Governor Bryan issued a proclamation](#) commemorating September 11, 2019, as “Patriot Day: A Day of Remembrance in the United States Virgin Islands” to honor the men and women lost in the September 11, 2001 terror attacks.

“I ask the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands to take a moment to remember our brothers and sisters lost that day and to keep their loved ones, and our servicemen and women overseas in your thoughts and prayers,” he said.